

# The Complete Dorm Packing List

A practical move-in checklist for freshmen and parents: what to buy first, what can wait, and what to confirm before spending money.

START HERE	PACK SMART	BUY LATER
Confirm bed size, appliance rules, room dimensions, and roommate shared items before shopping.	Prioritize bedding, bath, laundry, chargers, meds, ID, and daily clothes.	Wait on rugs, extra storage, decor, furniture, and appliances until you know the room.

## How to use this checklist

Start with the must-have categories, coordinate shared items with your roommate, and confirm your school's housing rules before buying appliances, heated items, bed risers, or extra furniture.

## The 3 packing rules that save the most money

Buy before move-in	Confirm or buy later
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Twin XL sheets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mattress protector</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pillow</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comforter or duvet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Towels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shower shoes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Laundry bag</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Basic meds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Phone / laptop chargers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ID and housing info</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mini fridge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Microwave</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bed risers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Electric blanket</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> String lights</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra furniture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Printer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rug size</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Storage bins</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coffee maker</li> </ul>

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Move-in date \_\_\_\_\_ Room / building \_\_\_\_\_

## Before You Pack

Do these checks first to prevent duplicate purchases, policy issues, and wrong-size orders.

### Confirm First

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	<b>Mattress size</b>	CONFIRM	Most dorms use Twin XL, but verify in your housing portal.
[ ]	<b>Allowed appliances</b>	CONFIRM	Check rules for microwaves, mini fridges, kettles, coffee makers, and air fryers.
[ ]	<b>Prohibited items</b>	CONFIRM	Usually includes candles, incense, space heaters, and some extension cords.
[ ]	<b>Room dimensions</b>	CONFIRM	Needed before buying rugs, storage carts, or extra furniture.
[ ]	<b>Provided furniture</b>	CONFIRM	Confirm bed, mattress, desk, chair, dresser, closet or wardrobe.
[ ]	<b>Roommate shared items</b>	CONFIRM	Avoid duplicate fridges, rugs, cleaning supplies, or appliances.
[ ]	<b>Laundry setup</b>	CONFIRM	Find out whether machines use an app, card, coins, or student account.
[ ]	<b>Bathroom setup</b>	CONFIRM	Hall bathroom vs. suite bathroom changes what you need.

#### Quick answer

Most freshmen need bedding, bath items, laundry supplies, desk basics, clothes, chargers, a few dishes, basic medicine, and smart storage. They do not need a full apartment setup.

#### Roommate / shared item notes


## Bed and Bath

These items make the dorm livable from the first night. For bedding, size matters more than style.

### Bed and Bath Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Twin XL sheet sets - 2	MUST	One on the bed, one clean for laundry week. Confirm size first.
[ ]	Comforter or duvet - 1	MUST	Choose washable, not oversized. Lightweight if the dorm runs warm.
[ ]	Twin XL mattress protector - 1	MUST	A practical layer for shared dorm mattresses.
[ ]	Mattress pad or topper	OPTIONAL	Optional for comfort. Confirm mattress height and sheet pocket depth.
[ ]	Pillows - 1 to 2	MUST	One sleeping pillow plus one support pillow if needed.
[ ]	Pillow protectors	OPTIONAL	Helpful for sweat, skincare, hair products, and dust.
[ ]	Extra blanket or throw	OPTIONAL	Useful for naps, guests, or cold rooms.
[ ]	Towels - 2 to 3	MUST	Bath towels plus one extra for laundry delays.
[ ]	Washcloths / hand towels	BUY	Pack enough for weekly laundry, not a full linen closet.
[ ]	Shower shoes	MUST	Essential for shared bathrooms.
[ ]	Shower caddy	MUST	Mesh dries faster; hard caddies stand upright.
[ ]	Robe or shower wrap	OPTIONAL	Useful if bathroom is down the hall.

#### Bedding tip

Twin and Twin XL are not the same. Twin XL is 5 inches longer, so standard Twin fitted sheets may pull off the mattress corners.

## Laundry, Cleaning, Desk, and School

Keep dorm systems simple: portable laundry, quick cleanup supplies, and school basics you will actually use.

### Laundry and Cleaning Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Laundry hamper or bag	MUST	Choose one that is easy to carry to the laundry room.
[ ]	Detergent pods or liquid	MUST	Pods are simple; liquid is often cheaper.
[ ]	Dryer sheets or wool balls	OPTIONAL	Helpful for static and softness.
[ ]	Stain remover pen / spray	BUY	Good for food, coffee, makeup, and move-in messes.
[ ]	Disinfecting wipes	BUY	Use for desk, door handles, mini fridge, and spills.
[ ]	Small trash bags	BUY	Check whether the room includes a bin.
[ ]	Paper towels	BUY	More useful than students expect during the first week.
[ ]	All-purpose cleaner	BUY	One small bottle is enough.
[ ]	Lint roller	OPTIONAL	Useful for dark clothing, bedding, and pets at home.
[ ]	Handheld vacuum or broom	CONFIRM	Coordinate with roommate when possible.

### Desk and School Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Laptop and charger	MUST	Label charger with name or tape color.
[ ]	Notebooks or binder	BUY	Buy for your actual class style, not every possible class.
[ ]	Pens, pencils, highlighters	BUY	Small supply only; restock later.
[ ]	Planner or calendar	OPTIONAL	Digital or paper, but use one system consistently.
[ ]	Desk lamp	CONFIRM	Confirm if provided. Consider built-in USB only if allowed.
[ ]	Sticky notes / index cards	OPTIONAL	Helpful for studying and reminders.
[ ]	Backpack	MUST	Comfortable enough for long walks across campus.
[ ]	Folders	OPTIONAL	Pack a few for syllabi, forms, and handouts.
[ ]	Scissors and tape	BUY	Move-in day lifesavers.
[ ]	Small stapler	OPTIONAL	Useful if your library is far.

## Tech, Charging, Clothing, and Closet

Pack for shared rooms, limited outlets, campus walking, weather, and laundry delays.

### Tech Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Power strip with surge protection	CONFIRM	Check school rules. Avoid overloaded cords.
[ ]	Phone charger - 2	MUST	One by bed, one for backpack or desk.
[ ]	Long charging cable	BUY	Helpful when outlets are in inconvenient places.
[ ]	Headphones or earbuds	MUST	Essential for shared rooms and studying.
[ ]	Portable power bank	OPTIONAL	Useful for long campus days.
[ ]	Extension cord	CONFIRM	Many schools restrict certain types.
[ ]	HDMI cable / adapter	OPTIONAL	Only if needed for monitor, TV, or presentations.
[ ]	External hard drive or cloud backup	OPTIONAL	Protect schoolwork from laptop issues.
[ ]	Printer	SKIP	Usually skip unless your major or dorm situation truly needs it.

### Clothing and Closet Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Everyday outfits	MUST	Pack for 2 to 3 weeks, not your whole closet.
[ ]	Comfortable walking shoes	MUST	Campus walking is more than most freshmen expect.
[ ]	Shower shoes / slides	MUST	Also useful for quick hallway trips.
[ ]	Light jacket or hoodie	BUY	Dorms and lecture halls can be cold.
[ ]	Rain jacket / umbrella	BUY	Depends on school climate.
[ ]	Business casual outfit	BUY	Useful for presentations, interviews, or events.
[ ]	Workout clothes	OPTIONAL	Only pack what you realistically use.
[ ]	Hangers	BUY	Slim hangers save closet space.
[ ]	Closet organizer	CONFIRM	Wait if you do not know closet layout.
[ ]	Laundry mesh bag	OPTIONAL	Useful for delicates, socks, and small items.

## Kitchen, Snacks, Health, and Safety

Most freshmen need a small food setup and a practical health kit, not a full apartment kitchen.

### Kitchen and Snack Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Reusable water bottle	MUST	One of the highest-use dorm items.
[ ]	Mug or travel cup	BUY	Good for coffee, tea, and microwave meals.
[ ]	Bowl and plate	BUY	One or two of each is enough.
[ ]	Fork / spoon / knife set	BUY	Keep it simple; avoid a full kitchen set.
[ ]	Food storage containers	OPTIONAL	Small set for leftovers and snacks.
[ ]	Mini fridge	CONFIRM	Confirm rules and coordinate with roommate.
[ ]	Microwave	CONFIRM	Often restricted or available as a rental combo.
[ ]	Coffee maker / kettle	CONFIRM	Check housing rules before buying.
[ ]	Snacks for move-in week	BUY	Choose shelf-stable and easy to store.
[ ]	Dish soap and sponge	BUY	Needed if you bring dishes.

### Health and Safety Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Prescription medications	MUST	Bring enough for the first few weeks and a refill plan.
[ ]	Basic first-aid kit	MUST	Bandages, pain reliever, thermometer, allergy medicine.
[ ]	Health insurance card	MUST	Physical or digital copy.
[ ]	Reusable mask	OPTIONAL	Optional based on health needs and campus guidance.
[ ]	Hand sanitizer	BUY	Small bottle for backpack.
[ ]	Vitamins / supplements	OPTIONAL	Only if already part of your routine.
[ ]	Safe or lockbox	OPTIONAL	Useful for passport, meds, cash, or small valuables.
[ ]	Flashlight	OPTIONAL	Phone light works, but a small backup is useful.
[ ]	Emergency contacts list	MUST	Keep in phone and with important documents.

## Storage, Organization, and Room Setup

Storage can make a small dorm feel bigger, but only when it fits the actual room.

### Storage and Organization Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Under-bed storage bins	CONFIRM	Measure bed clearance after move-in if unsure.
[ ]	Drawer organizers	BUY	Useful for socks, supplies, and toiletries.
[ ]	Command hooks / strips	CONFIRM	Check wall policy and weight limits.
[ ]	Over-door hooks	CONFIRM	Confirm door clearance and policy.
[ ]	Storage ottoman	OPTIONAL	Useful only if it doubles as seating.
[ ]	Rolling cart	OPTIONAL	Great for snacks, toiletries, or school supplies.
[ ]	Shoe rack	OPTIONAL	Only if shoes are becoming clutter.
[ ]	Bed risers	CONFIRM	Confirm allowed and compatible with dorm bed.
[ ]	Labels or tape	BUY	Helpful for move-in boxes and shared items.

### Personal Items and Decor Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Photos or small prints	OPTIONAL	Bring a few personal items without crowding walls.
[ ]	Small mirror	OPTIONAL	Useful if bathroom mirrors are busy.
[ ]	Desk fan	BUY	Often essential in older dorms without AC.
[ ]	Rug	CONFIRM	Optional; measure first if possible.
[ ]	Plants	OPTIONAL	Low-maintenance only, or skip.
[ ]	Whiteboard	OPTIONAL	Useful for reminders and roommate notes.
[ ]	String lights	CONFIRM	Many schools restrict them.
[ ]	Throw pillows	SKIP	One is fine; several become clutter.

## Documents, Move-In Day, and What to Skip

Keep move-in documents accessible and avoid buying items that waste space or violate dorm policies.

### Documents and Move-In Checklist

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Photo ID / driver's license	MUST	Needed for check-in, packages, banking, and travel.
[ ]	Student ID	MUST	If issued before move-in.
[ ]	Housing assignment details	MUST	Building, room number, move-in time, parking info.
[ ]	Medical and insurance info	MUST	Keep digital and physical backups.
[ ]	Bank card and small cash	MUST	Useful during move-in and emergencies.
[ ]	Roommate contact info	MUST	Coordinate shared items before shopping.
[ ]	Tool kit	BUY	Small screwdriver, measuring tape, scissors, tape.
[ ]	Move-in labels	BUY	Name, building, room, phone number on boxes.

### Skip or Confirm Before Buying

Pack	Item	Priority	Notes
[ ]	Too many throw pillows	SKIP	They take up space and usually end up on the floor.
[ ]	Bed skirt	SKIP	Under-bed storage is easier to access without one.
[ ]	Large furniture	SKIP	Most dorms already include core furniture and restrict extras.
[ ]	Candles / incense	SKIP	Almost always prohibited.
[ ]	Electric blanket / heated pad	CONFIRM	Confirm policy before buying.
[ ]	Full cookware set	SKIP	Most freshmen do not have space or permission to use it.
[ ]	Printer	SKIP	Campus printing is often easier and cheaper.
[ ]	Oversized luggage	SKIP	Hard to store after move-in.

## First-Week Dorm Setup Plan

Separate true first-night needs from items that can wait until after you see the room.

Need before the first night	Can usually wait
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sheets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pillow</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comforter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mattress protector</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Towels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shower shoes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chargers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Laundry bag</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> ID</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Basic clothes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra decor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rug</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Printer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Second lamp</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Storage carts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra seating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Full kitchen set</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bulk snacks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large mirror</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra bedding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal clothes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra bins</li> </ul>

## Budget tracker

Category	Estimated	Actual
Bedding	\$	\$
Bath	\$	\$
Laundry / cleaning	\$	\$
School supplies	\$	\$
Tech	\$	\$
Storage	\$	\$
Food / kitchen	\$	\$
Health / personal	\$	\$
Decor	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$

**Last-minute notes**

## Extra Notes and Room Measurements

Use this page during or right after move-in. Measure before ordering rugs, storage drawers, carts, or anything that depends on the room layout.

Area to measure	Measurement	Shopping note
Under-bed clearance		Needed for storage bins and drawers.
Closet or wardrobe width		Helps avoid organizers that do not fit.
Floor space for rug		Measure open walking area, not total room size.
Desk surface		Useful before buying monitor stands or organizers.
Wall space		Check policy before hanging anything.
Fridge / microwave area		Coordinate with roommate and confirm outlet access.

### Buy-after-move-in list


### Receipt and return reminders


### Final reminder

Pack the room you are actually getting, not the room you saw on social media. Start practical, keep receipts, and buy the nice-to-have items after move-in.