



Vanderburgh HOUSE

Guest Handbook & Resource Guide

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GUEST HANDBOOK

Vanderburgh House is a peer-supported structured sober living community. Our mission is to build recovery communities where our guests are supported in their recovery journey. We encourage all our guests to pursue their own personal recovery journey while living in a structured and supportive home environment. Each guest helps to actively build our community and contribute to the success of their brothers and sisters in recovery.

Our Purpose: Everyone affiliated with Vanderburgh House—from our staff to our independent Owner/Operators, House Mentors, and ultimately you—our guests—help to build the sober living environments we want for ourselves, our communities, and for everyone in recovery. We see the positive impact that sober living has on communities and the impact that structured recovery residences offer the men and women they serve. This is the reason that Vanderburgh House exists: to provide support and serve the individuals who choose to live in our homes. We exist to serve you in your recovery journey as you continue building a foundation for the life you desire for yourself.

This Handbook: This Guest Handbook addresses your role as a guest in a Vanderburgh House home. This handbook guides you and the other guests in your community. We have tried to cover all aspects of life in the home, but we can't cover everything. It is ultimately up to you to work with your housemates to build the community you want.

Leadership Structure: Vanderburgh House homes are carefully led according to a structure which allows for independence but also which offers support to every guest. We believe that through empowerment and leaning on many strengths of social model programs, we can build a strong and committed community where every guest has a voice. Guests are accountable to their *House Mentor*. House Mentorship is the way we describe the leadership role responsible for guiding and supporting the community in your home. A House Mentor (or in some cases, multiple House Mentors) will guide you and work to foster an environment of support and encouragement. House Mentors are accountable to the *Operator* of the home. The Operator is the individual or team ultimately responsible for the success of the home. At Vanderburgh House, Operators may be staff, but are most often independent owners of the home, while working as Vanderburgh House affiliates.

Chartered Homes: *Chartered Homes* are owned and operated by independent individuals who are granted a Charter from Vanderburgh House. These Chartered Operators operate their homes independently, while at the same time benefiting from the support that Vanderburgh House offers. Chartered Homes bear the Vanderburgh House name and are guided by the same core values and standards as all other Vanderburgh House homes; however, the Operator is ultimately responsible for the home, and guests and House Mentors are ultimately responsible to them directly. Operators may set additional rules and policies which all guests are expected to follow.

Growth Opportunities: Many guests use sober living temporarily while they build a foundation, eventually leaving when they are fully prepared for independent living. There is typically no minimum or maximum amount of time a guest is welcome at the home. Some guests wish to become more involved in the field of addiction recovery, and many explore House Mentorship as one way to give back to the recovery community. House Mentorship is a way to continue living in a structured sober living environment, while taking on a leadership role and supporting newcomers. From there, some House Mentors explore the idea of opening a sober living home as an independent Owner/Operator. We encourage your exploration and pursuit of growth in this field.

Safety: Each guest is responsible for the overall safety of the community. Review the Emergency Procedures and Exit Plan posters. Familiarize yourself with the locations of all exits in the event of an emergency. We do not allow candles or open flames in the home. Never leave the stove unattended or pour water on a grease fire. Electric space heaters are not permitted. DO NOT DISABLE SMOKE DETECTORS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

“My identity shifted when I got into recovery. That’s who I am now, and it actually gives me greater pleasure to have that identity than to be a musician or anything else, because it keeps me in a manageable size.” – Eric Clapton

HOUSE RULES

Vanderburgh House homes are guided by common-sense rules and policies. If the behavior of any guest undermines the recovery or safety of the community, the guest(s) will be asked to address the behavior at a House Meeting. In repeated or severe cases, guests may be asked to leave the home. The foundation of our community is mutual respect for others and for ourselves. Your focus should be on your personal recovery. These **House Rules** are requirements for living in the house.

- 1) **Strict Abstinence:** You must not possess or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at any time.
- 2) **Banned Substances:** You must not possess any item on the **Banned Substance List** at any time.
- 3) **Violence:** You must not commit any acts, threats, intimidation or bullying towards any guest or staff.
- 4) **Payments:** You must pay your rent on time as agreed when you moved in.
- 5) **House Policies:** The house may establish other policies which apply universally to all guests.

Behaviors: Several behaviors may result in a guest being asked to leave the home, including return to use (relapse), possessing banned substances, acts of violence or other criminal activity, missing payments for more than one week without a payment plan, serious or chronic problematic behavior, or developing a state in which you may harm yourself, others, or needs off-site treatment. You are a guest in a supportive and independent sober living environment and must participate in your own recovery as well as being a positive influence in the home. The most common reason for being asked to leave the home is for behavioral concerns.

Return to Use (relapse): We work as a community to support each guest in their recovery journey. However, in certain events, we will ask a guest to leave the home and terminate the Guest Agreement. If your Guest Agreement is terminated, you have agreed to voluntarily leave the home within two hours. If you need to return to the home to pick up belongings, you may do so with a scheduled appointment within seven days. We may notify probation and parole of your residency status, if applicable. In the event of a return to use, we will do our best to help you to find a more appropriate level of care, but we cannot guarantee any assistance in providing transportation or access to alternative living arrangements.

Screening: By choosing to be a part of the community, you have agreed to random supervised urine and breathalyzer screens. These screens may be administered any day, any time, including at night. Refusing a screen or tampering with or providing a false sample is grounds for immediate discharge. If you wish to dispute the results of a screen, you may obtain a laboratory test to challenge these results and must remain at the home until lab results are confirmed. If the laboratory results show negative, you will be reimbursed for the laboratory costs, up to \$50. You are also subject to random inspections of your personal property by your House Mentor or staff.

Suspected Use of Substances: We ask all guests to participate in building a recovery community. One way you can do this is by notifying your House Mentor of any suspected drug or alcohol use by another guest. This is not only the right thing to do, but it can save lives. In the event of an overdose, the home has naloxone (Narcan) in each bathroom above the toilet. If you are trained in the use of Narcan and comfortable doing so, administer an appropriate dose(s). Call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

Personal Responsibility: You are responsible for providing your own food, personal items, and medication. Be respectful of others: do not leave food out, wash dishes when you are done using them, clean up after yourself, and be a positive force in your community. Please be considerate and fit your personal items in the storage areas set for you. Personal property and possessions brought to the house are your sole responsibility and we are not responsible for any loss or damage to any of your property, including if you leave items behind when you leave.

“I avoid looking forward or backward and try to keep looking upward.” – Charlotte Brontë

Engagement: You have the opportunity to help build a supportive, loving, life-changing community by being active in-home activities, attending house meetings, and helping your community by identifying areas of concerns. Please be attentive to your role in building this environment. Guests must also be engaged in an independent and productive life outside the home, either through employment, volunteer activity, attending school, or attending an outpatient treatment program. We ask you to engage in activities suitable for you in your recovery journey (avoiding work in bars, liquor stores, etc.), and on shifts and locations which support your recovery goals.

Introductory Period: During the first 30 days, you should focus on becoming a part of the community in the home and becoming familiar with the home's structure and requirements. **You may not spend nights outside of the home during the first 30 days.** We ask you to communicate your recovery goals in a House Meeting and participate in at least five meetings outside of the home each week. We encourage you to work with a sponsor, recovery coach, and other one-on-one engagements in support of your recovery. Some guests follow a 12-step program (like AA or NA), but guests may create their own recovery pathway if they desire to do so.

Curfew: Curfew is typically 11:00 PM, every night of the week. Your home may have a different curfew policy which will be communicated to you by the Operator and typically posted inside the home. Curfew is taken very seriously, and failure to abide by curfew may result in discharge. Holidays have regular curfew.

After 30 days, you earn additional privileges as you continue in your recovery. You may spend one night outside the house on either Friday or Saturday. You must be in good standing and submit a request by Wednesday evening. After 3 months, you may stay out for Friday and Saturday, provided you are in good standing and approved. If your work schedule includes weekends, passes may be taken on alternate nights with House Mentor approval.

House Meetings: You are required to attend the House Meeting scheduled once a week and must plan your schedule accordingly. Please arrive on time, do not leave early, and do not use your cell phone during the meeting.

Medications: All prescription medication must be stored in a locked container. Do not leave medications in your room unsecured. Controlled medication may be subject to additional restrictions. Your medication may be inspected at random. We do not discriminate against guests using medically assisted treatment (MAT).

Overnight Requests: You may stay overnight outside of the home if you have lived in the home for at least 30 days and are in good standing as determined by the Operator. Overnight Request Forms must be submitted through your Buildium Resident Center and must be submitted with reasonable advanced notice. For you to be considered in good standing, you must not have received any recent written warnings and be current with rent.

BANNED SUBSTANCES & ITEMS

- Alcohol and marijuana in any form, including prescriptions and products containing THC
- Pipes, needles, syringes, or other devices or paraphernalia used to consume drugs, *other than prescription use*
- Kratom, valerian root, PCP, Kava Kava, Krokodil, Flakka, ketamine, K2, Bath salts, W-18, and others
- Weapons, including firearms, ammunition, pepper spray, mace, airsoft, and knives not used for food preparation
- Substances which are created to hide the effects or evidence of drug or alcohol use
- Any items or devices used to give false negatives on urine drug or breathalyzer screens
- Substances that resemble drugs or alcohol, e.g., non-alcoholic beer
- Controlled or illegal items in certain areas, including fireworks, caustic or poisonous chemicals, etc.

“Sometimes you can only find Heaven by slowly backing away from Hell.” – Carrie Fisher

RESIDENT CENTER

Shortly after you move in, you will receive an email invitation to access your Resident Center. The Resident Center can be accessed on a computer or through your mobile device and is an important part of being a guest. If you do not have access to your Resident Center, provide your House Mentor with a valid email address, and they will work with the Operator to get you set up. Your Resident Center will display a menu with the following options:

Payments: View your **current balance** and **payment history**; **make a payment** or set up **autopay**.

Requests: Request an **overnight**, request a **residency confirmation letter**, or request other documents.

Documents: Access a PDF copy of this Guest Handbook as well as access other helpful resources.

Community: Join or create discussions with your housemates, discuss local events, or ask for advice.

RENT PAYMENTS

On-time payment is required of all guests. If you are unable to meet your financial obligation, please speak with your House Mentor to see if a solution can be achieved. Payments can also be mailed to our office. Receipts will be sent automatically to your email. If you have not received a receipt, *we may not have received your payment.*

Please note we do not accept cash or personal checks. Please make appropriate arrangements for money orders if you decide to pay in person.

Due: Friday at 5:00 PM, if paying weekly

1st of each month, if paying monthly

Online

We strongly encourage all guests to pay online as you are able. Online payments are simple and can be completed through your **Resident Center**, payable by credit card, debit card, or bank draft.



In-Person

Money orders payable to **Vanderburgh House** can be given to your House Mentor; we do not accept personal checks or cash. Please indicate your **full name** on the memo line of every payment.



If you need to open a checking account but owe the bank money, you can use **Chime**. Scan the QR code to learn how.

“You will teach them to fly, but they will not fly your flight. You will teach them to dream, but they will not dream your dream. You will teach them to live, but they will not live your life. Nevertheless, in every flight, in every life, in every dream, the print of the way you taught them will remain.” – Mother Teresa

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Good Neighbor Policy: Please maintain quiet time of 9:00 P.M. through 8:00 A.M. Always be courteous and respectful to neighbors. Don't loiter in front of a neighbor's house or play loud music nearby, especially late at night or early in the morning. If you have an issue with a neighbor, please speak up at a House Meeting. All complaints made to Vanderburgh House regarding the conduct of guests, the condition of the property, or safety concerns are taken very seriously.

Visitors: Visitors are allowed for a limited time during the day with advanced approval. All visitors are asked to stay in the common areas, and we ask you to remain with your visitors and be accountable for the nuisance or damage they may cause. Visitors must be sober and respectful of your home.

Chores: Chores are a part of living in our home; you're not compensated for it, and you are expected to complete your chores diligently and in good spirits. All guests participate in caring for the home, including dishes, mopping, laundry, dusting, vacuuming, picking up trash, and other chores as needed by your home to be self-sufficient.

House Supplies: Some house supplies are covered by rent; this is at the discretion of the Operator and may change over time, especially if guests are found to be overusing or abusing house supplies. In some circumstances, guests may be asked to make weekly contributions to a budget for house supplies in cases of excessive use.

Rooms: Please keep your room clean and orderly. Make your bed each morning, put clothing away, and don't leave trash out. We ask that your personal spaces demonstrate care, attention, respect, and discipline. Sleeping is only allowed in your room, not in common areas. This policy is in place to support positive habits and a clean and comfortable home for all guests.

Vehicles: You are welcome to have a bicycle or other form of personal transportation. If you would like to keep a car at the home, you must have a valid driver's license and the vehicle must be properly registered. Parking is on a first-come, first-served basis, with the two spots closest to the main door to be left available for staff. Please be considerate of neighbors and other guests when parking on the street. We ask that you do not perform oil changes or major repairs on the property. Vehicles kept at the home are done so at the owner's risk.

Smoking: The use of tobacco is addictive, whether smoking, vaping, chewing tobacco, or using other types of nicotine-containing products. We encourage all guests to quit the use of these substances. Smoking, vaping, and the use of any other tobacco products is not allowed inside the house, basement, covered porches, breezeways, or in front of the house. Guests who smoke are only allowed to do so in the designated smoking areas. All cigarette butts must only be put in the "butt can" and must be emptied frequently by those who use it.

Laundry: Laundry machines may be available at your home. When using the machines, please empty all pockets and do not overload the machines. Do not leave laundry unattended. Our laundry policies exist to ensure a comfortable and convenient laundry experience for all guests; please help us make this happen.

- Do not ever give the home's keycode to guests or former guests
- Please be respectful of other guests when on the telephone or watching television
- Guests should never provide any information on any other guest; direct all questions to your Operator
- Mail sent to you should be addressed to your name if being mailed to the house
- Commercial activity is not allowed at the home (selling items or performing services for compensation)
- Please do not engage in gambling activities, including lottery tickets, Keno, or other gambling
- Staff and House Mentors are not allowed to have intimate relationships with guests
- Please do not share the address of the home or post photos or videos of guests on social media
- Be mindful that certain household items contain alcohol; always check the ingredients before buying

"Every noble work is at first impossible." – Thomas Carlyle

REFERRALS

We welcome your voice in who joins our recovery communities! If you would like to refer someone to become a guest in your home, please get in touch with us! Scan the QR code here to apply online, and feel free to share the link with anyone who may be interested.

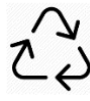


SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

We take sustainability seriously. The choices we make in our home life significantly impact our environment. Conserving resources also reduces our cost of living. We can each make small lifestyle changes to help conserve energy and support better living practices.



Electricity: Turn off the lights when you leave the room. Turn off the TV and other electronic appliances when not in use.



Recycling: Separate recycling from trash and use the appropriate containers. Wash dirty food containers before recycling them.



Water: Try taking shorter showers and shutting off water when brushing your teeth or scrubbing dishes.



Heating: Close all windows when the heat is on. Never leave an outside door open. Speak up in a House Meeting about any drafty doors or windows which don't close completely.

Heating & Air Conditioning: Only the House Mentor may adjust the thermostat and does so to a temperature specified by the health code. Please do not adjust any thermostat. Air conditioners or other high-energy appliances may be allowed but must be approved. Use is at your own risk and subject to certain requirements and restrictions. Please speak with your House Mentor for more information.

OUR VALUES

Recovery Focused: Recovery is the cornerstone of Vanderburgh House. Our policies, leadership, and culture are all built to support our guests in their personal and individual recovery journeys.

Community: Each of our homes is a recovery community, led by the guests, and connected by the shared desire to build a better life for ourselves without drugs or alcohol.

Accessible: Our homes are accessible to every member of the global recovery community with a straightforward application process, transparent approval criteria, and at an affordable price.

Independent: Each of us is responsible for our personal and individual recovery journey. We coach, support, and mentor our brothers and sisters in recovery.

Our Namesake: Our namesake, Richard Vanderburgh was an artist, a painter, a carpenter, a mentor, and a friend to many. He was also a recovering alcoholic. He lived his life serving others, giving his time and energy selflessly to give back to the recovery community, to young adults, and to his church. At Vanderburgh House, we carry on his spirit of caring and community engagement.



Building Recovery Communities

SOBERHOUSEDIRECTORY .COM

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Vanderburgh_House



VanderburghHouse

Vanderburgh House is proud to be a Certified B Corporation® and a member of the National Alliance for Recovery Residences.

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Some homes independently owned and operated

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