

The Provo Newcomer's Guide

What to do, in the order it actually comes up

A one-page-at-a-time checklist for your first month in Provo and Utah Valley. It carries the sequence and what each step needs. Everything that changes -- rates, hours, who to call -- stays on the live guides it links to, so the paper never goes stale in your drawer.

Two calendars run this valley, and neither one is the city's

Almost everything that surprises a newcomer here traces back to one of two calendars. The first is the Sabbath: a large share of the valley closes on Sunday, including businesses you would not expect, and planning around it is the single fastest way to stop being caught out. The second is BYU's academic year: rental turnover, traffic, restaurant queues, parking and the population itself all move with it. Learn those two and the place stops feeling random.

Before you arrive

2-4 WEEKS OUT

- Pick the neighborhood before the address. They differ more than the map suggests -- walkability, noise, who your neighbors will be and whether a car is optional all change block to block.
 - › [Neighborhood profiles](https://provo.com/neighborhoods/) provo.com/neighborhoods/
- Set a real budget before you tour anything, so a tour cannot move it.
 - › [Rent affordability calculator](https://provo.com/tools/rent-affordability-calculator/) provo.com/tools/rent-affordability-calculator/
- Read the lease terms that are normal here before you are asked to sign one, especially around shared housing and contract periods.
 - › [Utah renters' rights](https://provo.com/living/utah-renters-rights/) provo.com/living/utah-renters-rights/
- If you are moving with school-age children, check which district your address belongs to. Utah County's district map is being redrawn -- Alpine splits on 1 July 2027 -- so the answer for an address today is not the answer for the same address later.
 - › [District split resource center](https://provo.com/living/school-districts/) provo.com/living/school-districts/

Week one: the paperwork

FIRST 7 DAYS

- Start utilities before you need them, not after. Some are city services and some are private companies, and the two set up differently.
 - › [Setting up utilities](https://provo.com/living/utilities-provo/) provo.com/living/utilities-provo/
- Sort internet early. Provo's options are unusual for a city this size and worth comparing rather than defaulting.
 - › [Internet providers](https://provo.com/living/best-internet-provo/) provo.com/living/best-internet-provo/

- Do the driver license and vehicle registration together in one trip, with the documents checked in advance.
› [DMV guide](https://provo.com/living/dmv-provo-guide/) provo.com/living/dmv-provo-guide/
- Open a local account. Credit unions dominate here and the campus-linked ones behave differently from national banks.
› [Credit unions and banks](https://provo.com/living/credit-unions-banks-provo/) provo.com/living/credit-unions-banks-provo/
- Find out which day your bins go out and what the city will and will not take.
› [Recycling and garbage](https://provo.com/living/recycling-garbage-provo/) provo.com/living/recycling-garbage-provo/

Getting around

FIRST 2 WEEKS

- Work out whether you actually need a car for your commute before you commit to one. For some addresses the answer is genuinely no.
› [Car ownership](https://provo.com/living/car-ownership-utah-valley/) provo.com/living/car-ownership-utah-valley/
- Learn the UVX line. It is the spine of the valley's bus network, and the fare rules changed -- free travel now depends on a qualifying student ID rather than being open to everyone.
› [UVX bus guide](https://provo.com/living/uvx-bus-guide/) provo.com/living/uvx-bus-guide/
- If you commute north, FrontRunner is the alternative to I-15. Check the timetable pattern before you rely on it, including which days it does not run.
› [FrontRunner commuting](https://provo.com/living/frontrunner-commuting-guide/) provo.com/living/frontrunner-commuting-guide/
- Downtown parking has its own rules and its own free options. Learn them once and stop circling.
› [Downtown parking](https://provo.com/living/downtown-provo-parking/) provo.com/living/downtown-provo-parking/
- Canyon roads and mountain routes close seasonally, and the authority that closes them is often not the one you expect.
› [Canyon and commute conditions](https://provo.com/living/canyon-conditions/) provo.com/living/canyon-conditions/

Health, safety and the boring essentials

FIRST MONTH

- Register with a provider before you are ill, and know in advance which situations are urgent care and which are the emergency room.
› [Urgent care vs ER](https://provo.com/living/urgent-care-vs-er-provo/) provo.com/living/urgent-care-vs-er-provo/
- Pick a dentist and, if you have animals, a vet. Both are much easier to choose calmly than urgently.
› [Finding a dentist](https://provo.com/living/finding-a-dentist-provo/) provo.com/living/finding-a-dentist-provo/
- Read the local ordinances that catch newcomers out -- noise, parking and yard rules are enforced here in ways that surprise people.
› [Noise ordinance](https://provo.com/living/noise-ordinance-utah-valley/) provo.com/living/noise-ordinance-utah-valley/
- Winter arrives with obligations, not just weather. Snow removal is partly your responsibility as a resident.
› [Snow removal rules](https://provo.com/living/snow-removal-provo/) provo.com/living/snow-removal-provo/

Understanding the place

ONGOING

- Learn how LDS wards work, whether or not you are a member. They are the valley's default geographic social unit and they explain a great deal about how neighborhoods behave.
› [How LDS wards work](https://provo.com/faith-community/llds-wards-explained/) provo.com/faith-community/llds-wards-explained/

- If you want to visit a congregation of any faith, the etiquette questions have straightforward answers.
› [Visiting a church](https://provo.com/faith-community/visiting-a-church-in-provo/) provo.com/faith-community/visiting-a-church-in-provo/
- Check what is open before you drive somewhere on a Sunday. This is the single most common newcomer mistake in Utah Valley.
› [What's open now](https://provo.com/tools/whats-open-now/) provo.com/tools/whats-open-now/
- Get the cost picture from something that models your own situation rather than a headline average.
› [Cost of living calculator](https://provo.com/tools/cost-of-living-calculator/) provo.com/tools/cost-of-living-calculator/

Making it feel like home

MONTH ONE AND AFTER

- Get a library card early. It is one of the better civic institutions in the state and it is free.
› [Provo City Library](https://provo.com/things-to-do/provo-city-library-guide/) provo.com/things-to-do/provo-city-library-guide/
- Walk the Provo River Parkway end to end once. It is the fastest way to understand how the city is laid out.
› [Provo River Parkway](https://provo.com/things-to-do/provo-river-parkway/) provo.com/things-to-do/provo-river-parkway/
- Find your grocery store, your park and your gym in the first fortnight. Routine is what turns an address into a home.
› [Grocery stores](https://provo.com/living/best-grocery-stores-provo/) provo.com/living/best-grocery-stores-provo/
- Then start working through the things worth doing. There is more here than the reputation suggests.
› [Things to do](https://provo.com/things-to-do/) provo.com/things-to-do/

One thing this guide deliberately does not have

There are no prices, hours or phone numbers anywhere in it. Those are the first things to go out of date, and a printed sheet cannot tell you it has aged. Every step above links to a page that is maintained, so use the paper for the order and the site for the answer.