



Top 9 Guidelines for Visiting Cohousing Communities

Are you like me? When you travel do you consider visiting other cohousing communities? I LOVE it! Cohousers are a friendly bunch and most enjoy showing off their community.

Takoma Village is an oft visited community.

Not only are we located in a major metropolitan area — Washington, DC — we're in the Nation's capital! We are America's "Hometown!" And we are for all intents ... a capital city for the world!

Everyone comes to DC.

Hence, we get a lot of visitors.

This has me wondering: is there etiquette for visiting a cohousing community?

One thing I know I dislike is people just dropping by and wandering around until they run into someone to give them a tour. I think we forget that these communities are our homes.

Here are the Top 9 Guidelines I'm thinking about when visiting a cohousing community — both for visitors and host communities.

1. If you're visiting from out of town and think you might like a tour ... give the host community a few **DAYS** — not hours — to identify someone to give you a tour.
2. If you want to stay in the guest room ... check well in advance to see how much time a community needs to arrange an overnight stay for you. As heavily used as our guest rooms are four weeks advance notice is minimum to schedule an overnight stay.
3. If you leave a message do leave your full name and contact info. It helps to be able to return a call.
4. Try to remember that each community has a life of its own. The day and hour that's convenient for you to visit may find the community otherwise engaged: celebrating an important event, in the middle of a serious work day or memorializing someone's passing.
5. And on the other side of the coin ... one of the frustrating things I find about trying to make an appointment in advance is **NEVER** getting a call back or an answer to an email request. The phone

number or email address on your website goes to that great black communication wastebasket. If you are unable to accommodate tours and overnight stays say so diplomatically right on your website: Sorry, we are unable to accommodate visitors at this time. Simple, direct and no one gets frustrated. (Especially me!)

6. Make visiting easier by having a team of people who give tours or arrange for guest room stays. This way the work of hosting someone doesn't fall on just one or two people.
7. Remember how much you liked visiting cohousing communities when your community was getting started? Cohousing is more popular than ever ... more and more people are yearning to visit and to learn firsthand what makes a community work well. Promote tours and visits as a regular outreach activity for your community. Scheduling tours on a regular basis will reduce the number of drop ins and the need for individual tours.
8. Build in flexibility. Sometimes folks cannot make a scheduled tour because they are only in town for a short time. With a team of people willing to offer visitors a "walk about" it's easier to accommodate folks on a schedule.

9. Finally, giving tours to the public and hosting overnight guests can help your community create a list of interested future purchasers for resales. Wouldn't you rather have someone buying into your community who has at least visited before buying? Use tours and visits to educate folks in advance about living in your cohousing neighborhood.

What do you think? How do you handle visits and tours? (BTW, here at Takoma Village, we have four HUGE formal tours a year — 30-40 people per tour. Plus always happy to accommodate people ... with advance notice!)

What's the etiquette for visiting YOUR community?