

# Fire Safe College Housing



## What you need to look for.

Here are some good questions for college students and parents to ask before moving into a dormitory or signing an apartment lease.

- ✓ Are there working smoke alarms in each bedroom, outside of sleeping areas, and on each level of the building?
- ✓ Are there at least two ways out of each room and the building?
- ✓ Do the upper levels of the building have at least two sets of stairs inside and/or a fire escape?
- ✓ Are there exit signs in the hallways to show the way out?
- ✓ Are there enough electrical outlets for all appliances, computers, printers and electronics — without using an extension cord?
- ✓ Has the building's heating system been inspected recently (in the last year)?
- ✓ Does the building have a sprinkler system?
- ✓ Does the building have a fire alarm system?
- ✓ Does the sprinkler or fire alarm system send a signal to the local fire department and/or campus security?
- ✓ Is the building address clearly posted so emergency services can find it quickly if they need to?



For more information and free resources, visit

[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)

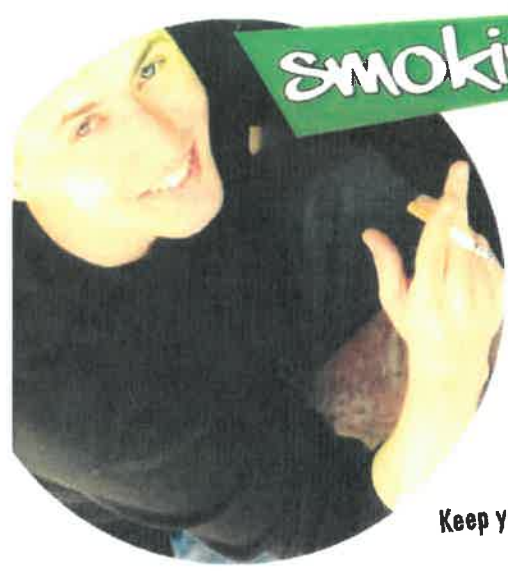


do you  
think about  
fire safety?



**you should**

Each year, on- and off-campus college and university students experience hundreds of fire-related emergencies nationwide.



**smoking**

Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out. Never toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash can.

After a party, check for cigarette butts, especially under cushions because chairs and sofas catch on fire fast and burn fast.

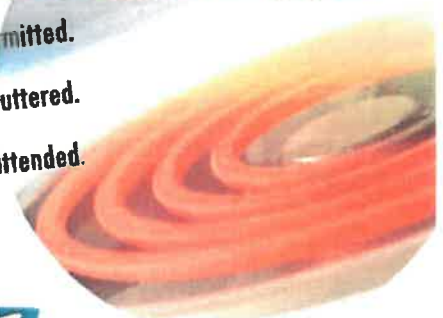
Be aware of how risky it is to smoke when you've been drinking or are drowsy.

**cooking**

Cook only where it is permitted.

Keep your cooking area clean and uncluttered.

Never leave cooking unattended.



**and don't forget**

Never disable or remove batteries from smoke alarms.

Have an escape plan that includes two ways out, no matter where you are.





## ALCOHOL AND FIRE ARE A LETHAL MIXTURE

### Alcohol and Fire Safety Tips

- After a party or get-together where alcohol was consumed, check for smoking materials, especially under cushions. Chairs and sofas catch on fire easily and burn fast.
- Don't consume alcohol and cook — you could fall asleep and cause a devastating fire.
- Make sure a working smoke alarm is installed; it significantly increases your chances of escaping and surviving a deadly fire.



### DID YOU KNOW?

In most cases where fire fatalities have occurred on college campuses, alcohol was a factor. Approximately 25 percent of all campus fire fatalities follow a party.

There is a strong link between alcohol and fire deaths. Intoxication impairs judgment and hampers evacuation efforts — you may sleep through a smoke alarm or not react quickly enough to escape.

Fires often start because people who are drinking fall asleep or are not careful while smoking. Smoking combined with alcohol abuse exacerbates the risk of fires, fire injuries and fire deaths.

Visit [www.usfa.fema.gov/college](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/college)  
to learn more.



# PLAYING A PRANK MAY BE COMMITTING A CRIME

## College arson prevention tips

- Report suspicious fires or signs of burning, regardless of the size, to school officials.
- Deny a potential arsonist easy access to fuel for a fire: lock paper notices displayed along corridors and hallways in protective cases.
- Don't leave outside doors propped open. Ensure that only students and authorized guests have access to your dormitory or residential building.

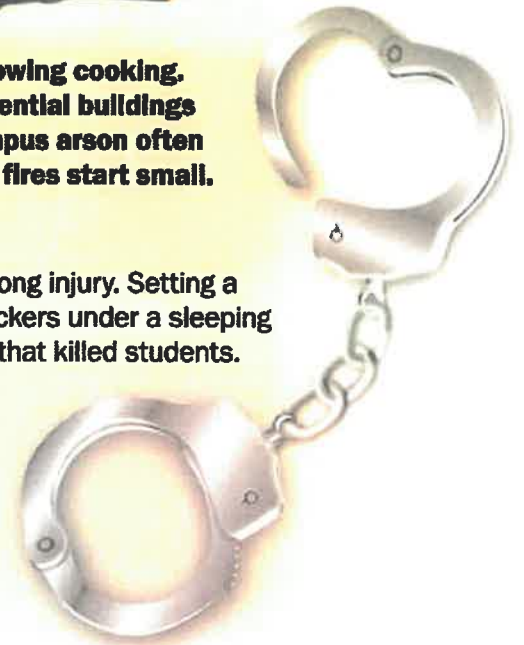
## DID YOU KNOW?

Arson is the second leading cause of campus fires following cooking. Over half of campus arson fires are in on-campus residential buildings and most of these are set in hallways or corridors. Campus arson often starts as a prank but pranks can turn deadly, as all big fires start small.

There are serious consequences to arson!

- **Life and health** consequences, such as death or life-long injury. Setting a poster on fire outside a classroom and tossing firecrackers under a sleeping student's bed are just two examples of recent pranks that killed students.
- **Legal** consequences, such as imprisonment.
- **Academic** consequences, such as dismissal from your college or university.

Think twice before playing a prank that can endanger your life and the lives of your friends.



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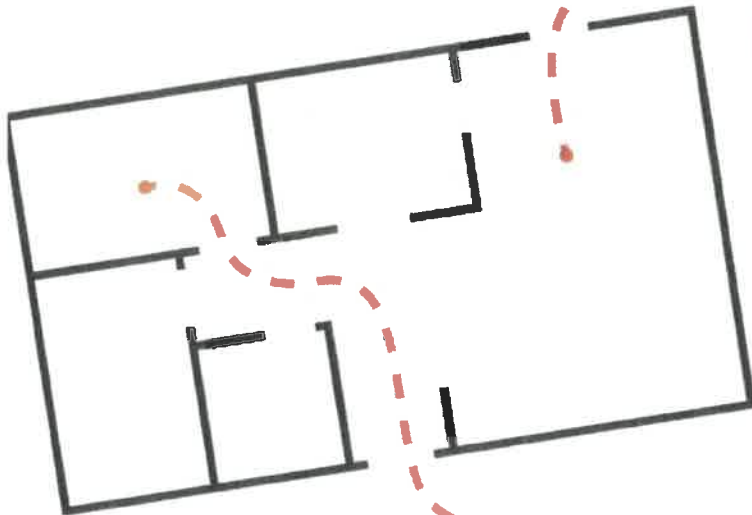
# PLAN TO LIVE KNOW YOUR ESCAPE AND PRACTICE IT!

## Escape Plan Safety Tips

- Identify two ways out of every room.
- Ensure that all windows and doors open easily.
- Keep escape routes clear of clutter.
- Establish an outside meeting place.
- Have two fire/evacuation drills a year.

## If a Fire Occurs

- Feel the door; if the door is hot, don't open it. Use your alternate exit.
- Leave immediately, closing doors behind, and knock on other doors as you exit.
- If you must escape through smoke, crawl low under the smoke keeping your mouth covered.
- Get out before phoning for help.
- Once you're out, stay out!
- Be the **Hero on the Outside** by providing information to firefighters about what/who might be inside.



## Did You Know?

In the last decade, college students have died in fires because:

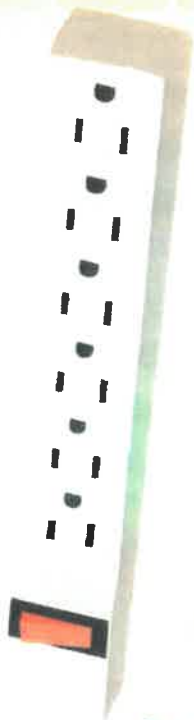
- There was only one way out of their room, and it was blocked by the fire.
- Exit signs were covered to create ambience.
- The window used for escape was too small.
- The path to the door was blocked by boxes, bicycles and furniture.

Take all fire alarms seriously.  
Never ignore a fire alarm.

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# SHOCKING TIPS ABOUT ELECTRICAL SAFETY



## Electrical Fire Safety Tips

- Do not piggyback or plug a power strip of any type into another.
- Do not overload electrical sockets.
- Never use an extension cord with an appliance — plug them directly into wall sockets.
- Never place anything that can burn over a lamp.

## Did You Know?

**More than 400 die from electrical home fires annually in the United States.**

Overloaded extension cords, power strips and outlets are one of the leading causes of fires in college housing

Many college students live in older off-campus housing equipped with electrical wiring that can't safely handle the modern power demands from microwave ovens, compact refrigerators and personal computers, used by the multiple residents living there.

Check with your college/university to see which types of appliances are allowed or prohibited in residence hall rooms.

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# COOKING SAFETY FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

## Cooking Fire Safety Tips

- Cook only where it is permitted.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Frying poses the greatest risk — never put water on a grease fire — put a lid on it.
- If a fire starts in a microwave, keep the door closed, and unplug the unit.
- If you use electric appliances, do not overload circuits.
- Stand by your pan — if you leave the kitchen, turn the burner off.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat, and keep the door closed.
- Propane and charcoal barbecue grills must only be used outdoors.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**85 percent of university housing fires are cooking fires.**

Unattended cooking is by far the leading contributing factor in college cooking fires.

There are more than 3,000 university cooking fires each year.

Microwave popcorn fires are a common occurrence with college students.

12:00

POPCORN	BEVERAGE	REHEAT
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
QUICK MINUTE	0	TIMER/ CLOCK
START	STOP	CLEAR

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to learn more.

U.S. Fire  
Administration



FEMA

U.S. Fire Administration  
1675 L Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548



# CANDLE FIRES ARE PREVENTABLE!

## Candle Fire Safety Tips

- **Make sure candles are in sturdy holders and put out after each use.**
- **Never leave a burning candle unattended.**
- **Always use a flashlight — not a candle — for emergency lighting.**
- **Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.**
- **Use flameless candles, which are both safe and attractive.**

## DID YOU KNOW?



**Candle fires are the fourth leading cause of campus fires behind cooking, arson and smoking.**

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that 20 percent of university housing fires in bedrooms are started by candles.

Despite the fact that candles are now banned at most colleges, candles remain a key ignition source for campus fires.

More than half of all candle fires occur when a combustible material is too close to the candle, with the most common materials being bedding and curtains.

Falling asleep was a factor in a quarter of candle fire fatalities — extinguish all candles before going to sleep.

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## WHERE THERE'S SMOKING, THERE'S FIRE

### Smoking Fire Safety Tips

- If you smoke, put it out, all the way, every time.
- Smoke only where it is permitted.
- Use deep, sturdy ashtrays.
- Soak smoking materials in water before throwing them away.
- After a party, check under cushions for smoking materials — furniture burns fast.
- If you are sleepy, don't smoke — smoking in bed is dangerous.
- If you've been drinking or are impaired — don't smoke.



### DID YOU KNOW?

**Fires caused by careless smoking result in more collegiate fatalities than any other ignition source.**

Most smoking-related fires begin when someone abandons or improperly disposes of smoking materials.

Nearly three-fourths of people who die in smoking related fires were killed by fires that started in either upholstered furniture or a mattress.

Most fires caused by smoking materials start inside — it's better and safer to smoke outside.

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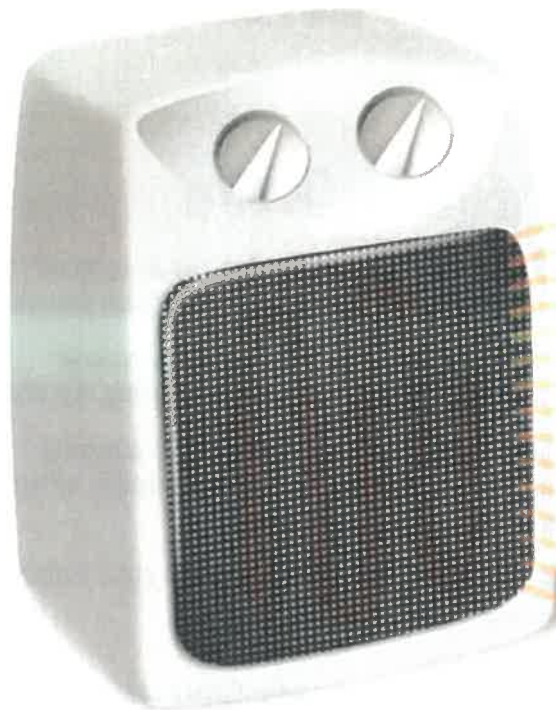


# HEATING SAFETY

## BE FIRE SAFE IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT

### Heating Fire Safety Tips

- **Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from all heat sources including fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, space heaters or candles.**
- **Turn space heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.**
- **Plug portable heaters directly into wall outlets; don't use extension cords or power strips.**
- **Use portable heaters with an automatic shut-off when tipped over.**
- **Never use an oven to heat your home or apartment.**



### DID YOU KNOW?

**Five collegians have died from heating related fires in the last seven years. These fires include the improper use of space heaters, ovens and fireplaces.**

Space heaters cause one-third of home heating fires and four out of five home heating fire deaths.

Heating is the second leading cause of all residential building fires following cooking.

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# FIVE ALIVE — CHOOSING OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

## 1. Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- Are working smoke alarms installed on every level, including the basement?
- Do you test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms once a month?

## 2. Escape Plans

- Are there at least two ways out of every room in the house?
- Do all the windows open, and is the opening large enough for a person to escape?

## 3. Electrical Safety

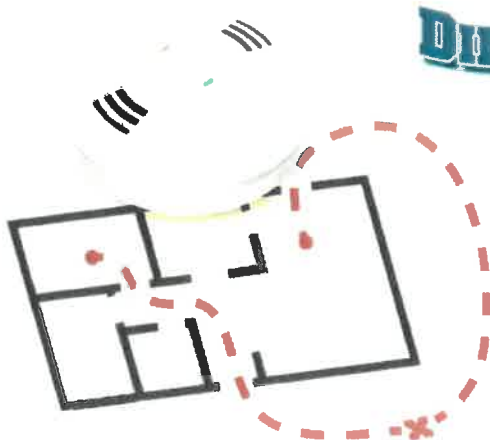
- Do you have any overloaded power strips?
- Are all appliances plugged directly into wall outlets?

## 4. Heating Safety

- Has the heating equipment been inspected, especially in older properties?
- Don't use the furnace room as a storage area.

## 5. Automatic Fire Sprinkler System

- Is a sprinkler system installed and maintained?
- Does the sprinkler system or fire alarm system send a signal to the local fire department and/or campus security?



## Did You Know?

A working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm significantly increase your chances of surviving a deadly house fire.

Overloaded extension cords, power strips and outlets are one of the leading causes of fires in college housing.

Heating was the second leading cause of all residential building fires following cooking.

The combination of working smoke alarms and fire sprinklers reduces the likelihood of dying in a fire by more than 82 percent.

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# FIRE SPRINKLERS — THE BEST ROOMMATE EVER!

## Fire Sprinkler Safety Tips

- **Don't hang things on or cover fire sprinklers, which could affect their ability to work properly.**
- **When a smoke alarm sounds or a sprinkler activates, immediately evacuate the building to the outside. Don't assume it's a false alarm.**
- **Make sure sprinkler heads are visible and accessible.**
- **Don't put heat sources near sprinkler heads, such as a toaster oven that emits a lot of heat.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

**The combination of working smoke alarms and fire sprinklers reduces the likelihood of dying in a fire by more than 82 percent!**

From 2012-2013, thousands of college student deaths were prevented by more than 30 saves where automatic fire sprinklers extinguished fires at campus residences before they could develop into life-threatening incidents.

Fire sprinkler systems offer the greatest level of fire safety because they control the fire immediately in the room of origin, help limit the spread of fire, and often extinguish it before the fire department arrives.

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