

College Fire Safety



At the beginning of every academic year, college students move into dormitories, fraternity and sorority houses, and off-campus apartments and houses. For many, it is their first time living on their own. The last thing students tend to worry about when moving into a new place is the possibility of a fire. Yet, every year thousands of fire-related emergencies are reported at schools and in off-campus housing. To protect college students from fires, it is important that they understand the risks in their new environment and take appropriate safety measures.

Off-Campus Fire Facts

- Since 2000, 108 U.S. students living in off-campus housing have died in fires. Most (84%) of all college fire deaths occurred off-campus.
- The major causes for the fires were cooking, candles, careless smoking habits, and arson.
- The majority of off-campus fire deaths occurred in houses without working smoke alarms, sprinkler systems, or identified escape routes.
- Poor judgment from drinking alcohol led to many of the fires and slowed the evacuation process.

Dormitory, Sorority and Fraternity Fire Facts

- Since 2000, 20 students have died in campus housing fires. This accounts for 16% of all college fire deaths in the U.S.
- The major causes for the fires were misuse of cooking appliances and overloaded electrical outlets.
- Escape was often delayed by smoke alarms that were vandalized, missing batteries, or ignored.

Prevention Tips

- Look for a house or dorm with a sprinkler system.
- Make sure you have a smoke alarm in your bedroom and on every level of your house or apartment.
- Test the alarms monthly. Never remove or disable the alarms.
- If a fire alarm goes off, always take it seriously. Get out quickly and stay out.
- Plan and practice at least 2 fire escape routes from every room.
- Keep candles away from drapes, sheets, or anything that can burn. Always blow them out before leaving the room or going to sleep.
- Always stay in the kitchen when cooking.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- If you smoke, only smoke outside. Never smoke in bed.
- Use deep, wide, non-tip ashtrays.
- If you have a party, do not allow smoking inside. After a party, carefully check your house for smoldering cigarette butts.
- Do not cook or smoke if you are drowsy or have been drinking.