



FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) urges students returning to campuses around the country and their parents to take the time to educate themselves on life-saving fire safety information. Thousands of fires occur each year in both on- and off-campus housing, many of which could have been easily prevented.

“While parents often take the time to educate their children about home fire safety, a focus on fire safety while living away from home is often neglected,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA’s vice president of communications. “Whether students are living on-campus or in off-campus housing, it is important for these young adults to take an active role in fire prevention and safety.”

A leading cause of campus fires is cooking, with cooking equipment involved in 75 percent of the reported dormitory fires. Although only five percent of fires in campus housing began in the bedroom, these fires accounted for 62 percent of the civilian deaths and one-quarter (26 percent) of the civilian injuries. While only two percent of the structure fires were caused by smoking materials, they were responsible for 39 percent of the deaths. Campus fires are more common during the evening hours between 5-11 p.m., as well as on weekends.

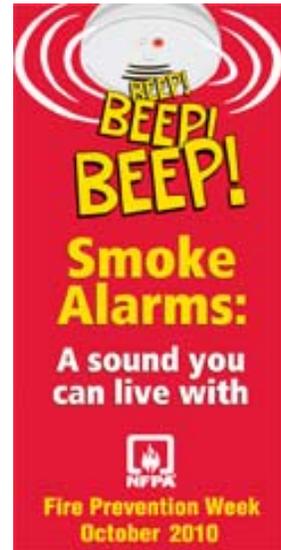
NFPA offers the following safety tips for campus fire safety:

Be Prepared for a Fire

- Look for fully sprinklered housing when choosing a dorm or off-campus housing.
- Make sure your dormitory or apartment has smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside every sleeping area and on each level. For the best protection, all smoke alarms should be interconnected so that when one sounds they all sound.
- For people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, make sure there are smoke alarms that use strobe lights to wake the person. Install vibration equipment (pillow or bed shake) that is activated by the smoke alarm.
- Test all smoke alarms at least monthly.
- Never remove batteries or disable the alarm.
- Learn your building’s evacuation plan and practice all drills as if they were the real thing.
- Involve students with disabilities in evacuation planning and the plan.

Escape Tips

- If you live off campus, have a fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
- Windows with security bars, grills and window guards should have emergency release devices.
- When the smoke alarm or fire alarm sounds, get out of the building quickly and stay out.
- Smoke is toxic. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.



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- If you can't get out, close the door and seal vents and cracks around doors with towels or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 or the fire department. Tell them where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

Smoking

- To prevent a deadly cigarette fire, you must be alert. You won't be alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs, or consumed alcohol that makes you drowsy.
- If you smoke, smoke outside or in an area designated by your college dormitory.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.
- Before going to bed, check under furniture cushions and other places people smoke for cigarette butts that may have fallen out of sight.

Cooking

- Cook only where it is permitted.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking.
- Cook only when you are alert, not sleepy or drowsy from medicine or alcohol.
- Check with your local fire department for any restrictions before using a barbecue grill, fire pit or chiminea.
- Keep the stovetop, burners and oven clean.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into an outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Check electrical cords for cracks, breaks, damage or overheating. Repair or replace the appliance.
- Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven.
- Propane and charcoal grills must only be used outdoors. Indoor use can kill occupants by either causing a fire or CO (carbon monoxide) poisoning.
- Place the grill well away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

Candles

- Burn candles only if the school permits their use.
- A candle is an open flame and should be placed away from anything that can burn.
- Never leave a candle unattended. Blow it out when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Always use a flashlight – not a candle – for emergency lighting.
- Use sturdy, safe candleholders.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles which can look, smell and feel like real candles.

Electrical

- Check your school's rules before using electrical appliances in your room.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- Use a surge protector for your computer and plug the protector directly into an outlet.

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About the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

NFPA is a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building and life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training and education.

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