

College Student Fire Safety

SAFETY TIPS

Sprinklers & Alarms

- When choosing a dorm or off-campus housing, try to select one with a home fire sprinkler system.
- Make sure you can hear the building fire alarm system when you are in your dorm room.

Smoke & CO Alarms

- If you live in a dormitory, make sure your sleeping room has a smoke alarm, or your dormitory suite has a smoke alarm in each living area as well as the sleeping room.
- If you live in an apartment or house, make sure smoke alarms are installed in each sleeping room, outside every sleeping area, and on each level of the apartment unit or house.
- Test all smoke and CO alarms at least monthly, and never remove batteries or disable the alarms.
- If there are fuel sources in your home, such as gas appliances, fireplace, attached garage, be sure that carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are installed on every level of the home, and within 15 feet of each bedroom or sleeping area.

Escape Plans

- Learn your building's evacuation plan and practice all drills as if it were real.
- It is very important to have a fire escape plan with **two ways out** of every room.
- Be sure that all windows open, and that the opening is large enough for a person to escape.
- Establish an outside meeting place.
- Keep escape routes clear of clutter such as boxes, bicycles, furniture, etc.
- When the smoke alarm or fire alarm sounds, get out of the building quickly and stay out.

If a Fire Occurs

- Feel the door; if the door is hot, don't open it, and use your alternate exit.
- Leave immediately, **close doors behind you**, and knock on other doors as you exit.
- If you must escape through smoke, crawl low under the smoke and keep your mouth covered.
- Get out before phoning for help.
- Once you're out, stay out!
- Be a valuable source of information to firefighters by providing information about what and who might be inside.
- Take all fire alarms seriously. Never ignore a fire alarm.

Smoking Sense

If you smoke, smoke outside and only where it is permitted. Use sturdy, deep, non-tip ashtrays. Don't smoke in bed or when you've been drinking or are drowsy.

Candle Care

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.

FACT: Fires in dormitories are more common during the evening hours, between 5-11pm, and on weekends.

Cooking Safety

- Stand by your pan — if you leave the kitchen, turn the burner off, never leave it unattended.
- Cook only when you are alert, not sleepy or drowsy from medication or alcohol.
- Frying poses the greatest risk — never use a fire extinguisher, or put water on a grease fire — **put a lid on it.**
- If a fire starts in the microwave, keep the door closed, and unplug the unit.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat, and keep the door closed.
- Check with your local fire department for any restrictions before using a barbecue grill, fire pit, or chimenea.
- Propane and charcoal barbecue grills must only be used outdoors, and kept **at least 10 feet away from combustible items**, including buildings, decks, fences, etc.
- **Fact:** About 85% of college housing fires are cooking fires.

Heating Safety

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

Electrical Safety

- Check your school's rules before using electrical appliances in your room.
- Do not piggyback or plug a power strip of any type into another.
- Do not overload electrical sockets or power strips.
- Never use an extension cord with an appliance, plug them directly into wall sockets.
- **Fact:** Overloaded extension cords, power strips and outlets are one of the leading causes of fires in college housing.

For additional information, please call Portland Fire & Rescue at (503) 823-3700