



# Campus Fire Safety

A Fire Safety  
Guide for College  
Students



# Introduction

This presentation has been developed to introduce students to some of the dangers of fire and the importance of having and practicing a fire evacuation plan.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, fire departments across the nation responded to 3,570 fires at residence halls, Greek housing and barracks between 2003 and 2006.

# Introduction

**At the conclusion of this presentation students should be able to:**

- Better understand the realities of fire
- Identify fire hazards common to student housing.
- Demonstrate the correct fire evacuation procedures. (Housing types vary so each student should be familiar with their building and its evacuation plan)
- Understand the consequences of initiating “prank” fire alarms.

# What is Real Fire Like?

- ***Real fire is fast.*** Once a fire begins to flame it can double in size every 30 seconds. At this rate, a room can become fully involved in minutes.
- ***Real fire is dark.*** Fires produce large amounts of thick, black smoke that obscures vision, causes nausea and may even lead to unconsciousness or death.



# What is Real Fire Like?

- ***Real fire is hot.*** A fire can cause the temperature at ceiling level to reach excesses of 1200 degrees Fahrenheit, at just 5 feet it can be 800 degrees.
- ***Real fire is unpredictable.*** Each fire is unique. Some fires may smolder for hours filling a room with smoke. Others will burn at exceedingly high temperatures, consuming everything with flames.



# Smoke is the Real Danger

- Most deaths and injuries in fires are caused by inhalation of smoke and gases
- All fires produce carbon monoxide and other toxic gases in large quantities



# Common Causes of Fires

- Cooking
- Smoking
- Heating
- Electrical
- Candles and incense

# Cooking

- Do not leave cooking unattended on the stove. A serious fire can start in just seconds.
- Use a timer when cooking.
- Keep the stove and oven clean. Do not allow grease to build up.



*Unattended cooking fire*

# Cooking

- Unplug toaster and other portable cooking equipment when not in use.
- If you experience fire while cooking, cover the pot or pan with a lid or cookie sheet to extinguish it.



# Smoking



*Cigarette fire*

- Never smoke in bed or when feeling drowsy.
- Keep ashtrays off of sofas or chairs.
- Use deep ashtrays and douse cigarettes in water before disposal.

# Heating



*Baseboard heater fire*

- Give your heaters space – keep combustibles a foot from baseboard heaters and three feet from space heaters.

# Heating

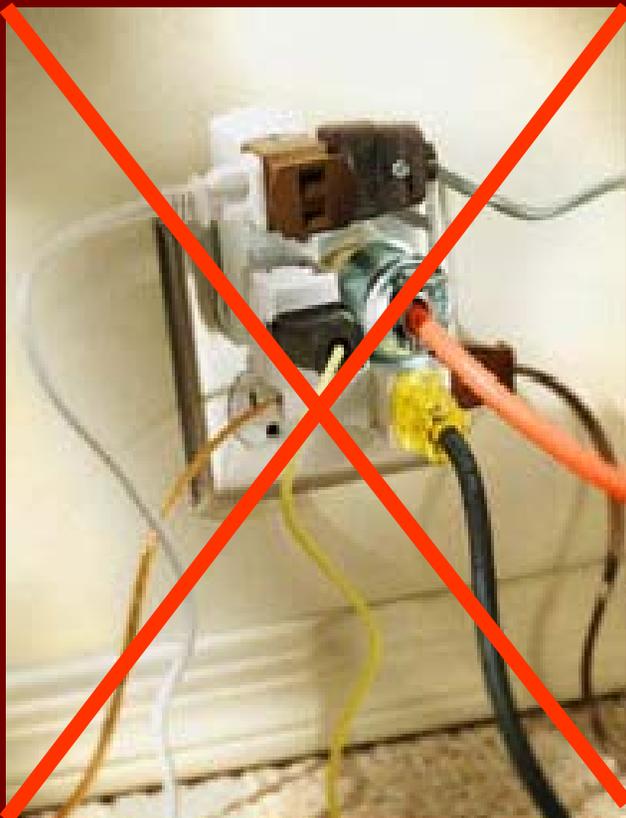
- Unplug all heat producing appliances when not in use.
- Never use an extension cord with a portable heater.



*Fire Hazard – items are too close to this heater.*

# Electrical

- Don't overload electrical outlets.



overloaded electrical outlet



*Overloaded outlet fire*

# Electrical

- When using a power strip, make sure it has an internal circuit breaker that will trip the breaker when overloaded to prevent overheating.



# Candles and Incense



*Candle fire*

- Put these out before leaving your room and before going to bed.
- Keep burning candles and incense away from items that can catch on fire such as furniture, drapes, bedding, carpets, books, paper, etc.



# Smoke Alarms

**A working smoke alarm will greatly increase your chance of surviving a fire at home.**

- Test your smoke alarms monthly.
- Change the battery at least once a year.
- If you rent, the landlord must provide a working smoke alarm. It is your responsibility to maintain the smoke alarm in working order.



# Common Factors found in fatal fires since 2000

- Lack of working smoke alarms
- Impaired judgment caused by alcohol
- Careless disposal of smoking materials such as cigarettes.
- No sprinklers present

# Evacuation Plan and Practice



- Whether you live in a high-rise building or single level apartment, you should have a plan for how to get out in the event of a fire emergency.
- Preparing and practicing an evacuation plan before a fire emergency will help you respond appropriately in a real fire.

# When the alarm sounds

- If you hear the building alarm, react immediately. Do not wait for instructions to begin your fire emergency response. In a fire, seconds count.



- If safe to do so, quickly leave your room and walk to the nearest exit.
- Close your door as you exit and make sure the exit doors are closed behind you.

# When the alarm sounds (cont.)

- Elevators should never be used during a fire emergency.
- Go to your outside meeting place and wait for instructions.
- Never re-enter a building until a fire official has said that it's safe to do so.



# If Trapped, Create and Area of Refuge

If you are unable to safely leave your room or evacuate the building, you make your room an area of refuge: a room where you are protected from smoke and flame.

- Place a towel or clothing at the base of the door to prevent smoke from entering the room.
- Do not open or break windows.
- Stay low under smoke.
- Signal for help and Call 911



# If you discover fire...

- Quickly leave the fire area and close the door behind you to contain the smoke and fire.
- Alert others to evacuate by knocking on doors as you make your way to the exit or by pulling the fire alarm pull station.
- Call 911 when you are outside in a safe location.



# Fire Alarms

- Every alarm should be taken seriously and not assumed to be a false alarm.
- A fire alarm can only be silenced after the Seattle Fire Department has given permission.
- The fire department will inspect every alarm.



# Malicious or “Prank” Alarms



- Prank alarms cost fire departments thousands of dollars and can delay firefighters from responding to a real emergency – where lost time could be the difference between life and death.

# Malicious or “Prank” Alarms

- A person who intentionally sets off a fire alarm without cause can be expelled from school and charged with a misdemeanor crime.
- Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 12A.60.105) states that a person who tampers with a fire alarm or sounds a fire alarm without cause is guilty of a crime and may be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000 or up to 90 days in jail.

# U.S. Fire Fatalities 2000-2009

Campus-related fire fatalities from January 2000 to May 2009 - **Total 135**

■ Off-campus*	113 (84%)
■ Residence Hall	10 (8%)
■ Greek housing	10 (8%)
■ Other	2 (1%)

\*2/3 of students live in off-campus housing.

Source: Campus Firewatch

# Questions?

Download Fire Fact Sheets at  
[www.seattle.gov/fire](http://www.seattle.gov/fire)



Public Education Section  
Seattle Fire Department  
206.386.1450  
[fireinfo@seattle.gov](mailto:fireinfo@seattle.gov)  
[www.seattle.gov/fire](http://www.seattle.gov/fire)

# Campus Fire Safety Resources

## Local

- Seattle Fire Department – Public Education Section  
<http://www.seattle.gov/fire/pubEd/generalInfo.htm>
- Seattle Pacific University  
<http://www.spu.edu/info/emergency/index.asp>
- Seattle University – Environmental Health and Safety  
<http://www2.seattleu.edu/facilities/inner.aspx?id=35934#FE>
- University of Washington – Residence Hall Fire Safety  
<http://www.ehs.washington.edu/fsoemerprep/residenceevac.shtm>

# Campus Fire Safety Resources

## National

- U.S. Fire Administration - Fire Safety for College Students <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/college/>
- National Fire Protection Association <http://www.nfpa.org/categoryList.asp?categoryID=711&URL=Safety%20Information/For%20consumers/Campus%20and%20dorm%20fires>
- The Center for Campus Fire Safety <http://www.campusfiresafety.org/home>
- Campus-Firewatch <http://www.campus-firewatch.com>
- IGot2Kno.org – a fire safety and prevention resource <http://igot2kno.peoplesburnfoundation.org/>