



## *Fall Fire Safety Tips*

Fall is once again upon us meaning going back to school, changing leaves and the beginning of cooler weather. This makes it the perfect transition time to make sure your residence is fire safe as we all prepare for winter. Many new students coming to school are unaware of fire prevention policies and procedures, presenting an increased chance for residential fires to occur.

The Fire Safety Division of EHS urges everyone to pay particular attention to fire safety during the fall season whether you live in on campus housing or in a residence off campus.

Cooking fires are one of the leading causes of damage to residential structures. Specific causes include:

- Overcooking food
- Unattended Cooking
- Misuse of cooking equipment due to unfamiliarity with safety procedures
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs or other medications before / during cooking

### **Residence Hall Fire Safety - As you move in:**

- Remember to practice fire safety. **Refer to the Fire Protection & Prevention Policy for more information pertaining to general fire safety regulations.**
- Locate building egress points, manual pull stations and the closest fire extinguisher.
- Make sure you know at least two ways out of the building.
- Make sure you know what the policies / procedures are in the event that a fire occurs. If you are unsure, ask your RA or Building Director.

### **How to Prevent a Fire in Your Residence Hall Apartment, Suite or Room:**

- Candles are prohibited! DO NOT use candles in any residential facilities.
- Use only the surge protectors that are approved by student housing.
- Don't overload electrical outlets! This can be a potential ignition source.
- Appliances with an exposed heating element for cooking are prohibited.
- Keep your room clean! With less fuel, fire cannot spread as fast.
- Covering lights with curtains or tapestries is unsafe as they can heat up and catch fire.
- Use only items and appliances that are UL approved in your room.

### **The DO NOT's of Fire Safety:**

- **DO NOT** tamper with or cover smoke detectors
- **DO NOT** tamper with the sprinklers
- **DO NOT** hang anything on the sprinkler heads
- **DO NOT** tamper with or activate fire alarms unless a true emergency exists
- **DO NOT** make false 9-1-1 calls

**Engaging in any of these acts will lead to judicial sanctions and possible criminal charges!**

### **In The Event of a Fire on Campus:**

- **IF THE ALARM SOUNDS, GET OUT AND STAY OUT!!!**
- Make sure you grab your room key and proceed to the room door.
- Check the door before you open it. If the door is not hot, proceed to open it slowly.
- Once you are out of the room, close your door and stay low.
- Proceed to your nearest available exit and go outside.
- Once outside, go to the "Designated Meeting Place" and remain there.

**If you are unable to evacuate your room, call Public Safety at 610-436-3311. Give the call taker all of your information.**

If smoke is coming under the door, place a towel at the opening in order to prevent smoke from coming into your room. Open a window and signal that you need assistance then wait for rescue personnel to arrive.

### Haunting Halloween Fire Hazards:

- Do not use candles in Halloween jack-o-lanterns. Flashlights are much safer.
- Make sure that Halloween costumes are made with fire retardant / resistant materials.
- Use only fire retardant holiday decorations.
- Remember to keep exits clear of decorations, so nothing blocks escape routes.
- Verify that all holiday lights and extension cords have been tested by an organization such as Factory Mutual or Underwriters Laboratory.

### Cooking Safety Tips:

- Almost 44% of all residential fires are caused by careless cooking making it the #1 cause of fire in a residential setting.
- Do not leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep any combustible materials such as towels, potholders, papers, etc., away from any heat source. Don't wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.
- Do not attempt to move a pan of grease that is on fire. Put a lid on the pan to smother the fire, then turn off the heat, or use an ABC-rated fire extinguisher.
- Be sure to turn pot handles towards the back of the stove.

### Space Heater Safety Tips:

- The use of fuel fired space heaters is prohibited on campus. Electric space heaters are permitted, but the unit to be used must be approved by Environmental Health and Safety.
- When plugging in electric space heaters, make sure that the outlet was designed to handle the load. Be safe. Do not plug anything else into the socket with the heater. Please refer to the [Portable Space Heater Policy](#) for more information regarding campus regulations for the use of space heaters.
- Keep all combustible materials at least 3 feet away from any heater - space heaters need space.
- Never use a range or an oven as a supplemental heating device. Not only is it a safety hazard, it can be a source of potentially toxic fumes.

### Fireplace Safety Tips:

It is very important to make sure your chimney is cleaned out before transitioning into the winter months. Creosote buildup as seen below can cause a chimney fire if it is not cleaned out ahead of time.

- Hire a chimney sweep to clean out your chimney every fall.
- Use fireplace screens to keep sparks and fire debris inside the fireplace.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- For natural gas fireplaces, get all connections and lines inspected before each season.
- Remember that outdoor fireplaces can be just as dangerous as indoor units. Observe all safety precautions when using them.

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### Smoking Safety Tips:

- Smoking-related fires are a concern. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse any smoking material with water before discarding.
- **Smoking is prohibited inside all campus buildings.**
- After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trashcans for smoking materials that may be smoldering.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of sight and out of reach from children - preferably in a locked cabinet. If your child sees you lighting candles or starting the fireplace, they may think it's OK for them to do it. Teach your kids about fire safety.

### Smoke Detectors

All residential facilities on campus are provided with smoke detectors and sprinklers throughout the building. These devices are monitored 24 hours by the Department of Public Safety.

Fire data shows that over the past three years, on average nearly 75% of the people who died each year in residential fires did not have a working smoke detector in their home. Follow these tips to keep you, those you live with and your belongings safe from fire:

- Replace the batteries in your smoke detectors twice a year. When you change your clocks for Daylight Savings, change your batteries.

- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and sleeping areas. Sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Develop an escape plan with your family - at least twice a year. Include a nighttime drill.
- Make sure overnight guests also know your fire escape plan.

### Fire Extinguishers

Remember the word **PASS** when using a fire extinguisher:

- **P**ull the pin and hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you.
- **A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- **S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

### Other Fall Safety Tips

- Prepare for fall storm related hazards. Heavy rain and high winds can result in flooding and long term outages. Make sure your flashlights and portable radios have batteries and that other supplies, such as bottled water and non-perishable food, are stocked and available.
- Consider having an Emergency Pack with the following items to last 3 days;
  - Flashlight and Portable Radio with batteries
  - Water (one gallon per person per day)
  - Non-perishable food supply / Manual Can Opener
  - First Aid kit
  - Whistle
  - N95 Dust Mask
  - Prescription Medications
  - Personal Hygiene items
  - Matches in a waterproof container
  - Cash (For when ATM's are not working)
- As part of continuing and maintaining all that you started during your spring cleaning make sure to take a few minutes to clean up and brush off your safety plans as well:
  - Remove hazards. Address piles of rubbish, trash and yard debris. Remove stacks of papers and magazines; take them to recycling centers.
  - Check for water leaks, especially near electrical appliances.

- Check for adequate clearance between heating appliances and combustibles.
- Properly store flammable liquids and home chemicals. Make sure that gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and are out of the reach of children and pets. Consider storage in a cool, dry place outside the house.
- Clean up work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches or other work items away and out of any child's reach. Make sure that all chemicals are kept under lock and key and out of reach of children and pets.
- Check fire protection and safety equipment. Test your smoke alarms. Make sure all doors and windows open easily and are accessible for fast escapes. Make sure extinguishers are the proper type and that they are fully charged.
- Make sure your street numbers are posted properly and are visible.
- Plan your escape. Sit down with your family and make sure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire by designing a home escape plan. Make sure you have two ways out of every room and that you have a meeting place outside the home for the whole family.
- Practice the escape plan. Even the best plan is no good if it's not practiced.



610-436-3333