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## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS' How to Prevent On/Off-Campus Fires

The American Society of Safety Engineers' (ASSE) Fire Protection Practice Specialty notes that students who live on campus should always check with the residence life or safety department for policies related to fire prevention. Most residence life policies prohibit the use of candles, space heaters, torchiere halogen lamps or halogen bulbs, open heating elements, and unapproved cooking appliances. Also, colleges/universities usually have procedures in place for residence halls' evacuation and, often, for college owned and/or managed Greek housing. Additionally, please note the following:

## **Residence Halls**

- Keep stoves, hot plates and other cooking appliances out of the room.
- Do not have flammable and/or toxic materials in the rooms, such as lighter fluid.
- Open flames such as candles and incense should not be permitted in rooms.
- Smoking should not be allowed in the building.
- Do not put aluminum foil in the microwave.



## Off-campus/Greek housing

- Extinguish candles and incense when leaving rooms.
- Keep combustible materials such as clothes, curtains, paper, books, etc. at least three feet away from heaters.
- If using a space heater, make sure to keep a three-foot clearance in all directions from the space heater and only use one that is Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL) approved.
- Check smoke alarms monthly. Change batteries annually.
- Check to see if carbon monoxide detectors are installed and properly maintained and tested.
- Develop and practice fire escape plans with roommates or neighbors. Set up a post-fire meeting place and communications so you know when everyone is safe following a fire.
- Keep barbecue grills 10 feet away from the building and off of porches and balconies.
- Never leave cooking food unattended.
- Learn how to use a fire extinguisher. Keep an extinguisher at a visible location near an exit. Know the <u>PASS</u> procedure to use a fire extinguisher: Pull the pin; Aim at the base of the fire; Squeeze the handle, and Sweep slowly from side to side.
- Place emergency numbers such as 911 and the college emergency number on or near phones and cellphones.
- Avoid hanging combustible materials such as blankets, drapes, rugs, etc., on the walls, over beds, or on ceilings.
- Keep exterior fire escape doors unlocked, closed and accessible at all times. Know the where the exit doors are.
- Arrange furniture to provide a clear way to the exits.
- Have fire drills at least twice a year, and whenever a new person moves in..
- Place smoking materials in a non-combustible container. Do not place in plastic cups or other combustible containers.
- Inspect furniture including under and in between cushions for discarded smoking materials after all parties and properly dispose of them.

## **Electrical Safety**

- Replace or repair loose or frayed cords on all electrical devices.
- Use power strips with circuit breaker protection. Each power strip must be plugged in directly in a wall outlet and not piggybacked with another power strip or extension cord. Do not place cords under carpet or rugs.
- Never use multi-plug extension cords or adapters. These are for temporary residential use only and should not be used in a dorm.
- Keep paper, books and boxes away from computers and electrical cords.
- If outlets or switches feel warm, have them checked by an electrician.
- Place lamps on level surfaces, away from things that can burn. Use bulbs that match the lamp's recommended wattage. Never hang fabrics such as scarves over lamp shades.

Sources include the National Fire Protection Association, <a href="www.nfpa.org">www.nfpa.org</a>; U.S. Fire Administration, <a href="www.usfa.dhs.qov">www.usfa.dhs.qov</a>. For more information or <a href="copies">copies</a> of the fact sheets, please go to <a href="http://www.asse.org/newsroom/safetytips/campusfiretips.php">http://www.asse.org/newsroom/safetytips/campusfiretips.php</a>.

Founded in 1911 and celebrating its centennial, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the oldest professional safety society and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. Its more than 34,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members lead, manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor, healthcare and education. For more information, please go to <a href="https://www.asse.org/newsroom">www.asse.org/newsroom</a>.

Please contact the Department of Environmental Health & Safety at 898-5126 if you have any questions regarding campus fire safety.