



American Burn Association

## LEAVING HOME SAFELY

A Guide to Fire/Burn Safety for College Students and other Young Adults Living Away from Home for the First Time

### Educator's Guide

A Community Fire & Burn Prevention Program Supported by the United States Fire Administration Federal Emergency Management Agency

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Community Fire & Burn Prevention Programs  
Leaving Home Safely Campaign

## GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Remember when you were in college, or living away from home for the first time? Do you remember moving into your first dorm room or apartment? For most college students and other young adults, fire safety and burn prevention concerns take a backseat to things like studying, partying, and possibly working part-time. Planning for a potential emergency may not even occur to them, or at best just seem like an inconvenience. Many young adults simply believe that a fire or burn could never happen to them, so they downplay the value of any preventive measures or regulations.

Numerous fire injuries and deaths occur among college-age students every year. Some occur in residence halls on campus while others take place off-campus in apartments or houses. In 1998, there were 1,380 fires in dormitories and fraternity/sorority housing alone,<sup>1</sup> and between January 2000 and October 2006, 84 students died in student housing fires.<sup>2</sup> Many off-campus apartment or house fires may not be reported or recorded as involving college students, therefore the true number of college students who experience a fire or are burned is most likely underreported.

Fires on college campuses are costly not only in personal injury, but also in property loss. In 1998, the dormitory and Greek housing fires in the United States resulted in about \$6 million in property damage.<sup>3</sup> Although most dormitories have smoke alarms that alert some students to exit the building, property damage and injuries still occur. In 1998, only 35% of dormitories that had a fire had sprinkler systems. According to the National Fire Protection Association, direct property damage per fire is 41% lower in dormitory fires when sprinklers are present and function as designed.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, installing sprinklers in addition to smoke detectors could save both lives and property. Unfortunately, to date, only three states have enacted college campus sprinkler laws.<sup>5</sup>

While property damage is a significant concern, the loss of life or a debilitating injury cannot be accurately measured in monetary terms. Often, the physical damage and loss from a burn injury is just a small part of the suffering. The grief and emotional damage often lasts a lifetime.

Whether you are a parent, a high school senior getting ready to leave home, or a college student, this campaign is for you. Parents must be informed so they can help prepare their children to live safely away from home. High school and college students need to learn common fire risks and basic preventive measures so they can make their living environment safe. It is every individual's responsibility to prevent fires and burn injuries.

Why are young adults at such a great risk for burn injuries? High school seniors and college freshmen are well on their way to becoming independent. They are learning to make decisions, deal with conflict, and think about the future. Peer relationships continue to be

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1. National Fire Protection Association, Online Fact Sheet

2. Campus Fire Safety website.

3. National Fire Protection Association website.

4. Ibid.

5. US Fire Administration Fire Safety 101 Fact Sheet



extremely important and influence many decisions they make.<sup>6</sup> Young adults may know that certain actions are inappropriate, but it doesn't stop them from carrying out the behavior if something such as peer pressure is motivating them. Even though these young adults are learning to process these ideas, they don't have the life experience needed to understand the ramifications of all their actions. Therefore, they don't always make the best decisions. Risk-taking behavior is common and all too often alcohol consumption is involved.

Alcohol is a major factor contributing to burns in college-age students. In most cases where fire fatalities occurred on college campuses, alcohol was involved. Alcohol use impairs judgment and hampers evacuation efforts. A student under the influence of alcohol is more likely to fall asleep while smoking or while a candle is burning. An intoxicated person is more likely to engage in unsafe behavior. And if a person "passes out" from alcohol, they are less likely to hear a smoke alarm and may succumb to the effects of smoke before being able to exit the building.

Besides alcohol, there are other situations that make this population of adults at higher risk for burn injuries. In dormitories and Greek housing, false alarms are common. Students will pull the fire alarm as a prank, with a "crying wolf" effect if the action is repeated. There have been cases of actual fires where the fire department still found students in a building as much as one hour after the alarm initially sounded<sup>2</sup>.

College students and other young adults living away from home for the first time often equip their living quarters to suit their needs, regardless of the hazards they may be creating. They may use multiple extension cords that overload electrical circuits. They often use extension cords as "permanent" wiring, especially in older buildings with less than adequate outlets. Electric blankets, space heaters, coffee makers and hot plates are frequently used inappropriately or left on unattended. Dormitory residents may disable smoke alarms by removing batteries, block fire exits with furniture, or prop open fire doors that should be left closed. Students will take these steps to make life more convenient, without thinking about the consequences for their own fire safety and that of others in the same building.

### Target Audience Information

*The information in this program is intended for the following target audiences:*

- Parents of high school seniors and/or college students
- Parents of similar-aged young adults living on their own for the first time
- High school seniors
- College students

The following organizations may be interested in using these materials:

- High schools
- Church youth groups
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Hospitals

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6. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Fact Sheets for Families, No. 58, May, 1997



- Fire Departments
- Injury prevention organizations
- University/College safety organizations
- University/College residence hall associations and administration
- University/College Greek organizations
- Apartment managers/landlords
- Property owners/landlords

### College fire facts

- ◆ In 1998, there were 1380 structure fires in school, college and university dormitories and fraternity and sorority housing, or 4 fires a day. (NFPA)
- ◆ An average of 141 structure fires occurs in fraternity and sorority houses every year. (NFPA)
- ◆ From 1970 to the mid-1980's, 88% of major college and university fires involving fatalities occurred in student residences, including fraternities and sororities. (Source: Fire Safety Manual, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC)
- ◆ The 3 leading causes of fires in collegiate housing are: (NFPA)
  1. arson
  2. cooking
  3. smoking
- ◆ The 3 leading causes of fire injuries in collegiate housing are: (USFA)
  1. cooking
  2. smoking
  3. arson
- ◆ 80% of all US fire deaths occur in residences. (USFA)
- ◆ Top 3 areas where residential fires most often occur: (USFA)
  1. Kitchen
  2. Bedroom
  3. Living room
- ◆ Candles and incense cause 12,000 residential fires annually. (College Fire Safety)
- ◆ Torchiere lamps burn at 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit (College Fire Safety)
- ◆ Nationwide, flames or toxic smoke from smoldering mattresses and sofas kill 1,500 people annually, injuring another 7,000 (College Fire Safety)
- ◆ About 33% of all dormitory fires are deliberately set. (College Fire Safety)



- ◆ 9.2% of dormitory alarms failed, or were disabled, in dormitory fires from 1993 to 1997. (College Fire Safety)
- ◆ 73% of dorm fires in the 1990's were in buildings without automatic sprinklers. (College Fire Safety)



## LEAVING HOME SAFELY FACT SHEETS *FOR COMMUNITY DISTRIBUTION*

- Drinking, Smoking and Fires
- Cooking Safely
- Grilling Safely
- Electrical Safety and Halogen Lamps
- Halogen Lamps
- Candle Safety
- Escape: Getting out Safely



## DRINKING, SMOKING AND FIRES

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Although drinking is not directly related to fires, alcohol intoxication may increase the risk of initiating a fire by impairing one's judgment and coordination. Someone who is intoxicated and smoking may succumb to the depressant effects of alcohol and fall asleep, drop a burning cigarette on furniture or bedding where it could smolder and eventually start a fire. In addition, someone who has succumbed to these affects may not hear the fire alarm or be able to respond to it.

Dropped cigarettes are the leading cause of fire fatalities. The incidence of these fatal fires is higher when the victim has also been drinking. Careless smoking, even without alcohol consumption can pose a significant fire risk of fires.

- If you smoke, smoke carefully; do not smoke in bed or in any residential building.
- Use large, sturdy ashtrays to extinguish your smoking materials. Wet down ashes, matches and cigarette ends before you dump them.
- Make sure any cigarette is extinguished before leaving a room.
- Never smoke around flammable liquids or aerosol cans such as hairspray.
- If smoking outside, never throw a lit cigarette into bushes or grass, where it could start a fire
- ***If you drink, be aware of the effects of alcohol.***
  - Women, who generally have a lower body weight, will experience noticeable effects from fewer drinks than males.
  - Drinking numerous drinks in a short period of time without food will cause more noticeable impairment.
  - If you have had several alcoholic drinks in a short time period, you are impaired, even if you do not think you are.
  - Have someone else accompany you home if you have been drinking
  - Do not mix alcohol and open flames. The flaming shot that you attempt may cause a flash burn to your face. Is it really worth the risk?

Do not drink and smoke together. Should you fall asleep without extinguishing your cigarette you may become the victim of a fire that you yourself caused



## COOKING SAFELY

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Each year in North America, hundreds of people are killed and injured in cooking-related fires and tens of thousands are burned by spills of hot foods and beverages.

Most deaths and injuries could be prevented if the individuals had followed basic rules.

### *In the Cooking Area:*

- Never leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep all pot handles turned back, away from the stove edge.
- Keep appliance cords coiled and away from counter edges.
- When removing lids from hot foods, remember that steam may have accumulated. Lift the cover or lid away from your face and arm.
- Check handles on appliances and cooking utensils to make sure they are secure.
- Wear short sleeves or tight-fitting clothing while cooking.
- Consider the weight of pots and pans. Use only those you can easily handle.
- Always use oven mitts or potholders when moving pots of hot liquid or food.
- Avoid using area rugs in cooking areas, especially near the stove. If area rugs are used, make sure they have non-slip backing to prevent falls and scalds.

### *In the Dining Area:*

- During mealtime, place hot items in the center of the table, at least 10 inches from the table edge.
- Use non-slip placemats instead of tablecloths - if anything pulls or tugs on the tablecloth, it can cause hot food to spill.

### *Microwave Safety:*

Many college students use microwave ovens as their primary cooking method, especially in dormitories. Many perceive microwaves as “safer” than conventional ovens and stoves, but they heat foods and liquids to very high temperatures, resulting in burns from spills, splashes and steam releases. Please read and follow manufacturer’s instructions for your microwave and follow the safety pointers listed below:

- Place microwaves at a safe height, within easy reach, for all users to avoid spills. The face of the person using the microwave should always be higher than the front of the door. Microwaves installed above counters or stoves can be a scald hazard for anyone.
- Steam, reaching temperatures greater than 200 degrees, builds rapidly in covered containers and can easily result in burns to the face, arms and hands. Puncture plastic wrap or use vented containers to allow steam to escape while cooking. Wait at least one minute before removing the cover. When removing covers, lift the corner farthest away from you and away from your face or arm.
- The steam in a microwave popcorn bag reaches a temperature of at least 180 degrees. Follow directions on package; before opening, allow bag to stand for one minute, and point bag away from your face when opening.
- Foods heat unevenly in microwaves. Jelly and cream fillings in pastries may be extremely hot, even though outer portions may feel only warm.
- Microwaved foods and liquids may reach temperatures greater than boiling without the appearance of bubbling. Stir and test food thoroughly before serving or eating.





# GRILLING SAFELY

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Every year, thousands of burn injuries result from the careless use of outdoor grills. These injuries occur primarily because of the use of gasoline or other inappropriate fluids to start or revive charcoal grill fires, or from faulty procedures or equipment in cooking with propane gas.

These injuries are preventable! Here are some safety tips to remember when using grills.

## Charcoal Grills

- Never use gasoline as a starter fluid or accelerant.
- Always use an approved lighter/starter fluid.
- After soaking your coals with lighter/starter fluid, wait for a minute before lighting the coals. This allows the heavy concentration of explosive vapors to disperse.
- When using lighter/starter fluid, place the container well away from the grill before attempting to light the coals.
- Be careful not to spill any fluid on your clothing or in the area surrounding the grill.
- Wear an insulated, fire retardant barbecue mitt when lighting presoaked coals.
- Never add lighter/starter fluid to hot or even warm coals. An explosion can result.

## Propane and Natural Gas Grills

- When using a gas grill, check all connections leading from the fuel source to the inlet connection of the grill for leaks. Never use a match, candle or flame source to check for a gas leak. A leak can be detected by spraying soapy water at the connections. If bubbles surface, there is a leak. SHUT TANK VALVE OFF and tighten connections. If the connections continue to leak, have a certified dealer check the grill before using it again.
- Open the valve only a quarter to one-half turn before lighting.
- Always shut off the valve to a fuel source when it is not in use.
- Never start a gas grill with the lid of the grill closed. The propane or natural gas may accumulate inside, and when ignited, could blow the lid off, causing injury.
- Periodically, clean the Venturi tubes that displace the gas under the grill. When tubes become blocked by insects, gas is forced out somewhere else within the system. Use the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning.
- Have a BC type fire extinguisher located in the grilling area.
- Always store full or empty propane tanks in a well-ventilated shed away from the house or any habitable structure.
- Always store propane bottles away from potential sources of flame such as furnaces, water heaters or any appliance with a pilot light.
- Wear tight-fitting or short-sleeved clothing while cooking on a grill



# **ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND HALOGEN LAMPS**

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Electricity is such an important part of our day-to day living that it is almost impossible to imagine a world without it. Unfortunately when used improperly, it can cause fires, severe injury or death.

- Do not overload outlets, power strips, multi-plug adapters or extension cords. One appliance per outlet is a good rule of thumb. With an approved power strip over-current protector, additional appliances may be used. Extension cords should be used for temporary situations (hours, not days).
- Be aware of outlets that feel hot to the touch. They are a potential fire hazard. Remove all appliances and contact your resident assistant or maintenance person immediately.
- Do not route cords under carpets or walkways. Wear and tear on the cord could damage the cord and cause a fire.
- Do not use staples to route any electrical cord. Damage to its components could cause sparking and in turn cause a fire.
- Look for the UL label on all appliances and cords to insure that they meet rigorous safety requirements.
- If your appliance has a grounding plug, but your wall outlet does not, make sure you use approved adapters to plug the appliance in. Do not break off the grounding post.
- Use light bulbs with the correct wattage for lighting fixtures. If you use a larger watt bulb in a fixture you increase the potential for a fire.
- Do not use electrical appliances in or near showers or bathtub. They might fall in the water and create a severe electric shock for the occupant.
- Turn off all electrical appliances that produce heat, such as curling irons, clothes irons hot plates and stoves, when you leave a room.

## **Halogen Lamps**

Halogen light bulbs emit high intensity light that is attractive and practical in small spaces. However, these light bulbs also emit intense heat, up to 1100 degrees Fahrenheit. Only 10% of halogen energy burned yields light. The balance is heat - intense enough to ignite wood, plastic or cloth on contact.

- Make sure an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved lamp is used.
- Keep lamp away from all combustible materials such as curtains, papers and clothing.
- Remember, a halogen bulb stays hot long after it has been turned off.
- Never leave a lighted halogen lamp unattended.



## CANDLE SAFETY

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Candles and incense are commonly used to create a serene atmosphere. Unfortunately they can have a devastating impact from resulting fire and burns.

Steps can be taken to prevent such tragedies.

- If your college hasn't already banned candles and incense from dormitories, and you're still using them, observe the following rules.
- Never leave a candle or incense burning unattended.
- Keep candles away from items that can easily catch fire such as clothing, books, paper, curtains or other combustible items.
- Keep candle wicks trimmed to ¼ inch in length.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over easily and are made from non-combustible materials.
- Do not place candles in windows where blinds and curtains can cover them or wind can blow them over.
- Keep all candles and incense away from flammable liquids. These include perfumes, cologne and aerosol sprays
- Remember that melted wax is extremely hot. Avoid moving candles until wax has cooled and solidified.
- Keep hands and exposed skin away from open candle flames.



## ESCAPE: GETTING OUT SAFELY

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When you first enter your dormitory, apartment or sorority/fraternity house you should take notice of all fire safety equipment. Notice where the fire alarms are located. Where are fire extinguishers? Is there a sprinkler system and smoke alarms or do you only have smoke alarms in the rooms? Make sure your nearest smoke alarm is working. If they are battery operated and make sure the battery is changed to keep it in working order. If you do have a fire in your building your life will depend on getting out. The following steps will help you make a plan in case this scenario happens. It is important to make a plan and practice, just in case...

- **Sound the Alarm** - Know the routine in your building in case of fire. Is there a fire alarm to pull and where is it. What is the number you should call to set off an alarm?
- **Leave the Building**- Treat all alarms as if they are real, you never know when it may be real. Your life depends on it.
- **Leave all of your belongings behind** - they can be replaced, you cannot.
- **Know your escape route.** When you first occupy the building walk all escape routes. Make mental notes of numbers of doorways etc. In a real fire there may be thick smoke and you will not be able to see.
- **Crawl low, you will be able to escape some of the toxic smoke and heat**
- **Feel all doors before opening, if it is hot, do not open, if cool, open slowly, to check the condition of the hallway.**
- **Always use a stairway out, never an elevator** - elevator shafts may fill quickly with smoke and the power may fail, leaving you stranded.
- **As you leave, close doors behind you.** This helps contain the fire.
- **Evacuate the Building, don't try to stay and fight the fire.**
- **If you are Trapped** -
  - Keep door closed, seal cracks and vents if smoke enters. If you are in a room and there is no smoke outside, open the windows to let heat/smoke out and fresh air in
  - Signal for help - yell or scream to attract attention. Hang an object from the window that can easily be seen. If you have a phone, call the fire department and report that you are trapped. Be sure to give your room number and location.



## GETTING THE MESSAGE TO THE MEDIA

- Sample press releases
- Sample Public Service Announcements



## Sample Press Release

### For Immediate Release

Contact: Local person and title  
Local phone number  
or American Burn Association 312-642-9260

*(Dateline: City and Date)*

Young adults all across America leave home for college every year. They arrive in their new dorm room, fraternity or sorority house, or apartment with all the tools they need for a successful semester - or do they? Fire injuries and deaths occur among college students every year. According to the National Fire Protection Association, there are about 1,700 fires in dormitories and Greek housing each year. This number does not include fires or injuries that occur off campus in apartments or houses. While college students may be well informed on political science, computer science, art history, or math, they may know very little about how to prevent fires or burn injuries. Unless they have already experienced a fire or a burn injury, they may not even realize there is a risk.

According to (insert name and title of local contact, Burn Center Director, or Fire Chief), the three leading causes of fires and burn injuries in collegiate housing are cooking, smoking, and arson. Alcohol abuse is commonly associated with burn injuries to college students. High school seniors and college students need to be educated about fire risks and prevention methods so they can create a safe living environment for themselves, their roommates, and other housing residents.

The American Burn Association has some lifesaving tips that anyone living on their own for the first time should be aware of:

- Do not overload extension cords, power strips, or outlets.
- Do not leave cooking food unattended.
- Do not use gasoline to fuel a fire or a barbecue grill.
- Never disable a smoke alarm.
- Do not play with fire, causing an unintended disaster.
- Keep curtains, linens, and any other flammable material away from hot surfaces.
- Make sure cigarette butts are fully extinguished before leaving a room.
- Never leave burning candles unattended. Make sure all candles are extinguished before leaving a room or going to bed.
- Curb alcohol consumption to avoid "passing out" while something is burning or to avoid being so intoxicated that you can't react quickly in an emergency.
- Never ignore a fire alarm.
- Have an escape plan that includes 2 ways out of every room.

For more information on college fire safety and burn prevention, fact sheets, and safety checklists, contact (your local contact name and phone number), or contact the American Burn Association at 1-312-642-9260 or [www.ameriburn.org](http://www.ameriburn.org).

## Sample Public Service Announcements



Community Fire & Burn Prevention Programs  
Leaving Home Safely Campaign

Contact: Local person and title  
Local phone number  
or American Burn Association 312-642-9260

**SUBJECT: COLLEGE SAFETY FOR PARENTS**

**Reading Time: 10 Seconds**

Is your high school senior prepared to prevent a fire or burn injury? For information on College Fire and Burn Prevention, contact (*insert local contact*) at (*insert local phone number*).

**Reading Time: 20 Seconds**

Give your college-bound high school senior advance knowledge of how to prevent fire and avoid burn injury. Share information with them on how to be safe in their first home away from home. Contact (*insert local contact*) for information at (*insert local phone #*).

**Reading Time: 30 Seconds**

College students are at risk for being burned from fires in dormitories, fraternity and sorority houses, and off-campus apartments. Start talking to your high school senior now about fire safety and burn prevention. Contact (*insert local contact*) at (*insert local phone number*) for information on how to be safe from fire and burns in their first home away from home.

**SUBJECT: COLLEGE FIRE & BURN SAFETY: A PRIMER FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Reading Time: 10 Seconds**

Protect yourself from fire and burn injuries once you leave home. For free information on College Fire Safety and Burn Prevention, contact (*insert local contact*) at (*insert local phone number*).

**Reading Time: 20 Seconds**

So, you're off to college in a few months. Do you know how to protect yourself from fire and burn injury in your new home? Contact (*insert local contact*) for more information at (*insert local phone number*).

**Reading Time: 30 Seconds**

Graduation is around the corner and you'll be leaving for college in the fall. You know how to make the grade, but what do you know about fire safety and burn prevention? College students are at risk of being burned in dormitories, Greek housing, and apartments. The American Burn Association wants you to be safe in your first home away from home. Call (*insert local contact*) at (*insert local phone number*) for more information.



**SUBJECT: COLLEGE SAFETY FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**Reading Time: 10 Seconds**

On your own for the first time? Learn how to prevent fires and burn injuries. For information on College Fire Safety and Burn Prevention, contact (insert local contact) at (insert local phone number).

*Reading Time: 20 Seconds*

It's official. You're a college student; you're on your own. Do you know how to protect yourself from fire and burn injury in your new home? For more information on fire and burn safety, contact (insert local contact) for free information at (insert local phone number).

**Reading Time: 30 Seconds**

The semester's almost over. You've studied hard and you're ready for finals. You know how to make the grade, but what do you know about fire safety and burn prevention? College students are at risk of being burned in dormitories, Greek housing, and apartments. The American Burn Association wants to keep you safe from fire and burn hazards in your new home away from home. Call (insert local contact) at (insert local phone number) for more information.





## REFERENCES/RESOURCES

### PARENTS GUIDE TO FIRE SAFETY

#### When your child leaves for college or their first living space of their own

Preventing fire and burn injuries is an important part of parenting. Remember all the hot items you have moved out of reach of your child to keep them safe? The transition when your child leaves home for the first time is no different. You want your son or daughter to be safe in a college dorm, fraternity house or in their first apartment. Here are some fire and burn prevention tips for you and your child.

#### Facts:

- 1400 fires occur on U.S. college campuses every year
- Arson or suspected arson is the #1 cause of dorm fires
- Cooking is the #2 cause of dorm fires
- Smoking is the #3 cause of dorm fires

You should have answers to these questions about your son or daughter's school:

- What type of fire prevention training is done? How often?
- How often are fire drills carried out?
- What type of fire safety training does the residence hall staff receive?
- Are the rooms inspected on a regular basis for fire hazards?
- What type of fire alarm system does the building have?
- Does the fire alarm system notify the fire department or campus security?
- Are there smoke detectors in each room?
- Do the residence halls have sprinklers?
- How many fires occurred on campus last year?
- How many false alarms were pulled on campus last year?

Dorm Life 101: Walk and talk through it with your "young adult"

#### 1. Exits, escape plan, fire drill

- Have an escape plan.
- Know two exits from your room.
- Memorize the number of doors to the nearest exit.
- Never hang anything from sprinkler systems.

#### 2. Smoke alarm and batteries

- Never ignore a fire alarm.
- Never disable a smoke alarm.
- Never borrow a battery from a smoke alarm.

#### 3. Alcohol and drugs

- Alcohol reduces your ability to detect a fire and safely escape a fire.

#### 4. Smoking



Community Fire & Burn Prevention Programs  
Leaving Home Safely Campaign

- Smoke in designated areas only.
  - No smoking in bed.
  - If you smoke, quit. If you don't smoke, don't start.
  - Dispose of cigarettes in appropriate containers, after dousing them with water. Cigarettes smolder long after they are discarded. After parties, check cushions for moldering cigarette butts.
5. Candles and incense
- Candles and incense may be prohibited in your dorm.
  - Never leave burning candles or incense unattended.
  - Keep candles and incense away from curtains, flammable materials, and unstable surfaces.
6. Cooking
- Cook in designated areas only.
  - Never leave cooking unattended.
  - If fire breaks out in a microwave oven, keep the door closed and unplug it.
7. Electrical outlets and extension cords
- Do not overload electric outlets.
  - Unplug electrical appliances when not in use.
  - Extension cords are for temporary use only.
  - Do not route cords under doors or carpets.
  - Do not use electrical appliances near or around water.
  - Check with dorm rules before purchasing a halogen lamp.



## 25 Questions to Ask BEFORE Signing a Rental Agreement!

1. Are smoke alarms installed? Working?
2. How old are the smoke alarms?
3. How often are the smoke alarms checked and batteries changed?
4. Are there at least two ways to exit your living space and your building?
5. Are exits marked and free from obstruction?
6. Are hallway doors closed and not propped open?
7. Do upper floors have a fire escape or ladder available for each bedroom? (If there are multiple floors)
8. Are the doors fire rated?
9. Are fire extinguishers available? Working?
10. Were fire extinguishers inspected within the last year?
11. Is a sprinkler system installed?
12. Is the electrical wiring adequate? What is the electrical panel rated (200 amps or above)?
13. Is there a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) in each bathroom and kitchen outlet?
14. Is the building regularly inspected by the local fire department or college emergency management office for safety?
15. What is the owner's policy and method of correcting safety problems in the building?
16. Has there ever been a fire in this building? If so, what was the cause?
17. Does the residence have a gas or electric stove/oven?
18. Do you know how to use appliance(s) correctly?
19. Where is the nearest fire hydrant? Who is responsible for keeping it clear of snow?
20. Did the school recommend the housing for students?
21. Is the owner a member of a landlord/tenant group or other housing association?
22. Has the city and/or university received any safety complaints regarding this building?
23. Do windows open easily?
24. If windows are secured with security bars, is there a quick release from the inside?
25. If there are dead bolt locks on doors, can you open without a key?



### How to get fire safety messages to 18-24 year-olds

1. Use real life stories and photos about fire-related incidents involving people in this age group (see [www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com) to find accounts of college campus fires.)
2. Put posters/flyers up in bathroom stalls at colleges/universities
3. Give presentations during Freshman Orientation (college students suggest having fellow students do skits that present the message in an entertaining manner)
4. Fliers placed around campus on message boards, in libraries, student unions and cafeterias, that make students think and get them interested.
5. Informational web address that pops up on web sites that college students use frequently.
6. College TV, radio and newspapers.
7. Bring in burn survivors to speak about experiences.
8. Free promotional items with fire safety messages on them with a web site/phone number for more information. Examples of items would be buttons, notebooks, pencils, pens, frisbees, coozies, t-shirts, water bottles. These could be handed out at booths in common areas or given out at Freshman Orientation.
9. Set up a booth at a student union/center staffed by a person with information, free stuff, and an on-going video or power point presentation playing stories about campus fires, burn survivors.
10. Place information in popular coffee shops and restaurants (for example the plastic holders on restaurant tables that sometimes have drink/food specials or info on events - everyone reads these!)

This information was compiled by AmeriCorps\*NCCC, Team Silver One, at a team meeting on June 5, 2003. This is a group of young adults age 18-24 representing the target audience.



## Fire and Burn Safety Resources Available on the Internet

### U.S. Fire Administration

[http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs\\_04.cfm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs_04.cfm)

This website contains easily accessible safety information that can be downloaded to any computer using in a Word or PDF version. Included is information about Living with Fire: A program for campus and student fire safety project, lesson plans and resources and sample press releases. Some of the topics included are Alcohol and fire safety, Smoking and fire safety, Evacuation, Fire Behavior (an overview for the college student), On and off campus housing and many other appropriate topics. PowerPoint presentations are also available for downloading.

### Campus Fire Watch

<http://www.campus-firewatch.com/documents/parents.htm>

Documents available at this website include

Harvard College 1999 Campus Alcohol Study

College Administrator Survey - What is being done to curb binge drinking?

Establishing a Relationship between Alcohol and casualties of Fire (USFA study on links between fires and alcohol)

Fire Safety 101: A Fact Sheet for Colleges and Universities (Prepared by the US Fire Administration)

Answer These 20 Questions - (Questions that everyone should be able to answer before signing a rental agreement.)

### College Fire Safety

<http://collegefiresafety.org>

Contains fire safety tips and supporting information about fire safety issues for college age students that can be downloaded from the website. Topics include Alcohol use, Smoking issues, Electrical use in dorm rooms, fire alarms, Halogen torchiere lights, candles/incense and others.

**Campus Firewatch** - electronic newsletter devoted to campus fire safety

[www.campus-firewatch.com](http://www.campus-firewatch.com)

414-323-6002

**Living With Fire** - United States Fire Association (USFA) web site developed by Campus Firewatch, has free downloadable material for educators

[www.usfa.fema.gov/public/campus.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/campus.shtm)

**National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**

[www.nfpa.org/catalog/home/index.asp](http://www.nfpa.org/catalog/home/index.asp)



Community Fire & Burn Prevention Programs  
Leaving Home Safely Campaign

## Videos and Other Available Materials

1. "Graduation: Fatally Denied"  
Video  
Target audience - college students  
Cost \$17.95 ea  
Emergency Film Group  
[www.efilmgroup.com/graduation](http://www.efilmgroup.com/graduation)
2. "College Fire Safety 101"  
Video  
Target audience - college students and administrators  
No cost  
Fax request on letterhead to USFA Publications Center (301) 447-1213
3. "Ready to Respond"  
Video  
Target audience - campus housing administrators  
No cost  
Fax request on letterhead to USFA Pub Center (301) 447-1213
4. "Get Out and Stay Alive"  
Video  
Target audience - college students  
No cost  
Order online from USFA Publications Center  
[www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs\\_10.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs_10.shtm) (under resources)
5. Photo Library  
Downloadable photos to use in developing your own programs  
USFA  
[www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs\\_07.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs_07.shtm)
6. Power Point Presentations  
Eight available with various topics and target audiences  
USFA Living with Fire web site  
[www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs\\_08.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs_08.shtm)
7. Brochures  
Downloadable information bulletins in Word or pdf format  
Target audience students and housing administrators  
School logo and contact information can be inserted  
No cost  
USFA Living with Fire web site  
[www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs\\_03.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs_03.shtm)
8. Lesson Plans  
Downloadable



Target audience is students living both on and off-campus  
Educates on scope of problem, science of fire, and safety measures  
USFA

[www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs\\_04.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/cfs_04.shtm)

9. Recommended materials available through the NFPA Catalogue:

- a. 10 Tips for Fire Safety - video  
targets - off-campus, Greek housing  
cost - \$299
- b. 10 Tips for Fire Safety - brochure, English and Spanish  
cost - 100 for \$22
- c. Candle with Care - brochure  
Cost - 100 for \$22
- d. E.D.I.T.H. (Exit Drills in the Home) - brochure, English and Spanish  
Cost - 100 for \$22
- e. Fire Extinguishers: Fight or Flight - video  
Cost - \$477
- f. Fire Power - video  
Cost - \$299
- g. Fire Safety 101: College Safety Brochure  
Cost - 100 for \$22
- h. Home Smoke Alarms - brochure
- i. Kitchen Fire Safety - brochure
- j. Survive Fire in Your Home - video  
Cost - \$299
- k. Fire: Countdown to Disaster - video  
Cost - \$299

10. Recommended materials from USFA web site (order online)

- a. "Get Out and Stay Alive" - brochure  
targets college students  
no cost
- b. Smoke Alarms: What You Need to Know - brochure  
No cost
- c. Escape from Fire - Once You Get Out Stay Out - brochure  
No cost



## EVALUATION FORM

### LEAVING HOME SAFELY

We appreciate any suggestions and recommendations for future improvements in the community fire and burn prevention education programs. Please take a moment to print and complete this form; return it to the American Burn Association, 625 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 2550, Chicago, IL 60611 (Fax - 312-642-9130). Thank you.

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Service \_\_\_\_ Burn Support Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did the content covered in the campaign kit meet your learning needs?  
Yes No
  
2. If you answered no, please tell us what we should add, or subtract?
  
  
  
  
3. Did the length of the topic coverage provide what you needed?  
Yes No
  
  
4. Were the fact sheets helpful?  
Yes No
  
  
5. What did you like most about this campaign?
  
  
  
  
6. What did you like least about this campaign?
  
  
  
  
7. What pieces of this campaign did you use? Please check all that apply.  
\_\_\_\_ Statistics \_\_\_\_\_ PSAs  
\_\_\_\_ Fact Sheets \_\_\_\_\_ PowerPoint Presentation  
\_\_\_\_ Press release

