



## Keeping Your College Students Safe From Fire

According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately 18 million students will be enrolled in 4,100 colleges and universities this fall. For many students this will be their first experience with independent living and its associated responsibilities. For most, fire safety was a subject they learned about in grade school, but they considered to be their parents' responsibility. Hundreds of fires occur daily on college campuses, many serious and some fatal. Here's a list of fire safety measures that you can provide to your student (or use at home too!):

- ☑ Check to see if smoke detectors are installed on every level of the residence, and if they are maintained and tested regularly
- ☑ Don't overload outlets by using multiple plug extenders or extension cords
- ☑ Use a certified, surge-protected power strip and stick to recommended wattages
- ☑ Never run electrical wires or extension cords under carpets or heavy items
- ☑ Never tack up an extension cord with staples or pins
- ☑ Make sure electrical cords are not worn or frayed
- ☑ Avoid using regular candles, but if you do, never leave them unattended and be sure to place them in a secure holder away from flammables and linens
- ☑ Cook only where it is allowed, keeping the area clean
- ☑ Do not leave cooking unattended
- ☑ If a fire starts in a microwave, keep the door shut and pull the plug
- ☑ Don't smoke inside your room/apartment (especially in bed). Instead go outside and, when finished, make sure cigarettes are properly extinguished.
- ☑ Never toss hot cigarettes or ashes into a trash can
- ☑ After parties with smokers, check inconspicuous places for cigarette butts (e.g., under cushions, garbage cans, kitchen sink, etc.)
- ☑ Drink responsibly! There is a strong link between alcohol and fire deaths – not only can it impair your judgment, it can also hamper your ability to escape.
- ☑ Make an escape plan, identifying at least two escape routes from your room if possible. Learn the building's emergency exits and don't ignore fire drills. Student apathy can be a major problem with quick and efficient evacuation.
- ☑ If you have to escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to the exit
- ☑ Before opening a door, feel it—if it's hot, use the second way out
- ☑ Use the stairs to escape a fire, never an elevator
- ☑ If trapped, call the fire department and tell them where you are. Seal the door with rags and signal from the window. Open windows slightly at the top and bottom, but shut them if smoke rushes in from any direction.
- ☑ Never reenter a burning building
- ☑ Once you are **out and away from the building**, call your family so that they know you are safe

**Many residence halls will have a resident assistant or building management who may be helpful with many of these steps. Do ask questions to secure your own safety!**

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration/FEMA, Underwriters Laboratories

Visit [Allstate Be Aware and Prepare](#) and the [Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety](#) for more, helpful information.