

CAMPUS Firewatch™

Off-campus housing fire safety checklist

Since 2000, 85% of college-related fire fatalities have happened in off-campus housing, where most students live. When looking for a place, consider these 10 items:

Smoke Alarms

- Are there smoke alarms in every bedroom, on every level of the building?
- In most fatal fires, the smoke alarms are missing or disabled. Often, a reason for this is nuisance alarms caused by cooking. Photoelectric smoke alarms near the kitchen can help cut down on this. What kind of smoke alarms do you have?

Exits

- Are there two ways out of every bedroom? Keep in mind the second way out may be a window.
- If a window is the second way out, does it open? Is it blocked by an air conditioner? Can you climb out of it? Are there security bars on the window?
- If the bedroom is on a second or third floor, do you have an escape ladder? These can be purchased online or in a home improvement store.
- Is there a second way out of the house or unit? Every apartment must have two ways out.
- Is the second way out blocked by storage in the stairs such as bicycles or trash cans? Is the snow removed from the door and steps so you can get away from the building?

Fire Causes

- The leading cause of all home fires is cooking. What condition is the stove in?
- What about the electrical service? Are there enough outlets to handle today's electrical needs?
- What about smoking? The leading cause of all fatal home fires is smoking, and a contributing factor in college-related fires is fires that start in upholstered furniture on porches and decks.

There is a lot more to consider when looking for fire-safe housing, this is not a complete list. For more information on campus fire safety, visit

- Campus Firewatch (www.campus-firewatch.com)
- U.S. Fire Administration (www.ufsa.fema.gov)
- National Fire Protection Association (www.nfpa.org)

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