

Fire Safety in
On-Campus Housing
at the University of Connecticut

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Emergency Evacuation Procedures

What To Do In Case Of A Fire

- When Exiting Your Room And The Building
 - Feel the door handle with the back of your hand, if door handle is not hot, open cautiously.
 - Check for smoke or fire before going out.
 - Make sure that you are dressed appropriately for weather conditions (i.e. coat, shoes, etc.).
 - Close and lock all doors. Bring your room key and ID card with you.
 - Walk quickly to the nearest marked exit.
 - Use the stairs. NEVER USE ELEVATORS DURING AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION
 - Carry a towel with you to cover your face.
 - Stay low to the ground, below smoke. Crawl if necessary.

What To Do In Case Of A Fire

- If Your Door Is Too Hot Or If There Is Heavy Smoke
 - Do not open your door.
 - Wedge cloth around the door cracks and remain in the room.
 - Call 911.
 - Open the window wide enough to attract the attention of fire officials and await rescue.

What To Do In Case Of A Fire

- Once Outside Of The Building
 - Move away from building and immediately report to the designated [assembly area](#) to check in with Reslife staff
 - Stay clear of all emergency vehicles – do not stand in roadway/walkway and block emergency vehicles from getting through.
 - Do not re-enter the building until you are instructed to do so by an emergency responder or ResLife staff

Means Of Egress

- It is important that in cases of fire or emergencies, residents have a clear path from their room to outside of the building. Dorm room doors must not be blocked with furniture or other items that will not allow for at least 30 inches of clearance. Furniture, bicycles or other items are not to be stored in corridors, stairwells, lounges or lobbies as these areas are typically the way out of a building in emergency situations.

Outdoor Assembly Areas

Alumni

- All of Alumni will line up on evacuation according to floors
- Brock -- evacuates to sidewalk and courts around building
- Eddy -- evacuates to the Nathan Hale Inn gated lot
- Belden -- evacuates to sidewalks
- South Watson -- evacuates to the sidewalks around the building

Buckley

- South Tower -- evacuates to parking lot south of the tower
- North Tower -- evacuates to parking lot directly behind their hall

Outdoor Assembly Areas

Busby Suites

- 1st Floor -- Emergency vehicle lot on north side of building
- 2nd Floor -- Front lawn area
- 3rd Floor -- Parking lot area south of building
- 4th Floor -- volleyball and basketball courts behind building

Charter Oak Apartments

- Residents evacuate to front lawn (opposite of parking lot side) of apartments. Two separate alarms need to be set off for the building's fire alarm to sound

East

- Sprague, Whitney, Holcomb, Grange, and Hicks will evacuate to sidewalks along Rt 195 directly in front of their buildings

Outdoor Assembly Areas

Garrigus Suites

- Basement Level -- Behind hall by dumpster
- 1st Floor -- Volleyball court
- 2nd Floor -- In pathway next to volleyball court
- 3rd Floor -- Putnam (grass area between Putnam & Garrigus)
- 4th Floor -- Between volleyball court and athletic fields

Connecticut Commons (formerly Graduate Residences)

- All students go to area in front of Graduate Center and gather by building

Hale & Ellsworth

- Floors 1 - 4 -- Volleyball court
- Floors 5 - 8 -- Directly behind the hall

Outdoor Assembly Areas

Hilltop Apartments

- Residents evacuate to grassy area behind their apartment and gather by apartment assignments Husky Village Each house will evacuate to volleyball courts

Mansfield Apartments

- Single unit fire-alarms do not activate at station but must be phoned in. Residents will evacuate to sidewalk in front of their unit

Outdoor Assembly Areas

McMahon

- South Tower --
Floors 4 - 7 on Hillside by hall
Floors 1 - 3 corner of Gilbert and Hillside Rd by Alumni
- North Tower --
Floors 4 - 7 front lawn of North Tower
Floors 1 - 3 front of Museum of Natural History

North

- Residents in these areas will evacuate to the quad and gather by floors

Outdoor Assembly Areas

Northwest

- Hanks, Goodyear, Russell, Batterson, Terry, and Roger evacuate to quad area

Northwood Apartments

- Each unit has separate alarms. Residents would evacuate to front lawn of apartment

Shippee

- Evacuates between Shippee and the Bishop Center

Outdoor Assembly Areas

South Residences

- South A & B -- evacuate to sidewalks north of their buildings
- South C -- evacuate to the courtyard side and line up in sidewalks

Towers

- Residents will evacuate to sidewalks in front and on the sides of their hall

West Campus

- Alsop, Shakespeare/Troy, Hollister A&B, Chandler/Lancaster --
Center of the West courtyard

Fire Suppression Systems

How Do Sprinklers Work

How Do Sprinklers Work?

Primarily our sprinkler systems are water-filled except in areas prone to freezing, where an air charge holds the water down in the heated areas of the buildings.

When a fire causes heat to rise up to a sprinkler head, the head has a plug that's held in with a solder link that will melt or a liquid-filled glass bulb that will shatter. Once the plug melts, the water rushes out in a pattern designed to cover a certain area. If the system is a "dry" or air filled system, the air first rushes out allowing the water to then spray onto the coverage area. These systems are supplied by large, automatic supplies of water that will not deplete during the time they are needed. Another automatic function is activation of the fire alarm system to notify occupants of the danger.

Of the systems on campus, 99% operate in this "head by head" fashion. Contrary to what is depicted in movies, the actuation of one head does NOT cause all the heads to open and spray.

Another important point is that physical damage can activate a sprinkler. Activation can be caused by breaking a pipe, or more commonly impact to a sprinkler head such as clothing hangers placed on or in the heads, sporting equipment used improperly indoors, or impact by equipment or tools operating in the area of the head. Nothing should be placed on or near sprinkler heads or piping, and any physical activity should be kept safely away.

The life safety value of sprinklers is very high, with roughly 98% of all fires in sprinklered buildings being controlled by the activation of the first or second sprinkler head. This not only allows time for the fire department to arrive and finish extinguishment, but more importantly provides extra time for an orderly and safe evacuation of persons in the buildings.

Various components of these systems are inspected and/or tested on regular schedules from monthly to annually.

How Do Sprinklers Work

Do sprinklers go off accidentally?

- It is possible for a sprinkler to discharge spontaneously, but this is an extremely rare occurrence in systems which are properly maintained. Records indicate that only 1 in 16,000,000 sprinklers per year will open without cause.

Do fire sprinklers cause widespread water damage?

- Fire department hoses typically discharge ten to one hundred times more water than that discharged by sprinklers. Since *only* the sprinkler closest to the fire is activated, the total amount of water is limited. Fire damage is also limited; most fires are put out quickly by relatively few sprinklers in areas with a fully functional sprinkler system.

Tampering With Sprinkler Systems

- Items should never be hung or placed on sprinkler pipes or sprinkler head to avoid accidental water discharge. Sprinkler heads should not be covered or tampered with nor should items be placed within such a distance as to deflect normal spraying patterns. Residents found responsible for tampering with these systems may be removed from on-campus housing.

Testing Measures

How often are the sprinklers tested?

- The University meets or exceeds all required testing and inspection schedules in accordance with State Fire codes. The sprinkler systems are inspected monthly and tested quarterly.

Fire Alarm Systems

Fire Alarm Systems

- Almost all University buildings have fire alarm systems. These systems vary in design and appearance. Almost all of them have some type of manual pull station devices that allow occupants to cause an alarm. These will all notify the occupants of the alarm and most will send that alarm directly to the University's fire station.
- Additional features of the majority of the systems include automatic smoke detection as found in all residence units, carbon monoxide detection found in residences with fuel burning equipment, links to the sprinkler systems in sprinklered buildings, and heat detection in mechanical and attic spaces of many buildings.
- The primary purpose of these systems is to benefit life safety by providing occupant notification of an alarm condition. This is done by horns or bells and in newer systems additionally by flashing lights. The secondary purpose is to alert the fire department automatically which is done via dedicated phone and data lines directly to the 911 center at the Department of Public Safety.
- These systems are tested and inspected at regular intervals from quarterly to annually depending on the components involved. In addition to the testing, fire drills are conducted in residences and some other buildings on varied schedules from quarterly to each semester. These drills are to increase the safety of the occupants by practicing the routine of making an orderly and safe, but expeditious exit. Contrary to common folklore, the fire department does NOT conduct regular drills in the middle of the night. Occupants should always treat each and every alarm as though it is real and leave the area. Unless you are told in advance of a reason that the alarm will ring in a non-emergency, ALL alarms are emergencies.

Tampering With Smoke Detectors

- Smoke detectors should never be removed or covered for any reason. Residents found responsible for tampering with these systems may be removed from on-campus housing.

Fire Doors

- Doors that lead into a corridor or stairwell must be able to shut and latch when the fire alarm sounds. Student room doors and all common area doors that do this should not have obstruction in the way (i.e.. Wooded pegs, door stops) that would prohibit the proper closing of the door. These doors should have self closing devices on them which are considered fire safety equipment. It is important to secure a safe means of egress out of the building in case of a fire and fire doors are an important component to control the spread of fire.

Testing Measures

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Tampering With Fire Safety Equipment

- Tampering with or misuse of the fire safety equipment (including automatic door closures, smoke detectors, sprinkler heads or pipes, fire alarm systems, fire fighting equipment or building security systems) is prohibited and illegal. Examples are as follows: covering the smoke detector or sprinkler head with plastic or tape; hanging items from sprinkler pipes; putting items too close to the sprinkler head that flow could be altered; pulling a false alarm.
- Residents found responsible for tampering with these systems may be removed from on-campus housing.

Housing Contract

- View the [Housing Contract](#)
- Candles and/or incense are prohibited in all on-campus housing.
- Additional appliance and fire safety information can be found in the housing contract at the link above.

University Apartment Safety

Fire Prevention

Appliance Instructions

- **Microwave Safety**

- Always read the cooking instructions on the packaging. Read any warning messages or instructions for recommended operating procedures and safety precautions on the microwave. All microwave ovens are not alike.
- Use the microwave for food preparation only.
- Do not use metal such as metal-edged bowls, plates or cups, tin foil or even twist ties. Metal can cause a spark, called arcing and can damage the oven and lead to a fire.
- The door should always be secure. If the seal, hinge or latch are worn or broken or if the door is loose report the problem immediately.
- Use microwave-safe utensils. Hot food melts some plastic such as margarine tubs.
- Steam can burn so when you cover your food with plastic wrap, be sure to fold a corner over to create a steam vent. Venting allows some steam to escape during the heating process and can reduce the risk of burns.
- When making microwave popcorn, be sure to follow the directions. To prevent the bag from catching on fire, stay in the kitchen while it is popping so you know when to take the bag out. If you let the bag pop for too long a fire could occur.

Fire Prevention

Appliance Instructions

- **Washer and Dryer Safety**

- The leading cause of dryer fires is lint buildup. Clean the lint trap before and after each load
- Do not place items exposed to cooking oils, gasoline, dry cleaning solvents or other flammable or explosive substances near appliances as they give off vapors that could ignite or explode.
- Do not reach into the dryer if the drum is moving
- Keep the area around the exhaust opening and adjacent surrounding areas free from accumulation of lint, dust and dirt
- If the dryer is not working correctly please report immediately.
- Keep the dryer at least 6 inches from the wall for proper venting. Dryers too close to the wall will cause the hose to kink leading to longer drying time and lint build up.

Maintaining A Safe Apartment

- **Escaping in a fire**
 - Know where all the exits from your building are.
 - Develop an emergency escape plan from your bedroom that includes a primary and alternative escape route.
 - If you see a fire and the building has not been alerted, pull the alarm on your way out.
- **General Info**
 - Don't park in front of fire hydrants or in fire lanes. Fire trucks need quick and close access to buildings.
 - Do not tamper with fire equipment! Detectors and alarm boxes must remain in functioning condition. Faulty equipment can risk the safety of others in a real fire situation.
- **Cleanliness**
 - Indiscriminate mess can be a great source of fuel for a fire as well as a blockade or hazard for exiting in an emergency.
 - Place trash and recycling in the proper receptacles and take it out to the dumpster area when they are full.
 - Clothes should not be strewn about the floor and furniture, but instead placed properly in dressers or hung in closets.

Maintaining A Safe Apartment

- **Furniture and decor**
 - Furniture should be placed in a manner that allows easy flow of traffic throughout your living space.
 - Never place furniture so that it protrudes or blocks walkways, doorways, stairs, or windows, even if it is for a short time.
 - Do not hang items from the ceiling, sprinkler pipes, sprinkler heads, or conduits.
 - Do not cover your smoke detector – even if it is temporarily.
 - Candles (including those with unburned wicks) and incense are not permitted in our residence halls or apartments.
 - Electric lamps and other electric appliances generate heat. If this heat is not adequately dissipated, a fire can occur. Lamps can cause fires in a number of ways, including:
 - If a lamp is covered with a combustible material, such as an article of clothing, a towel or some other fabric, the fabric can ignite
 - If a lamp tips over, the bulb can come in contact with a combustible material, such as bedding or upholstery, and cause it to ignite
- **Smoking**
 - Smoking is banned from all residence halls and apartments. Smoking materials (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc.) are the leading cause of fire deaths and the third leading cause of fire injuries in the United States. If you do smoke where it is permitted, please take extra care to extinguish and dispose of properly. Do not throw cigarettes into bushes, onto grass or mulch. These are sources of ignition for fires.
- **Appliances**
 - Immediately shut off and unplug appliances that sputter, spark or emit an unusual smell. Have them professionally repaired or replaced.

Maintaining A Safe Apartment

- **General Kitchen Safety**
 - Keep combustibles – potholders, pizza boxes, plastic utensils, towels, etc. away from hot surfaces. Turn off all heat-generating appliances when not in use.
 - Pot handles should not extend out from a kitchen stove or range.
 - Don't leave spoons or other utensils in pots while cooking.
 - Keep curtains and towel racks away from a stove or range.
 - Keep sturdy oven mitts or potholders near the cooking area.
 - Use only microwave-safe utensils in microwave ovens. Do not use metal or plastic products.
 - The storage area above a stove or range should not contain any flammable or combustible items.
 - For stove or range, the exhaust fan should be on while cooking.
 - When cooking, wear appropriate clothing, such as short or tight-fitting sleeves and tight-fitting shirts, robes, gowns, etc.
 - Check for and clean up accumulated grease from the stove, oven or exhaust fan regularly. Cooking grease and oil ignite easily and burn rapidly.
 - Never leave a stove or range unattended when cooking, especially when the burner is turned to a high setting.
 - If you have to leave the kitchen (even to take a phone call) turn the stove or range burners off - it may take longer than you anticipated.

Maintaining A Safe Apartment

- **Extension Cords and Power Strips/Surge Protectors**
 - Extension cords should only be used to provide temporary power and should not be used in place of permanent wiring.
 - Extension cords should be used to lengthen an appliance cord, not multiply the number of outlets available.
 - When used, the diameter of an extension cord should be as large as (or larger than) the appliance cord.
 - All extension cords must be approved by a national testing agency, such as Underwriter's Laboratory or Factory Mutual.
 - Extension cords should be no longer than six (6) foot in length for interior use.
 - Use polarized extension cords only (one of the prongs is wider than the other, preventing the plug from being inserted incorrectly).
 - Never use extension cords in tandem (e.g., “daisy-chaining”) or plugging one into another.
 - Old, cracked or frayed extension cords should be discarded. They can become a fire hazard.
 - Extension cords should never be run under carpets or rugs.
 - When disconnecting extension cords, pull the plug rather than the cord itself.
 - Use only 3-wire extension cords for appliances with 3-prong plugs. Never remove the third round or U-shaped prong safety feature (ground prong) designed to reduce the risk of shock or electrocution.
 - Stretch out an extension cord. Using it while it is coiled or looped can generate excessive heat.
 - Do not attach extension cords to building surfaces using staples or nails – this can damage the cord and create a shock or fire hazard.
 - Power strips/surge protectors must be approved by a national testing agency, such as Underwriter's Laboratory or Factory Mutual.
 - Multiple-outlet power strip/surge protectors should only be used to provide over-current or transient voltage surge protection for electrically sensitive devices such as computers, printers, fax machines, etc. They should not be used to extend the number or reach of outlets. Do not plug a power strip/surge protector into an existing power strip/surge protector (piggybacking).
 - Do not plug more than one power strip/surge protector into a dual electrical outlet.
 - Use only power strips/surge protectors that have a built-in breaker.

Health And Safety Inspections

Fire, Health, and Safety Inspections

- Fire, Health, and Safety Inspections ensure resident's safety. The RA staff will conduct these inspections periodically throughout the academic year. Residents will be notified of these inspections the week prior to the inspections. The RA staff is looking for the following:
- Any fire code violation
- Any violations of the Housing Contract/Student Code
- Cleanliness of the room
- Any alterations/modifications of the room
- University Furniture in the room

Grilling

- Grilling involves the lighting of a flame whether through propane ignition, charcoal or fire. Any ignition of a flame on campus whether it's inside or out must be approved by obtaining a Hot Works permit through the Fire Department.

Other Helpful Links

Fire Safety Awareness Programs And Staff Training

- Resident Assistants (RAs) receive training conducted annually and facilitated by the University of Connecticut Fire Department and Fire Marshall's office. Training topics include:
 - General fire safety information and safe practices
 - Protocols for responding to fire and other environmental issues for RAs
 - Fire safety equipment/systems
 - Programs offered by the Department of Public Safety for RAs and residents
 - Organization of the Department of Public Safety

Fire Extinguishers

- Fire extinguishers were removed from hallways in the residence halls in the early 1990s for three reasons; (A) once fire suppression systems (sprinklers) were installed they were no longer required by fire safety code (B) it is believed that fighting fires is dangerous, delays evacuation, and could delay emergency response and (C) vandalism/tampering with fire extinguishers was common and could result in danger and delay to a person who tried to use an extinguisher that had been compromised by horseplay or malicious intent.

Statistics

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) The number of reported fires in the dormitory occupancy group increased 34% from 3,200 in 1980 to 4,290 in 2006. In comparison, structure fires of all types declined 51% from 1980 to 2006.

Facts & Figures

- In 2003-2006, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 3,570 structure fires in dormitories, fraternities, sororities, and barracks. These fires caused an annual average of 7 civilian deaths, 54 civilian fire injuries, and \$29.4 million in direct property damage. Note: Dormitories include school, college and university dormitories; fraternity and sorority houses; monasteries; bunk houses; barracks; and nurses' quarters.
- Between 2003-2006, cooking equipment was involved in 75% of the reported dormitory fires; this includes confined or contained fires.
- Structure fires in dormitories, fraternities, sororities, and barracks are more common during the evening hours between 5-11 p.m., as well as on weekends.
- Only 5% of fires in these properties began in the bedroom, but these fires accounted for 62% of the civilian deaths and one-quarter (26%) of the civilian injuries.

No Smoking

- **No Smoking:** Connecticut State Law prohibits smoking in state-owned buildings. Smoking is not permitted within 25 feet of a residence hall

Grilling

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