Residence Hall Fire
Safety
at Teachers College-
Columbia University

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Fire Statistics

Annual Averages at Colleges and Universities (1994-1998)

- 2,140 structural fires
- 3 deaths
- 102 injuries
- Most occurred during early morning hours
The Primary Cause of Fire

in Colleges or Universities was unattended candles.
As a result candles are banned from many Dormitories.
Seton Hall - January 19, 2000

It only took 17 minutes for the fire to cause the following consequences:

- 3 fatalities
- 58 injuries
- 12 hospitalizations
  - four with serious burns
  - several from jumping out 3rd floor windows
- Long-term psychological trauma
Fire Source

The source of the Seton Hall fire is still under investigation. However, the combustible fuel was three upholstered couches in the third floor lounge, which caused intense heat and smoke.
Dorm Fire

Fires happen at Colleges and Universities. In the Spring of 2001 a Princeton student lost 95% of the contents in the room as a result of a fire.
Fire Prevention

Things you can do to control the amount of combustible material (fuel) in your room:

- Use only College approved furniture
- Minimize the use of draperies, curtains and other free-hanging decorations
- Remove newspapers, trash and recycling materials on a consistent basis.
Control Sources of Ignition

- Do not overload electric circuits and make sure extension cords are used properly.
- Use a power adapter/strip with a fuse that can be reset if there is an power overload.
Fire Detection & Alarms

- When a room smoke detector is activated, it will alert the room only.

- When a pull station is activated, the general alarm in the building is activated and Safety and Security are notified.
The purpose of fire extinguishers is for first responders to put out small fires and prevent spreading.

They should NEVER be used for any other purpose.
Insert Pull Station
Sprinkler Systems

- If your dormitory has a sprinkler system please keep the sprinkler heads clear of any type of obstruction.

- Keep stored materials at least 18 inches from the sprinkler head. Do not hang any items from the sprinkler head.
Evacuation ( Insert our signs )

React promptly to all alarms
- Get Out!

Know at least two evacuation routes from your room
Evacuation Procedures

✓ Take your room key
✓ Check door before opening
✓ Open the door slowly
Evacuation Procedures

✓ Close doors behind you
✓ Stay low
✓ Follow hall to exit
✓ Remain outside until “All Clear” signal is given by College officials
Evacuation Procedures

If you are trapped, \textit{stay in your room and dial #3333 or 9, 9-1-1}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [✓] Give information
  \item [✓] Put towels under door
  \item [✓] Hang sheet outside of window
\end{itemize}

For complete procedure - refer to Guide to Residence Life
Mandatory Evacuation Drills

- State law requires that the College conduct two fire drills per year.

- Everyone should evacuate immediately ANY TIME the alarm sounds.
The following are some examples of prohibitions:

- torchiere halogen lamps
- flammable holiday decorations (e.g., live trees & wreaths)
- candles
- fireworks or flammable liquids

Please see the Guide to Residence Life for full details.
Policy
(Recommended)

✓ Room entry doors – wedged/propped = automatic fine.
✓ Candles – automatic fine (Candles are banned).
✓ Refrigerator/Freezer – Only **ONE** per occupant.
✓ Evacuation Placards on back of the doors.
✓ Fines – Charged per occupant NOT divided amongst roommates.
✓ No removal of screens or doors from rooms.
✓ Room entry doors will be locked by all College personnel when leaving rooms.
Carbon Monoxide

What do you think of having these?
Fire Safety Violations

The following are the most common fire safety violations:

- Improper use of electric cords.
- Entry doors propped open.
- Tampering with fire extinguishers.
- Blocking or obstructing egress routes.
The following are sanctions that can result from non compliance: (Recommended)

- **Fines** -- Will Cost You $$
- **Disciplinary Measures** -- Can Affect Your College Status
- **Criminal Prosecution**
- **Refer to RLG for Penalty Specifics**
Health and Safety Inspections will begin during Fall of 2003. All apartments and rooms will be entered by Housing and Residence Life staff at least once throughout the year. If you have any questions please refer to the Guide to Residence Life.
Things to Remember

- Review all fire and safety policy changes.
- It only takes minutes for fire to spread.
- The toxic smoke is what causes injury and death.
- Fires can be prevented if individuals take responsibility for their actions.
- When the alarm sounds get out and stay out.
For Questions or More Information Contact:
Security Housing and Residence Life Staff Safety Contacts.