

## Off Campus Housing Fire Safety Information

Dear UNH Students,

We realize many of you are planning to move off campus next year. As you find housing, sign leases, and find roommates, please also keep these fire safety guidelines in mind.

### **As you're looking at places to live:**

- *Are smoke detectors in place?* A minimum of one should be located adjacent to each sleeping area. If not, contact your landlord about installing one.
- *Do the smoke detectors work?* Test smoke detectors monthly if a test button is present. "Chirping" indicates a low battery. If the smoke detector isn't working either change the batteries or contact your landlord as soon as possible to repair it.
- *Do you know your second way out your home? Have you made a plan?* If a fire blocks your main exit you want to know a second way out, be it a back door or a window.
- *Are hallways and stairways clear and unobstructed?* If smoke is filling the air you will have a hard time seeing and to avoid tripping hazards slowing your exit you want to keep exit pathways as clear as possible.
- *Do sleeping room windows open completely?* Check this as they may be a crucial method of escape.
- *Do the upper floors have a fire escape or ladder available for each bedroom (if there are multiple floors)?*
- *Check all doors leading to the outside.* All doors should open full with little effort. Little used doors often get stuck over time, check doors often and have them serviced if they become difficult to open.
- *If fire extinguishers are present, do you know where they are located?* If fire extinguishers are available and you are trained how to use one they can be a valuable safety tool for extinguishing small fires before they get out of hand. But remember, if you don't know how to use an extinguisher, or if the fire seems too large, don't try to extinguish it, just get out! Contact your local fire department and they will answer any questions you may have on the proper use of fire extinguishers.
- *Are the fire extinguishers in normal charged conditions?* Check gauge. If the gauge is low or the extinguisher has been used, please call your building manager to have it refilled or replaced.

- *Are the fire alarms activating/visible (in multi-unit apartment buildings)?* Know the location of these fire alarm pull stations.
- *Where is the nearest fire hydrant on the street (if applicable)?*

**When you first move in:**

- Arrange furniture and decorations so that all automatic fire sprinkler heads are clear. Do not hang anything from fire sprinklers.
- Keep furniture clear of windows and doors for quick exiting.
- Never prop stairway doors open. Keep hallways clear.
- Identify all emergency exits on your floor. In case of fire, elevators will not be in service.
- Never overload electrical outlets. Do not staple, tape or nail extension cords or run them under carpeting. Use UL-listed electrical power strips and unplug appliances when not in use.

**Throughout the school year as you're living there:**

- Never ignore a fire alarm; fires can spread quickly. Evacuate immediately even when there is no smoke present. Have an escape plan with two evacuation routes from every room.
- Candles are extremely dangerous! Use appropriate holders that completely protect the flame from contact with anything. Never place a candle near curtains, poster or anything flammable. Keep candles away from fans, open windows or anywhere they can be knocked over. Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Do not leave cooking unattended. Turn off all burners and your stove whenever you leave your apartment.
- Do not use grills on combustible (wood) porches or balconies or within 10 feet of combustible construction.
- When smoking, use a sturdy "non-tipping" ashtray. After parties, check furniture cushions for smoldering cigarette butts. Be careful not to empty smoldering ashtrays in the trash. Take all trash outside after a party.
- Avoid using extension cords and use all electrical appliances properly.
- Be careful when using alcohol- alcohol consumption is a major factor in fire deaths.

The Durham Fire Department is available to answer your questions and perform safety inspections. Just call 603.862.1426.

Consider purchasing renters insurance or at least have your parents check their homeowners insurance to see if your off campus home would be covered by their policy. For additional information on renters insurance, please visit: [www.iii.org/media/publications/brochures/rentersins/](http://www.iii.org/media/publications/brochures/rentersins/) or call 1-800-942-4242.

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Health & Safety at the University of California at Berkeley; Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services at Seton Hall University; Office of Off-Campus Housing Services at the University of Maryland and Ann Arbor, MI Fire Department.

Sincerely,

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