



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **1 University of Wisconsin - Whitewater Injured by Fire; 23 Sorority Sisters Displaced**

Newburyport, Massachusetts - March 21, 2014.

A fire at the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater's Sigma Sigma Sigma (Tri Sigma) Sorority House, was reported at approximately 10:44 this morning, March 21, 2014. One of the sorority sisters was transported to the hospital for smoke inhalation. All twenty three occupants are now displaced, due to heavy smoke and water damage.

When it was initially reported, the fire was small; by the time the fire department arrived, it had grown considerably. The fire occurred on the first floor of the house and fire damage was limited to a single room. The cause of the fire is currently listed as undetermined. Whitewater firefighters were assisted by fire and EMS personnel from Elkhorn, Fort Atkinson La Grange, Janesville, Jefferson, Walworth County Sheriff's Department, Whitewater Police Department, and the Walworth County Arson Task Force.

[The University of Wisconsin - Whitewater website](#) lists Tri Sigma as an official, university sanctioned Greek organization. [Wisconsin fire code](#) dictates that all buildings that are used by university sanctioned fraternities and sororities, if built before January 7, 2006, were required to have sprinkler systems installed by January 1, 2014. The property owners were in the process of installing fire sprinklers in the house, nearly three months after the deadline, but, as it was not yet complete, the system was not operational at the time of the fire.



“The Center for Campus Fire Safety wants to point out the necessity of fire sprinkler systems”, said Paul D. Martin, President of The Center for Campus Fire Safety. Fire Sprinklers protect people and structures. Most people don't realize that 8 out of 10 fire deaths occur at night when everyone is asleep. Fires are also fast; they can go from a tiny flame to total destruction in as little as three minutes. Fire sprinklers can suppress and often extinguish a fire before the fire department arrives, providing additional time to escape.

86 fatal fires have been documented that occurred on a college campus, in Greek housing or in off-campus housing within 3-miles of the campus - claiming a total of 123 victims.

- » 73 fires have occurred in off-campus housing claiming 104 victims
- » 7 fires have occurred in on-campus building or residence halls claiming 9 victims
- » 6 fires have occurred in Greek housing claiming 10 victims

CCFS has been documenting specific campus related fires deaths since Year 2000. Current and more detailed statistics, along with the definition of how we define “campus related fires” are always posted on the website, along with a host of fire safety resources and tips for fire safety professionals as well as students in both universities and off-campus housing. One of the resources includes a daily and ongoing listing of other fire incidents in the higher education arena.



To learn more about CCFS and its programs, visit [www.campusfiresafety.org](http://www.campusfiresafety.org).

**For additional information:**

Fire Fatality Statistics and Definition:

<http://www.campusfiresafety.org/firefatalitystatistics>

Continual e-news -campus fire & safety:

<http://www.campusfiresafety.org/News>

Campus Fire Safety Resources: <http://www.campusfiresafety.org/resources>

**About The Center for Campus Fire Safety (CCFS)**

The Center for Campus Fire Safety (CCFS) is a non-profit, member focused organization devoted to reducing the loss of life from fire at our nation's campuses. The mission of The Center for Campus Fire Safety is to serve as an advocate for the promotion of campus fire safety. CCFS serves as the focal point for the efforts of a number of organizations and also as a clearinghouse for information relating to campus fire safety. Visit us at [www.campusfiresafety.org](http://www.campusfiresafety.org) for more information.

**Media Contacts**

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