



CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY CODE TALK

Campus Fire Safety e-NewZone

During NFPA's Fire Prevention Week October 9 -15, college students learn life-saving benefits of smoke alarms and escape planning

With the fall school semester underway and thousands of students settling in to classes and getting accustomed to living away from home, the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA) reminds everyone to be mindful of fire safety.

A recent report published by the United States Fire Administration (USFA), "[Campus Fire Fatalities in Residential Buildings \(2000-2015\)](#)," states there were 85 fatal fires in dorms, fraternities, sororities and off-campus housing resulting in 118 fatalities - an average of approximately seven per school year. Additional facts state that nearly all (94 percent) of the fires occurred in off-campus housing; alcohol was a factor in 76 percent of the fires; most fires occurred on Friday, Saturday or Sunday; and nearly 60 percent of the fires occurred in homes where smoke alarms were either missing or had been tampered with.

Part of the challenge for fire educators, college residential advisors (RA's) and college health and safety officials in educating students about the dangers of fire is that most students are on their own for the first time and safety isn't top-of-mind for them. And while NFPA research points to September and October as peak months for fires in college housing, parents and students are often too preoccupied with numerous other details associated with starting the school year to consider fire prevention measures.

This year, in a continued effort to raise awareness about the importance of smoke alarms, NFPA launches Fire Prevention Week 2016 on October 9-15. The theme, "Don't Wait - Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years" is a great way for fire safety educators to share messages around the life-saving benefits of smoke alarms and escape planning with students, and serves as an important reminder for everyone, including parents and landlords, to learn three key messages:

- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years
- Make sure you know how old all the smoke alarms are in the house
- Find out how old a smoke alarm is, and look at the date of manufacture on the back of the alarm; the alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date.

The following are additional key fire safety tips for students living on- or off-campus:



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- Make sure your dormitory or apartment has smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside every sleeping area and on each level. For the best protection, all smoke alarms should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.
- Make sure you know how old all the smoke alarms are in your home. Ask your landlord to replace alarms that are outdated.
- Test all smoke alarms at least monthly, and never remove batteries or disable smoke alarms.
- Look for fully sprinklered housing when choosing a dorm or off-campus housing.
- Learn your building's evacuation plan and practice all drills as if they were the real thing. If you live off campus, have a fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.

Two new fire safety efforts targeting students are also underway this fall and are a great complement to this year's Fire Prevention Week theme, including the Massachusetts-specific "[Best Roommates Evah!](#)" campaign that highlights the importance of having working smoke alarms and two ways out of a house in case of a fire emergency. The second, the "[See It Before You Sign It](#)" national campaign, encourages parents to take a more active role in helping their loved ones choose secure, fire-safe housing in apartments or houses that are not on campus, including making sure there are working smoke alarms.

As we kick off the 2016/2017 school year, let's make it a fire-safe one. Learn more about NFPA's Fire Prevention Week campaign and get additional tips and resources about smoke alarms at www.nfpa.org/FPW.



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