



OFF-CAMPUS

By Tim Knisely
August 2019

Preparing for Move-in:

Summer is nearly over and property managers across the country are preparing for turn-over. Most have been busy sprucing up their properties to be appealing to the student as well as the parents that will be helping them move in.

Hopefully, you have not forgotten the required maintenance of your fire and life safety systems. Let's start with the most often forgotten:



The smoke alarms: You should have a smoke alarm in each bedroom and at least one per floor in the common areas; such as hallway, living room or the basement. Not the kitchen! Be careful to maintain the proper distances from the bathroom doors as well as cooking alliances as outlined in newer alarm instructions. All smoke alarms must be functional and be sure to install new batteries, if so equipped. Newer alarms have a 10 - year non-replaceable battery. Know what you have and be sure that your staff are trained in the proper maintenance and placement. It helps to have one brand and model if possible, to make staff training easier. This also limits the stock of batteries you'll need. If your smoke alarms are interconnected, be sure that the models are compatible.



OFF-CAMPUS

By Tim Knisely
August 2019



Carbon monoxide alarms are another device that is frequently forgotten. Verify the placement requirements with your AHJ, but typically when CO alarms are required these need to be in the hallways near the sleeping rooms on each floor. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the installation requirements and follow the battery requirements as you would do for smoke alarms.

o For both smoke and CO alarms, or combination alarms make sure these are within the life expectancy set by the manufacturer. Smoke alarms have a 10- year life and CO alarms are anywhere from 7 to 10 years.

A fire extinguisher should be in the kitchen area (depending on your local code) and needs to be inspected at least annually. If you use disposables, know how to check the extinguisher for proper operation. Also know where this should be installed. Most times it must be installed in a visible location near the kitchen. Extinguishers stored in closets or under the sink may not be found during a fire. Therefore, useless.



OFF-CAMPUS

By Tim Knisely
August 2019

Dead-bolt locks on the entry doors need to be functional and may not be double-keyed to provide for a safe egress. Be sure window locks are installed when the outside grade is less than six feet below the window.

For the building life safety systems, these will typically require a fire protection contractor to conduct the maintenance and testing. If the building has a fire alarm or sprinkler system be sure these have been inspected in the past year. If you have had painters in your buildings, be extra careful and check all life safety devices after painting is complete. You might be in for a large repair bill if the painters were t careful.



In the corridors or hallways, make sure all areas are clear. All stairway fire must doors self-close and latch. Exit signs and emergency lighting need tested for proper operation and battery life. Be especially mindful of storage issues during move-in.

If your buildings have standpipes, know how to check these for damaged or missing caps and reducers. Make sure the valve is closed entirely, as these are

frequently tampered with and found open.

The fire department connection for your sprinkler and/or standpipe must be visible from the street or have a sign that provides direction. Be sure all vegetation is



OFF-CAMPUS

By Tim Knisely
August 2019

trimmed away and that there are not any obstructions within three feet in any direction.

o Breakaway, brass or locking caps must be in place to prevent damage to the threads, and to make sure that nothing gets lodged inside the pipes.

Outside, make sure the street address is clearly marked along the front entrance or street side. This is for emergency responders, as well as visitors and delivery drivers to find the building.



For more information about your building systems and maintenance needs, check with your local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). This could be the building inspector, property maintenance inspector or fire inspector. It may also be a state fire code or law that you must comply with. Get their number, establish a relationship with them. It will pay dividends in the end.

Feel free to contact me with any question and I can put you in touch with a resource if I can't answer your questions.

Have fun!



OFF-CAMPUS

By Tim Knisely
August 2019



Tim Knisely

Tim Knisely is the newly appointed Training Manager for the Automatic Fire Alarm Association (AFAA). In this position he coordinates all training programs that are offered by the organization. Prior to this, he more than 20 years as the Senior Fire Inspector (AHJ) for the Centre Region Code Administration in State College, PA. Tim has been active with The Center for Campus Fire Safety since its inception and served on the Board of Directors until 2018.



Published by Center for Campus Fire Safety.

www.campusfiresafety.org

978.961.0410 | [email](mailto:)