



OFF-CAMPUS

By Tim Knisely

June 2016

Wishful thinking? Or, maybe some will want to 'comply'

Several of the training programs that I've presented for CCFS over the years have included the fire safety reporting requirements contained in *The Clery Act*.

Originally titled *The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990*, and renamed the *Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act*. In 2008 *The Clery Act* was amended by Congress to create fire safety reporting requirements for institutions with on-campus student housing facilities, and these

reports had to be submitted beginning in 2010, and annually thereafter.

While this requirement has been accepted with mixed reviews by campus officials for the last six years it provides a great resource for parents, students and administrators. Since more than 94% of our campus housing fatalities in the last 15 years have occurred off-campus, I frequently think how much this act could do to improve the off-campus housing issues that we face. Imagine how informed the parents could be when choosing housing from a list of properties that are protected with

fire detection or sprinkler systems, or both. The landlords would send a letter to each incoming student advising them of what they should bring - and more importantly what should be left at home. And to also inform the student of the calendar of fire safety training events that everyone must attend. Then, I wake up. But, is it really out of reach? Just imagine with me for a little bit longer...

If you like light reading, take a look at *The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting* and wonder, like I do, if the landlords chose to voluntarily follow some



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of these requirements how much safer their properties would be. Maybe, just maybe we can convince some of the landlords to voluntarily utilize some of these federal requirements in their own marketing and move-in packets.

It all starts by tweaking some of the highlights from [*The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting*](#):

- A description of each student housing facility fire safety system.
- The number of fire drills held during the previous year.

- The landlord's rules on portable electrical appliances, smoking limitations and open flames within the dwelling.
- The landlord's procedures for evacuation in the event of a fire.
- The fire safety education and related training that is provided to the student and staff, provided by the landlord.
- The phone number for the landlord or maintenance staff that students should report after a fire has occurred.
- The landlord's plan for future improvements in fire safety.
- The fire statistics for each property owned by the landlord. This would include the number of fires, the cause of each fire, the number of injuries or deaths if applicable, and the value of property damaged.

How many of the tenant caused violations or hazards could be eliminated if the tenants were informed of the rules, codes or ramification from their



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actions? By providing basic fire safety education to every tenant how many cooking fires or smoking related fires could be prevented? How many injuries or fatalities would be prevented by allowing tenants to make informed decisions, and having the tools and knowledge to escape when it all goes wrong?

Maybe I'm unrealistic? Who knows, but I'm willing to try all new ideas to try and make a dent in the disproportionate statistics that we have in the off-campus market. We need to do better! What do you think?

Fire Extinguisher

follow up: Earlier this year I wrote an article about [fire extinguishers](#), and the use and application in the campus environment. Readers were encouraged to submit tips or training successes on the [Off-Campus Fire & Life Safety Alliance](#). Jim Tidwell, a member of the CCFS Advisory Council forwarded some information to me about a study that examines fire extinguisher use by ordinary people. The study was sponsored by the [Fire Equipment Manufacturer's Association](#) and carried out by Worcester Polytechnic Institute

and Eastern Kentucky University and has some pretty amazing findings. Check out the [report here](#), and see the [FEMA website](#) to see fire extinguisher tips, training videos and other useful information.

Thanks to Jim and others that commented!

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