

A. Fire Safety in Dormitories

1. Fire Hazards on Campus

- a. Carelessness with cigarettes, matches, etc., accounts for the greatest number of residence hall fires.
- b. Candles can be dangerous. Leaving them burning unattended or too close to combustible materials can lead to fires.
- c. Some decorations ignite easily and allow a fire to spread rapidly. These include holiday decorations, large posters, filmy curtains, and flammables tacked to the ceiling.
- d. Accumulations of trash and newspapers, especially in corridors and stairwells, are a fire hazard. Report such accumulations to a Resident Assistant.
- e. Common materials like paint, paint removers, hair spray, duplicator fluid, and thinners can be fire hazards if they are handled or stored improperly.
- f. A cigarette or incense that falls on a stuffed chair, sofa, or mattress can smolder for hours, then suddenly burst into flame. Always extinguish these before leaving room.
- g. Careless use of heat-producing appliances can start fires. Especially hazardous are:
 - h. Hot plates left on and unattended or grease build up on coils.
 - i. Electric blankets left on when resident is not in bed.
 - ii. Irons left on, lying down, unattended, or used on a bed.
 - iii. Toaster ovens left on, with accumulated grease, or unattended.
 - iv. Hair dryers laid down while they are on or used to dry clothes.
- i. Portable space heaters placed near combustibles like curtains or used to dry clothes. Setting fires on purpose is a leading cause of campus fires. Arson is a serious crime that can result in unnecessary deaths. Arsonists shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
- j. False alarms are also a hazard. They create a mood of apathy so you may not react quickly enough to save your life if there is a real fire. And if fire fighters are out on a false alarm, they will not be available to fight a real fire. Individuals caught setting false alarms shall face disciplinary action and possible prosecution.

2. Fire Safety Features

- a. Fire extinguishers are designed to fight small fires. Some important guidelines are:
 - i. Find out where they are located and what kind of fires they are designed to fight.
 - ii. Learn in advance how to operate them properly.
 - iii. Do not block access to extinguishers.
 - iv. Report all extinguishers that are missing, damaged, or have been discharged.
 - v. Do not empty fire extinguishers as a prank.
- b. Fire Alarms
 - i. Know where alarms are located.
 - ii. Learn how to activate them.

LSU University Safety Manual
Section IV, Part A – Fire Safety in Dormitories

- iii. If you hear a fire alarm, alert as many people in the building as possible and evacuate the building.

c. Fire Doors

- i. Prevent fire and smoke from spreading and provide a safe escape route.
- ii. Keep fire doors closed at all times. Report any that need repair or have been propped open.
- iii. Do not block access to fire doors.

Note: Doors with automatic closers should remain open—they will close by themselves in the event of fire.

d. Fire Exits

- i. Know how to find them, even if it is dark and smoky.
- ii. Do not use them as porches or balconies.
- iii. Keep them free of obstructions such as plants, bicycles, storage boxes, etc.

e. Emergency Numbers

- i. Emergency numbers shall be clearly posted next to phones or on bulletin boards, etc., for quick dialing.
- ii. In the event of fire or other emergency, call Campus Police at 911. If injury is involved, tell the police; they will alert EMS and the Infirmary.

f. Smoke detectors alert while there is still time to escape. Remember, smoke is the greatest danger in a fire.

- i. Check their location near your room.
- ii. Do not hang things over them or cover them up.
- iii. Test regularly, if authorized to do so.

3. Fire Prevention for Students

Follow all campus rules and take the following precautions:

a. Smoking

- i. Smoke only where permitted. Never smoke when drowsy, in bed, or near flammable liquids. (A spark can cause an explosion.)
- ii. Store matches properly, not in bureau drawers or in pockets. Close matchbook cover before striking.
- iii. Use safe ashtrays (not plastic or paper cups). Clean them often. Douse with water before emptying into wastebaskets. Do not put ashes/cigarettes out on carpeted floors.

b. Housekeeping

- i. Do not pile books and magazines on radiators.
- ii. Store combustibles away from ignition sources.
- iii. Empty wastebaskets often.
- iv. Keep exits clear of possessions and trash at all times.
- v. Store flammable liquids (including paint and paint remover) in proper metal containers. Store aerosols properly. Store all in approved area, never inside your room.

LSU University Safety Manual
Section IV, Part A – Fire Safety in Dormitories

- vi. Store incompatible chemicals with adequate separation.

c. Appliance Use

- i. Use appliances according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- ii. Do not leave heat-producing appliances unattended. Unplug them when not in use, and let them cool before storing. Do not cover ventilation openings on TVs, stereos, and radios.
- iii. Unplug all appliances before leaving on vacations.
- iv. Check appliances for damaged cords and circuits. Have faulty appliances repaired or discard them.
- v. Do not overload circuits by plugging too many appliances into one outlet. Use heavy duty UL approved extension cords to increase cord length, not to plug in more appliances.
- vi. Do not use hot plates, grills, or other appliances in your dormitory if they are prohibited.
- vii. Halogen lamps shall not be used in dormitory rooms.

d. Other Precautions

- i. Decorate for holidays or parties with flame-retardant or noncombustible materials. Remove them before leaving for the holidays. Use artificial Christmas trees. Check lights for damaged wires and loose connections. Unplug lights before leaving the room.
- ii. Never store motorcycles, mopeds, or gas cans indoors. Any spark—even from turning on a light—can ignite gas vapors.
- iii. Use grills and hibachis only where permitted—never indoors, next to buildings, on fire escapes, or on stairways. Do not leave them unattended while fire is burning.
- iv. Do not tamper with emergency equipment. Leave extinguishers and alarms alone except in a fire emergency. Never disconnect a smoke detector.
- v. Report damaged or missing extinguishers, alarms, smoke detectors, or exit signs to a Resident Assistant or to Facility Services.
 - 1. Make a plan. Think about how you would exit from different areas of your residence hall/classroom building.

Decide on at least two exits (primary and alternate) from your room, classroom, etc.
 - 2. Count and remember the number of doors between the room and the exits.
 - 3. Take special note of the location of safety equipment and of exits in other buildings.
 - 4. Have an outside meeting place to get a head count.

e. Fire Drills

Fire and smoke drills are very important, especially in residence halls. If you know what to do, you are less likely to panic. (Some drills may be held at night to practice escaping in the dark.) Take fire drills seriously; they may save your life. Follow directions of the person in charge.

f. In Case of Fire:

- i. Stay calm. Think out what you have to do. Then act because every second counts.
- ii. Sound alarm to warn others. Pull the alarm box. If there is none, shout and pound on doors as you evacuate. Never ignore an alarm. (In buildings equipped with smoke detector systems, the alarm will sound automatically—if it doesn't, pull the alarm!)
 - 1. Call LSU Police (578-3231). They will immediately call the City Fire Department.

LSU University Safety Manual
Section IV, Part A – Fire Safety in Dormitories

- Give full address clearly.
 - 2. Describe extent of fire.
 - 3. Answer any questions before you hang up.
- iii. If you are in your room when you hear an alarm, feel the door, from bottom to top (heat rises). If it is hot, don't open it. Stay in your room.
- iv. If it is cool, open it a crack—but be ready to slam it shut if you find smoke or flames. Leave if corridor seems safe.
 - 1. If you can exit:
 - Take your key and walk to nearest exit if there is no smoke. If there is smoke or if it is dark, crawl to exit, counting doors so you don't get lost.
 - 2. Close all doors behind you.
 - 3. Do not use elevators—they are deathtraps in a fire. Use the stairs; hold on to rail.
 - 4. Turn back if you encounter heavy smoke (it is deadly) and look for another exit.
 - 5. Stand clear of the building and out of the way of the fighters when you get outside. Never go back into a burning building for any reason. Report to your meeting place.
- v. If you are trapped in your room:
 - 1. Keep your door closed.
 - 2. Seal cracks around door with tape, clothes, sheets, etc.
 - 3. Open windows slightly, if there is no smoke outside. Open at top (to vent smoke) or at bottom (to let in fresh air).
 - 4. Tie wet cloth over nose and mouth to aid breathing.
 - 5. Stay low, where air is fresher (smoke rises).
 - 6. Signal rescuers by waving a sheet or clothing out the window, or telephone for help.
 - 7. Do not jump if you are higher than two stories.
- vi. If clothing catches fire—Stop, Drop, and Roll!
 - 1. Do not run—it will fan the flames. Drop to the floor and roll out fire.
 - 2. Drop and roll someone else on the ground. Use a rug, coat or blanket to smother flames.
 - 3. Cool the burn with cold water. Get prompt medical attention.

4. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

a. Types of Fires:

Class A—Ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper, cloth, some rubbers, and plastics.

Class B—Flammable liquids such as gasoline, oils, grease, tars, lacquer, and oil-based paints.

LSU University Safety Manual
Section IV, Part A – Fire Safety in Dormitories

Class C–Energized electrical equipment such as fuse boxes, electrical outlets, circuit breakers, wiring, appliances, and other machinery.

Class D–Combustible metals such as fires involving titanium, magnesium, lithium, potassium, or sodium.

b. Types of Fire Extinguishers:

- i. Fire extinguishers come in various shapes, sizes, colors, and types. They shall only be used on the type of fire they are rated for. Before an emergency arises, it is recommended that all employees/students read and understand the directions on the fire extinguisher(s) in their area.
- ii. A water extinguisher is designated by an “A” inside a green triangle on the label and is easily recognized by its silver container. This extinguisher is only to be used on Class A type fires. CAUTION: Do not use on electrical fires.
- iii. A CO₂ extinguisher is designated by a “B” in a red square and a “C” in a blue circle on the label and is easily recognized by the large black discharge horn. This type of extinguisher is only to be used on Class B and/or C type fires. CAUTION: Do not use in a confined space.
- iv. Multi-Purpose and Ordinary Dry Chemical extinguishers are designated by an “A” inside a green triangle, a “B” inside a red square, and a “C” inside a blue circle on the label respectively. It is easily recognized by its red container and/or piggy back cartridge. This type of extinguisher is only to be used on Class B and/or C type fires, while multi-purpose dry chemical can also be used on Class A type fires. CAUTION: Respiratory irritant, if inhaled.
- v. Halon 1211 extinguishers are labeled by the same designations as a multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher, “ABC.” Halon is usually packaged in a red container similar to a dry chemical extinguisher, but it is usually not recognizable until the label is read. This extinguisher is for use on Class A, B, and C type fires. CAUTION: Do not use in a confined space.

NOTE: A Halon 1211 or CO₂ fire extinguisher is recommended for use in computer rooms or in areas where electronic equipment is located. Dry chemical and water extinguishers are not.

- vi. A Combustible Metal fire extinguisher is designated D by a “D” inside a yellow star on the label. This extinguisher is only for use on Class D type fires.

c. How to Use a Fire Extinguisher:

- i. The method described below is a standard application for how to use a fire extinguisher; however, it is highly recommended that all employees/students read and understand the directions on the fire extinguisher(s) in their area. This method does not apply to all portable extinguishers.
- ii. To use extinguisher, remember P A S S.

Pull the pin. (Some may require pressing a puncture lever or releasing a lock hatch.)

Aim the extinguisher nozzle or cone at the base of the fire.

Squeeze or press the handle.

Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire until it appears to be out. With a water extinguisher, place your finger over the nozzle to create a mist. Stop the extinguisher, check the fire area, and (if necessary) continue your extinguishment efforts. Always back away from a fire so you will not be caught off guard.

5. Fire Drills

- a. For persons to respond properly when a fire occurs, they shall know there is a fire (alarm), they shall have adequate means of egress (escape), and they shall have a plan of action. A fire drill is needed to test that plan of action.
- b. The purpose of the fire drill is to be able to anticipate what can happen during an actual emergency and also to provide for prompt, effective action.
- c. The goals of the fire drill are to minimize loss of life and personal injury, to protect property with a minimum of damage, and to restore normal operations as soon as possible.
- d. The fire drill also helps to minimize panic and confusion among the occupants who sometimes may change rooms/dorms every semester.
- e. Unannounced fire drills shall take place at least once a semester, preferably between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight. Floor monitors for each dormitory shall fill in the short Fire Drill form.
- f. Head Residents and Resident Managers have the primary responsibility for fire safety and the development and execution of plans for fire drills and evacuation which include:
 - i. Testing the alarm system the day prior to opening dormitories each semester or summer term. Report problems to the Department of Residential Life so that they can be reported to Physical Plant.
 - ii. Maintaining flashlights in all buildings to be issued and signed out to the Fire Chief and Sub-Chiefs.
 - iii. Maintaining current fire drill procedures for each Resident Hall which includes:
 - a. Location of fire alarm call boxes.
 - b. Control panels.
 - c. Explanation of alarm signals, if coded, and how to activate general alarms.
 - d. How to deactivate alarm and reset system.
 - e. Evacuation routes and duties of fire squad members.
 - f. List of fire squad members.
 - iv. Explaining the purpose of the fire drills and procedures for residents to follow at house and section meetings.
 - v. Removing the building roster, room chart, and pass keys in the event of fire requiring evacuation of the building.
 - vi. Instructing the fire squad each semester of assigned duties. (Be sure Wardens are designated to hold emergency exit doors open to admit residents re- entering the building after fire drills.)

LSU University Safety Manual
Section IV, Part A – Fire Safety in Dormitories

- g. Head Residents and Resident Managers are to advise their House Council to select a Fire Chief early in the semester. The Fire Chief (and Assistant Fire Chief in large buildings) is to work closely with the Head Resident or Resident Manager to select and appoint Sub-Chiefs and Wardens.
- h. Sub-Chiefs are needed for each emergency exit and Wardens for at least each floor. Where floors are physically separated, additional Wardens shall be selected. (Additional Wardens for each 8-10 rooms per floor may be selected to enhance the effectiveness of the fire squad.) In areas where Resident Assistants serve, they are to be “senior” Wardens for their section.
- i. Upon completion of the fire squad, a meeting shall be held to explain procedures and plans for fires and fire drills and to inform the squad of the location of alarm boxes, types of signals, location of and how to use fire extinguishers, safe evacuation assembly points (at least 50-100 feet from the building), procedure to use in accounting for students, all clear signals, and the squad’s responsibility to note problem areas for evaluation after fire drills. This meeting shall be held no later than five days after the opening of the building to occupants.
- j. Duties for fire squad members are to:
 - i. Locate and assist Head Residents when fire alarms sound.
 - ii. Observe execution of fire drill evacuation.
 - iii. Verify with Sub-Chiefs that building is clear.
 - iv. Advise evacuated students when “all clear” is given for re-entry to the building.
 - v. Meet with fire squad for drill evaluation.
 - vi. Submit Fire Drill Report within 48 hours of drill.
- k. An Assistant Fire Chief must assist the Fire Chief in large buildings when it is impossible to observe and contact groups assembled in back of buildings.
- l. Sub-chiefs shall:
 - i. Verify with Warden that building is cleared and notify Fire Chief.
 - ii. Supervise return of residents to building and assure that emergency doors are closed and secure.
 - iii. Meet with Fire Chief for evaluation of drill.
- m. Wardens shall:
 - i. Verify that assigned area residents follow evacuation procedures correctly.
 - ii. Report to Sub-Chiefs that all residents are out, or that one may be trapped in building in the event of an actual fire.
 - iii. Submit Floor Fire Drill Report to Fire Chief within 24 hours of drill.
 - iv. Meet with Fire Chief for evaluation of drill.
 - v. Fire Drill Report Forms can be found in the Appendix.

6. Guide for Fire-Safe Christmas Decorations in Student Rooms

- a. Because Christmas decorations are an extreme fire hazard, the following limitations on decorations are necessary:
 - i. All decorations shall be fire resistant.
 - ii. Natural Christmas trees are not permitted in Residence Halls. Because most Christmas trees must be cut well in advance of use, they dry out to a considerable degree and are too combustible for safe use.
 - iii. The use of burning candles is very dangerous and is therefore prohibited.
 - iv. Door decorations or foil shall be suspended from the edges of the door. Remember that tape and other adhesives may cause damage on the door surfaces. Keep electrical decorations away from the metal door frames; do not string lights so that the door could close on the wiring.
 - v. Check extension cords to insure that they do not have breaks in the insulation. Keep the use of extension cords to a minimum. Use them only for a limited number of small lights, not for appliances.
 - vi. All decorations shall be removed prior to Christmas vacation to facilitate hall cleaning.
- b. From a fire safety viewpoint, metal/plastic trees are desirable because they are not combustible. Illuminate metal trees with indirect lighting (remotely located spotlights or flood-lights). Defective lighting sets placed on the tree may energize the tree with enough voltage to injure someone touching it or cause a short circuit.
- c. Artificial trees labeled as made of non-burning materials may be used. Only approved cool bulbs shall be used on lighting strings.
- d. When decorating rooms and room doors, use only noncombustible material such as foil, glass, or metal. Do not use untreated cotton batting, flock, or paper as they ignite easily and burn continuously. Approved for the door decorations are: (1) all foil wrapping paper, and (2) small Christmas pictures applied to foil. Doors may be totally decorated if decoration or foil is suspended from the edges of the door.
- e. No cut boughs shall be used in student rooms or on doors. Candles are permissible on dining room tables but must not be used in student rooms or public areas. Placing cut tree boughs around a burning candle is extremely dangerous. No exit from the individual floors or houses shall be blocked by Christmas decorations.
- f. If a fire occurs, (1) clear everyone out of the building by pulling the evacuation (fire) alarm, (2) call Campus Police at 911, and (3) contact an advisor. Fight the fire only if you can do so safely, keeping an exit route open. Otherwise, close doors to confine the fire and exit out-of-doors.

7. Guide for Safe Christmas Decorations in Other Common Areas

- a. Natural Trees

LSU University Safety Manual
Section IV, Part A – Fire Safety in Dormitories

Due to their extreme fire hazard, natural trees are not allowed in residence halls.

b. Artificial Trees

- i. Choose only those labeled as made of non-burning materials.
- ii. Use only approved cool bulbs in lighting strings.
- iii. Tree decorations shall be fire resistant.
- iv. Illuminate metal trees with indirect lighting. Lighting sets placed on the tree may “charge” the tree with enough voltage to burn or fatally injure someone touching it.
- v. Lights shall be turned on only for parties. Conserve energy—do not leave lights on.

c. Decorations

- i. Carefully inspect any electrical decorations for frayed cords or exposed metal parts. Destroy any which have defects.
- ii. Do not use extension cords.
- iii. Do not use burning candles. Candles (enclosed in glass) are permissible on dining room tables but shall not be used in student rooms or public areas.
- iv. Do not use cotton batting, flock, and paper unless you are sure they are fire-resistance treated.
- v. Do not use boughs cut from natural trees.
- vi. Do provide plentiful and large ashtrays.
- vii. Do use decorations made of metal, glass, foil, etc.

d. If a fire occurs:

- i. Clear everyone out of the building and sound the evacuation (fire) alarm;
- ii. Call Campus Police at 911; and
- iii. Fight the fire only if there is no risk to your life. Otherwise leave the area, closing doors behind you.