



University, College and Post-Secondary Student Fire Safety – Tip Sheet

As students prepare to move into shared or rented accommodations to attend university, college or other post-secondary institutions, parents, guardians and students themselves should take an active role in finding a safe place to live. It is essential for caregivers and students to talk about fire and life safety. Whether returning to school or leaving home for the first time, a discussion about good fire safety practices can help to ensure this exciting time in a student's life is not marred by a fire tragedy.

Living Safely - What Every Student Should Know to Prevent Fire

1. **Look While You Cook:** Stay in the kitchen when cooking – especially if using oil or high temperatures. If a pot catches fire, have a proper-fitting pot lid handy to slide over the pot and turn off the stove. Cooking requires constant attention. Distractions like televisions, cell phones, or computers can lead to a tragic cooking fire.
2. **Candles:** Do not burn candles. They are a leading cause of fires in Canada.
4. **Smoke Outside:** If you must smoke, only smoke outside of a building and only in areas where it's permitted. Ashtrays should be emptied into a metal container, not the garbage can. Check around furniture cushions after people have been smoking, especially if they have been drinking.
5. **Use Electricity Wisely:** Toasters, coffeemakers and microwaves should be plugged directly into an outlet. If you must use an extension cord, buy one that is the correct gauge for the appliance and has a CSA or ULC approval mark on the label. CSA or ULC approved power bars may be used for stereo equipment, computers and lights.
6. **Clear the Clutter:** Keep things that burn away from heat sources like stovetops, space heaters and electronic equipment. Tea towels and paper too close to burners can catch fire. Keep space heaters (if permitted on campus) at least one metre away from bedding, furniture and curtains.
7. **Working Smoke Alarms:** It's the Law: Your room or apartment must have working smoke alarms. Test them monthly and notify the building manager or landlord immediately if they're not working. Dead batteries must be replaced right away. Nuisance alarms can be avoided by making sure smoke alarms are not located too close to the kitchen or bathroom. Consider getting a smoke alarm with a hush feature. Smoke alarms should be checked after any extended absence such as Christmas break and mid-term break. Never tamper with or disable a smoke alarm.
8. **Plan To Escape:** Know two ways out of your room or apartment in case of fire. Identify all exits and make sure you can use them. If you live in an apartment building, familiarize yourself with the fire safety plan. If you discover a fire, call 911 from a safe location outside.
9. **Be Equipped:** To stay safe, all students should put together a package that includes a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm, a battery powered lantern or flashlight, and a radio with extra batteries.
10. **Learn More:** For more information about fire safety in student accommodations, contact your post-secondary institution and local fire department.