



## *Spring Fire Safety Tips*

Spring has sprung and that means grilling, travelling, outdoor activities and unfortunately, lots of opportunities for fires to occur. Spring is also the time to ensure your safety by changing out your smoke detector batteries when you set your clock ahead for daylight savings.

The Fire Safety Division of EHS urges everyone to pay particular attention to fire safety during the spring season whether you live in on campus housing or in a residence off campus.

**Refer to the Grill Use Policy / Permit for more information pertaining to fire safety regulations when you break out the BBQ.**

During the spring season cooking fires are one of the leading causes of damage to residential structures. Specific causes include:

- Overcooking food
- Unattended cooking
- Misuse of cooking equipment due to unfamiliarity with safety procedures
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs or medications before/during cooking

### **How to Prevent a Fire in Your Residence Hall Apartment, Suite or Room:**

- Candles are prohibited! DO NOT use candles in any residential facilities.
- Use only the surge protectors that are approved by student housing.
- Don't overload electrical outlets! This can be a potential ignition source.
- Appliances with an exposed heating element for cooking are prohibited.
- Keep your room clean! With less fuel, fire cannot spread as fast.
- Covering lights with curtains or tapestries is unsafe as they can heat up and catch fire.
- Use only items and appliances that are UL approved in your room.

### **The DO NOT's of Fire Safety:**

- **DO NOT** tamper with or cover smoke detectors
- **DO NOT** tamper with the sprinklers
- **DO NOT** hang anything on the sprinkler heads
- **DO NOT** tamper with or activate fire alarms unless a true emergency exists
- **DO NOT** make false 9-1-1 calls

**Engaging in any of these acts will lead to judicial sanctions and possible criminal charges!**

### **In The Event of a Fire on Campus:**

- **IF THE ALARM SOUNDS, GET OUT AND STAY OUT!!!**
- Make sure you grab your room key and proceed to the room door.
- Check the door before you open it. If the door is not hot, proceed to open it slowly.
- Once you are out of the room, close your door and stay low.
- Proceed to your nearest available exit and go outside.
- Once outside, go to the "Designated Meeting Place" and remain there.

**If you are unable to evacuate your room, call Public Safety at 610-436-3311. Give the call taker all of your information.**

If smoke is coming under the door, place a towel at the opening in order to prevent smoke from coming into your room. Open a window and signal that you need assistance then wait for rescue personnel to arrive.

### **Grill Fire Safety**

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): More than one-quarter of the home structure fires involving grills started on a courtyard, terrace or patio, an exterior balcony or open porch. Only 6% started in the kitchen.

- Position the grill well away from the residence. Do not place your grill directly next to siding, deck railings, extended eaves, or below overhanging branches and/or leaves.
- Do not place your grill near or under utility pole wires that may be coming into your house.
- Place the grill a safe distance from where foot traffic would normally be.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area by maintaining no less than a 3-foot zone around the grill.

- Make several different types of long-handled grilling tools available to the parties cooking on the grill to ensure plenty of clearance from heat and flames when cooking food.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below grill as well as on the grill rack itself, so it cannot be ignited by open flame / heat.
- Use grills outdoors unless the device is specifically manufactured for use indoors. Grills used indoors or in any enclosed spaces such as tents pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing occupants to carbon monoxide.

### **Charcoal Fired Grills**

- Be very careful when using charcoal starting fluid. Follow the directions on the can and never apply any other kind of additional fluid once the fire has been ignited.
- The use of an electronic starter is recommended and pretreated charcoal may also be used.
- Place all ashes generated by the charcoal grill into a metal can.

### **Propane Fired Grills**

- Before each use, check hoses for signs of wear and tear, and that the connection to the tank is tight.
- Remove excess grease buildup from the unit, to prevent flare ups.
- Periodically check the inside gas tubes for the buildup of spider webs that can cause blockage, causing gas to backflow into the control valves, where it could potentially ignite.
- An orange flame is an indication that there is an obstruction in the gas tubes that lead to the burners. Flame should be blue in color.
- When igniting the grill, make sure the lid or cover is in the open position.
- Always shut the tank off after each use.
- If the unit catches fire, do not attempt to extinguish it, especially if propane is burning freely. CALL THE FIRE DEPT. Propane will reignite with explosive force.
- Proper location and placement of the unit is very important. Keep the unit away from the sides or back of your home, as well as open windows. If fire occurs, it will spread to the building.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an average of 317,000 intentional fires are reported to fire departments in the United States each year, and although three of

every four intentional fires are started outside, most of the intentional fire casualties and property loss resulted from structure fires.

- Keep leaves, firewood and other combustibles away from buildings.
- Keep doors and windows locked when a building is unoccupied. Board up abandoned buildings.
- Store all flammable liquids such as paints, gasoline, and aerosols in an approved storage location, e.g., locked cabinets, locked storage units, locked garages (preventing access to kids), etc. Also, keep away from heat sources such as furnaces and other types of heaters.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach and sight of young children.

### **Cooking Safety Tips:**

- Almost 44% of all residential fires are caused by careless cooking making it the #1 cause of fire in a residential setting.
- Do not leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep any combustible materials such as towels, potholders, papers, etc., away from any heat source. Don't wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.
- Do not attempt to move a pan of grease that is on fire. Put a lid on the pan to smother the fire, then turn off the heat, or use an ABC-rated fire extinguisher.

Be sure to turn pot handles towards the back of the stove.

### **Smoking Safety Tips:**

- Smoking-related fires are a concern. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse any smoking material with water before discarding.
- **Smoking is prohibited inside all campus buildings.**
- After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trashcans for smoking materials that may be smoldering.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of sight and out of reach from children - preferably in a locked cabinet. If your child sees you lighting candles or starting the fireplace, they may think it's OK for them to do it. Teach your kids about fire safety.

## Smoke Detectors

All residential facilities on campus are provided with smoke detectors and sprinklers throughout the building. These devices are monitored 24 hours by the Department of Public Safety.

Fire data shows that over the past three years, on average nearly 75% of the people who died each year in residential fires did not have a working smoke detector in their home. Follow these tips to keep you, those you live with and your belongings safe from fire:

- Replace the batteries in your smoke detectors twice a year. When you change your clocks for Daylight Savings, change your batteries.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and sleeping areas. Sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Develop an escape plan with your family - at least twice a year. Include a nighttime drill.
- Make sure overnight guests also know your fire escape plan.

## Fire Extinguishers

Remember the word **PASS** when using a fire extinguisher:

- **P**ull the pin and hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you.
- **A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- **S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

## Other Fall Safety Tips

- Prepare for fall storm related hazards. Heavy rain and high winds can result in flooding and long term outages. Make sure your flashlights and portable radios have batteries and that other supplies, such as bottled water and non-perishable food, are stocked and available.
- Consider having an Emergency Pack with the following items to last 3 days;
  - Flashlight and Portable Radio with batteries
  - Water (one gallon per person per day)
  - Non-perishable food supply / Manual Can Opener
  - First Aid kit
  - Whistle
  - N95 Dust Mask
  - Prescription Medications

- Personal Hygiene items
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Cash (For when ATM's are not working)

## **Spring Break and Fire Safety**

Many students leave campus for spring break, but no matter where you go during vacation, it is always important to ensure that you are staying in a safe environment and that you recognize that the chance for injury or a fire accident may be even greater off campus property. Here are some safety tips to take along with you on spring break if you are staying at a hotel: - **PLAN AHEAD!!**

- When making your reservations, ask if the hotel or motel has smoke detectors and fire sprinklers.
- When traveling, take a flashlight with you.
- Read the fire evacuation plan carefully. If one is not posted in your room, request one from the front desk.
- Locate the two exits from your room.
- Count the number of doors between your room and the exits. This will assist you in the need of an emergency evacuation.
- Locate the fire alarms on your floor.
- Locate fire extinguishers on your floor.

### **Here are LIFE SAVING steps you can take if you find yourself in a hotel that is on fire:**

- If the fire is in your room, get out quickly. Close the door, sound the alarm and notify the front desk.
- Always use a stairwell, never an elevator. The elevator could stop at the floor of the fire.
- If the fire is not in your room, leave if it is safe to do so. Be sure to take your room key with you in case fire blocks your escape and you need to re-enter your room.
- To check the hallway for fire, touch the door with the back of your hand to test the temperature. If the door is cool, get low to the floor, brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly. Be ready to close it quickly if there are flames on the other side. Crawl low in the smoke to the nearest exit; the freshest air is near the floor.

- If your room door is hot, do not open it. Instead, seal the door with wet towels or sheets. Turn off the fans and air conditioners. Call 911 to give your location. Signal from your window.

### **Other Spring Fire Safety Tips**

- Start to prepare for storm related outages. Make sure your flashlights and portable radios have batteries and that other supplies, such as bottled water, are stocked and available.
- Remove all hazards. Address piles of rubbish, trash and yard debris. Remove stacks of paper and magazines; take them to recycling centers.
- Check for water leaks, especially near electrical appliances.
- Properly store flammable liquids and home chemicals. Make sure that gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and are out of the reach of children and pets. Store in a cool, dry place outside the house.
- Clean up work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches or other work items away and out of any child's reach. Make sure that all chemicals are kept under lock and key and out of reach of children and pets.
- Check fire protection and safety equipment. Test your smoke alarms. Make sure all doors and windows open easily and are accessible for fast escapes.
- Make sure your street numbers are posted properly and are visible.
- Check and make sure you have a working flashlight and battery-powered radio for the approaching storm season.
- Plan your escape. Sit down with your family and make sure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire by designing a home escape plan. Make sure you have two ways out of every room and that you have a meeting place outside the home for the whole family.
- Practice the escape plan. Even the best plan is no good if it's not practiced.



610-436-3333