

The Essential Fire Safety Products for On- & Off-Campus Living

Whether heading to the residence hall, fraternity or sorority house, or off-campus housing, packing fire safety equipment, along with laundry baskets and shower caddies, is a must.

On-Campus Living – Residence Halls and Greek Housing

All colleges and universities must comply with local fire codes, but these codes vary by municipality. Some require interconnected and hard-wired smoke alarms, but some don't. Some codes require sprinkler systems, but most don't.

If your son or daughter will live in university-owned housing this year, be sure to send a UL-rated fire extinguisher (minimum 2-A, 10-B:C rating) such as the Kidde Living Area Fire Extinguisher with him or her. A fire extinguisher can be used to put out a small fire or aid in creating a pathway to safety. And before the student heads off to campus, review how the fire extinguisher works with your child.

In addition, be sure to find out what type of fire safety measures are in place at the school and review the residence hall escape plan with your son or daughter.

Off-Campus Living – Apartments and Houses

Seventy-nine percent of fatal college fires take place in off-campus housing, and the incidences often mimic other residential fires in the U.S. However, when renting an apartment or house, most students don't ask a landlord about the fire safety equipment that's installed. Will your son or daughter know about a fire as soon as possible? Will he or she have an escape plan? Take a look around your child's apartment or house for the following:

- ✓ Are UL-listed smoke alarms installed in every room of the housing unit, including basements, kitchens, finished attics, bedrooms, outside of sleeping areas, and at the top and bottom of stairways?
- ✓ Are the alarms interconnected? A wireless smoke alarm system, such as the Kidde Wireless System, uses radio frequency technology to link smoke alarms together into an interconnected system so that when one alarm sounds, they all sound. This immediate response helps provide early warning no matter where the fire starts, thereby giving more time to escape
- ✓ Have the batteries in the smoke alarms been replaced for the start of the semester or quarter?
- ✓ Is a fire extinguisher within reach in rooms where fires are most likely to start, such as the kitchen, bedroom, living room, any room with a chimney and laundry room?
- ✓ Are there two ways out of every room? In cases where your child has a second- or third-floor bedroom, a fire escape ladder can be used for an alternative exit.
- ✓ Are candles placed away from other flammable items? Remind your child to never leave a candle unattended.
- ✓ Are extension cords overloaded with too many appliances? Are the cords UL-listed?
- ✓ Does the property have fuel-burning appliances, such as a gas furnace, water heater or fireplace? Are UL-listed carbon monoxide alarms installed on each floor and near sleeping areas?

If you answer "No" to any of these questions, talk to the landlord or superintendent about improving the fire safety equipment. Or, visit the local hardware or home center yourself and purchase what's needed to keep your student safe. For more fire safety information, visit www.campusfire.org.