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## IS YOUR CHILD AT RISK OF BECOMING A VICTIM OF A COLLEGE-RELATED FIRE?

As you send your child off to college this fall, you have a lot to think about – the quality of his or her education, campus crime, and social activities that may involve alcohol. But are you also thinking about fire safety?

Chances are your child is moving into a house or apartment, where 75 percent of all college students live. Fires that occur in off-campus housing are very similar to the types of residential fires that occur every day in the U.S. During the 2005-2006 academic year, 11 college students died in on- or off-campus fires, bringing the total number of college fire deaths since January 2000 to 89. What factors put your college student at a greater risk of being a victim of fire while at school?

### ALCOHOL

- One of the four common factors in student-related off-campus fires is alcohol consumption. (The Center for Campus Fire Safety)
- A study of young adults ages 18-25 found that those who went to sleep under the influence of alcohol (.05 BAC and higher), took nearly twice as long to wake up to a smoke alarm than when they were sober. (*The Effect of Alcohol Upon Response to Fire Alarm Signals*)
- In the same study, more than one-third of the participants under the influence of alcohol never woke up to the sound of a traditional smoke alarm.

### SMOKING

- A recent survey found that 26 percent of men and 22 percent of women ages 18-24 smoke cigarettes regularly. (Centers for Disease Control)
- Carelessly disposed of cigarettes are the leading causes of fire deaths in residences across America, including rental properties. (NFPA)
- Approximately 45 percent of smoking-material fires start in a bedroom, living/family room or den, and in most cases, ignite bedding or upholstered furniture first. (NFPA)
- More than 60 percent of adults killed or injured in smoking-material residential fires were either asleep or possibly impaired by alcohol. (NFPA)

### LACK OF PROPER FIRE DETECTION AND SUPPRESSION

- According to the NFPA, while 94 percent of U.S. homes have smoke alarms, more than one-third of these alarms do not work because of dead, missing or disconnected batteries. Off-campus houses and apartments are included in these statistics.
- Nearly half of the nation's fire deaths occur in the six percent of homes that do not have smoke alarms. (NFPA)
- Residence halls should have working smoke alarms but may not have sprinkler systems. Studies show fire sprinklers could reduce fire deaths by 82 percent if they were included with smoke alarms in residences. (National Institute of Science and Technology)
- In all of the fatal campus-related fires, there were no automatic fire sprinkler systems in the buildings. In many on- and off-campus fires, the smoke alarms had been removed or disabled.

### CANDLES

- Candle fires cause approximately \$321 million in damage yearly. (National Fire Protection Association)
- An average of 140 people die annually due to candle fires. (NFPA)
- The two leading causes of candle fires are unattended or abandoned candles and candles that burn too close to flammable materials. (NFPA)

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Before your kids pack their bags and head to school, discuss these important fire safety tips with them:

- Install UL-listed smoke alarms in every room of an apartment or rental home. Battery-powered wireless smoke alarms, such as the Kidde Wireless System, use radio frequency technology to link together so that when one alarm sounds, all of the alarms sound. This immediate response helps provide early warning no matter where the fire starts, thereby giving more time to escape.
- Test smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries as needed.
- Know two ways out of every building, whether it's a residence hall, your house or apartment, a restaurant or a movie theater. A fire escape ladder, such as one offered by Kidde, can provide an alternate exit from second or third floor rooms.
- Properly dispose of smoking materials in ashtrays. Run water over matches and cigarettes before throwing them out.
- After parties, check the cushions on couches and chairs for smoldering cigarettes.
- Purchase a fire extinguisher and learn how to use it BEFORE a fire breaks out.
- Install a UL-listed battery-powered carbon monoxide (CO) alarm or AC-powered unit with battery backup on each floor and near sleeping areas in apartments or rental homes. Carbon monoxide is created anytime a fossil fuel (such as gasoline, oil, wood, or propane) is burned, and becomes lethal when common household appliances malfunction or are not properly ventilated.
- Use UL-listed extension cords and electrical appliances properly. Don't overload electrical outlets.
- Never leave candles unattended and keep them away from items that could easily catch fire. Be sure to extinguish candles before going to bed.

If you have questions about the fire safety of your child's campus housing, ask the local fire department to perform an inspection. For more information about campus fire safety, please visit [www.campusfire.org](http://www.campusfire.org).

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