

Fire Safety

Much of fire safety and protection is common sense. Keep in mind the following to protect yourselves and your belongings:

- Accumulated mail, newspapers, garbage, and other combustibles are very real fire hazards. Try to keep things neat and away from heat sources.
- Keep space heaters and halogen lamps away from flammables, such as clothing, paper, and curtains, and never leave them unattended. Halogen lamps should have a cover over the top to prevent objects from falling on the bulb.
- If you or your roommates smoke, make sure to extinguish and dispose of your cigarette butts in an appropriate container. **Un-extinguished butts can smolder for hours in couches, beds, and trash cans before igniting.** Never smoke in bed
- Develop a fire escape route, and familiarize yourself with all exits and windows. Know two exits accessible from where you sleep. Each bedroom should have at least one window that opens to the outside. Those of you who have created improvised sleeping areas in windowless rooms, like closets, attics, and basements, could be trapped with no exit in the event of fire. Landlords are violating the law if they allow such arrangements.
- **Put out candles and incense when unattended.**
- Firing up the grill? **Be sure to place your barbecue at least 10 feet from any structure, including your porch.**
- Make sure your address is clearly visible from the street so that fire and rescue response teams can quickly identify your house in an emergency.
- Annoyed that your smoke detector keeps beeping even though there's no smoke? It's probably the batteries. **Don't just remove the batteries -- replace them!** If your detector is defective, let your landlord know immediately.
- Overloading electrical outlets creates a dangerous fire hazard, particularly in some of the older homes. If you use power strips, plug them directly into outlets, not into extension cords. Using too many extension cords can overload wiring and spark a fire.
- Holiday lights should be hung appropriately and decorations should be non-flammable.