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# RESIDENCE HALL FIRE SAFETY

## SMOKE DETECTORS

In accordance with Commonwealth of Virginia fire regulations, residents are required to test their smoke detectors once each week to assure that they are in good working order. Wooden dowel rods are provided in each room to assist residents with this process. In addition, smoke detector batteries are available at each area desk at no charge. Residents who notice smoke detector malfunctions must immediately report them to the Residence Hall Work Control Center by going on-line at <http://housing.gmu.edu>.

## TESTING THE SMOKE DETECTOR

Using the wooden dowel rod located in your room, firmly press the test button on the cover of the smoke detector. You may need to hold the button for 30-45 seconds. The detector will emit a shrill alternating beep. If the detector does not beep, obtain a new battery from your area desk. If after inserting the new battery the detector still does not beep, or if you are uncomfortable or unable to change the battery yourself, immediately contact the Residence Hall Work Control Center by going on-line at: <http://housing.gmu.edu>. You may also contact a residence hall staff member or dial 4-WORK (4-9675). Townhouse residents and mobile phone users call (703) 993-2793.

## TO PREVENT FIRES

### Be careful with electricity

- Use only U.L. listed appliances.
- Never run wiring under carpeting or furniture!
- Spliced/repaired wiring is not safe and is prohibited.
- Do not use items with damaged wiring. Replace the item and the protect cord from foot traffic.
- Don't overload outlets. Report damaged or dead electrical outlets.
- Use only approved power strips with a build-in circuit breaker in place of extension cords.
- Multi-plug adapters (gang plugs) are prohibited.
- Halogen lamps are not permitted.
- Do not daisy chain power strips together.
- Extension cords are prohibited in residence halls.

## HELP ELIMINATE CAMPUS FIRE HAZARDS

### Appliances

Exposed electrical coil appliances – including, but not limited to hotplates, toasters, toaster ovens and kerosene space heaters are not permitted in the residence halls. Microwave ovens with less than 900 watts of power consumption and do not exceed .6 cubic feet are permitted in student rooms. Refrigerators must not be larger than three (3.0) cubic feet and draw no more than 1.5 Amps

### Open Flames

Candles (lit or unlit), Bunsen burners, incense or any open flames are not permitted in the residence halls.

### Barbeque Grills

Barbeque grills must be located at least 25 feet from all buildings and combustible areas. Only use matchlight charcoal briquettes in open barbeque grills. Lighter fluid and LPG tanks cannot be stored inside residence halls. Campfires are not allowed on campus.

### Fireworks and Explosives

Possessing, storing, or using any fireworks, explosives or flammable substances is strictly forbidden in and around the residence halls.

### Obstacles

- Storage of bicycles, furniture, boxes and trash is prohibited in stairwells and other exit ways. Blocked exits can cause “chain reaction” pileups of fallen people during emergencies.
- Do not block your room window(s) with bunked beds.
- Do not block the window with bottles or other decorations.

## IN CASE OF FIRE OR HEAVY SMOKE

### Sound the Alarm

If you discover a fire or smell smoke, sound the building fire alarm. If there is time, warn others by knocking on doors and shouting as you leave. Activate the fire alarm by using a manual pull station located near stairways and exit doors.

### Once the alarm sounds

- Try to alert others only if you can do so safely.
- All occupants must immediately evacuate the building.

### Check your room door before opening it

- If the door handle is hot, DO NOT try to open it!
- Stay in your room and seal the base of the door with a towel or sheet
- Call GMU police- dial 911 and report that you are in your room and need assistance.
- Turn on your room lights and raise the blinds.
- Check for smoke and fire outside your window. If it is safe to do so, open your window and hang a sheet outside to alert firefighters of your location.

### If you can leave the room

- Be sure to wear shoes because floors and stairs may be hot.
- Close your door behind you and lock your door.
- Consider two ways to exit the building. Use your primary exit route unless you encounter thick smoke or fire. If necessary use your secondary exit route or return to your room.
- Always use the stairs. Do not use the elevators as they will not operate in smoky conditions.



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## Crawl if there is smoke

- If you get caught in the smoke, get down and crawl.
- Cleaner, cooler air will be near the floor.

## Once outside the building

Move away from the building a safe distance and do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so by appropriate staff or public safety personnel. Face away from the building in case of explosion.

## IF YOU ARE ON FIRE

### Stop Drop and Roll

If your clothes catch on fire – STOP DROP and ROLL— wherever you are. Cover your face with your hands and roll from side to side. Rolling smothers the fire. Call for medical assistance.

### Cool Burns

Use cool tap water on burns, immediately. Do not use ointments. If skin is blistered, dead white, brown, or charred, call for an ambulance.

## PROTECT YOURSELF

### Participate in Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted each semester to familiarize you with the sound of your building's fire alarm and the emergency exits which you may not normally use. Learn where all the exits are—NOW!

During fire drills, OHRL staff or emergency officials may make a room-by-room check to ensure that all occupants leave the building. Failure to evacuate the building immediately may result in a fine and disciplinary action.

## IF YOU ARE DISABLED

If you are disabled (even temporarily), you should make sure that you identify yourself to your resident director. It is important that you plan ahead for emergencies, and be aware of your capabilities and limitations. Campus emergency responders are notified of the assignments of students with mobility impairments. While elevators are designed to stop operating when an alarm sounds, interior stairwells are designated safe zones. If you do not feel safe waiting for an emergency responder in your room, move to the closest stairwell and wait for assistance.

## REPORT DAMAGED FIRE EQUIPMENT TO YOUR RESIDENT DIRECTOR

- Fire doors – should automatically close and completely latch. Never prop fire doors open.
- Exit signs – two exits should be visible from all public areas.
- Smoke detectors – keep them clear so they can detect smoke when you are asleep, and wake you in time to get out.
- Fire extinguishers – report empty or vandalized extinguishers.



- Do not tamper with or hang items from sprinkler pipes or sprinkler heads.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns about fire safety policies, procedures, or equipment, please contact the Office of Housing and Residence Life, (703) 993-2720.

“FIRE SAFETY... IT’S AN IDEA WE CAN ALL LIVE WITH!”

# GUIDE TO RESIDENCE HALL FIRE SAFETY 2007-2008



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GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
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