



Fire Safety Report

Fire Safety

The Fitchburg State University Police Department and Capital Planning and Maintenance work together with the Fitchburg Fire Department to ensure that Fitchburg State University is in compliance with all fire and life safety codes and standards. All residence halls meet or exceed local and national fire safety codes and are equipped with modern fire alarm systems including smoke detectors and sprinkler systems. In addition, all fire extinguishers are inspected on a regular basis.

Smoking

All Fitchburg State University Academic, Administration, Athletic, and Residential Halls are smoke free. This includes all student rooms, hallways, and common areas. As posted, there is no smoking within 25' of any building on campus.

Fire Safety Equipment

Fire alarm systems and fire safety equipment are provided for the protection of the residents. The fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, fire alarm horns, pull stations, and emergency exit signs are critical to the safety equipment.

Fire Reporting Procedures

The following general procedures should be followed if you discover a **FIRE**:

Smoke is the greatest danger in a fire. As you evacuate, or if you are trapped, always stay near the floor where the air is less toxic. **STAY LOW!**

In advance, familiarize yourself with fire extinguisher locations, exits, and alarm pull stations.

- Close the door to the room involved. This will contain the fire.
- Activate the closest fire pull station.
- Call the Fitchburg State University Police when it is safe to do so.
 - Outside phone: (978) 665-3111
 - Campus phone: 3111
- Awaken any sleeping roommate
- Feel the door knob and the door. If they are hot, do not open the door. If they are cool, open slowly, if heat or smoke rushes in, close the door immediately and remain inside.
- When leaving your room, be sure to take your key in case it is necessary to return to the room should conditions in the corridor deteriorate.
- Get on your knees or belly and stay low always making way to the nearest marked exit.
- Alert others as you exit.
- **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS!**
- Resident life staff members who are present on their floors should facilitate the evacuation of their floor/section if possible.
- Stay back at least 500 feet or more from the building.

If trapped during a fire:

- Shout at regular intervals to alert emergency crews of your location.
- Find a window and place an article of clothing outside of it to use as a marker for rescue crews.
- If there is no window, stay near the floor where the air is less toxic.

Whom Students and Employees Should Report That a Fire Occurred

Per federal law, The Fitchburg State University is required to annually disclose statistical data on all fires that occur in on-campus student housing facilities. Listed below are the **non-emergency** numbers to call to report fires that have already been extinguished in on-campus student housing. These are fires for which you are unsure whether the Fitchburg State University Police Department may already be aware. If you find evidence of such a fire or if you hear about such a fire, please contact one of the following:

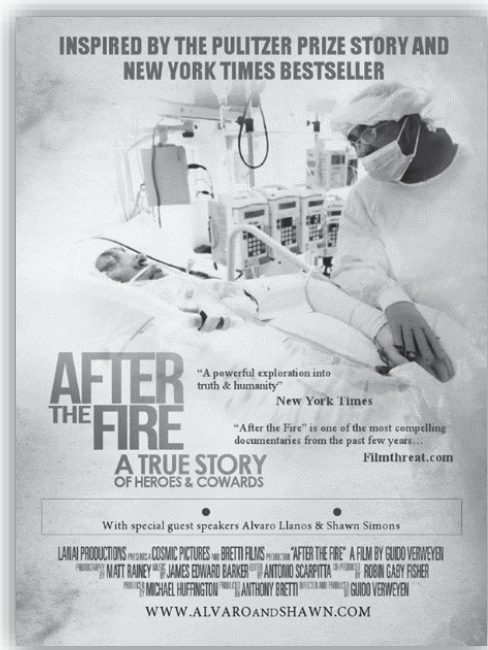
Fitchburg State University Police **(978) 665-3111**

Fitchburg State University Housing and Residential Services **(978) 665-3219**

Fitchburg State University Capital Planning and Maintenance **(978) 665-3115**

When calling, please provide as much information as possible about the location, date, time and cause of the fire.

Fire Safety Education and Training Programs Provided to Students and Employees



Fire safety education programs for all students living in on-campus student housing and all employees that have any association with on-campus student housing are held at the beginning of each semester. These programs are designed to: familiarize everyone with the fire safety system in each housing facility, train everyone on the procedures to be followed in case there is a fire and distribute information on the college's fire safety policies. During these programs, trainers emphasize that participating in fire drills is mandatory.

The Fitchburg State University also utilizes a documentary, "After the Fire" which is mandatory for all incoming students. "After the Fire" discusses the January 19, 2000 Seton Hall University fire that claimed three lives and injured 56 others. In addition, copies of their book, "After the Fire," are available in the library. Members of the Fitchburg Fire Department and Fitchburg State University Police Department are also on hand to answer questions.

Emergency Procedures

General Procedures for Students and Employees in case of a Fire; All faculty, staff, and students are required to evacuate the building during a fire alarm.

Evacuation Procedure

- When evacuating the building, use the most direct means of egress possible.
- Before opening the door, feel the door with the back of your hand. If the door is hot, or you can see fire or smoke in the corridor, do not pass through. Stay in the room. Pack towels (wet if possible) under the door to prevent smoke from entering. Telephone Fitchburg State University Police and report your location.
- If the door is cool, open it slowly. If there is no smoke, proceed to the nearest exit. If the smoke is light, crawl low to the closest exit. If you encounter smoke along the way, choose an alternate escape route. Make sure the doors close behind you to prevent the spread of smoke.

Evacuation Plan for Persons with Disabilities

- If the occupant, resident, or visitor is located on the ground floor of the building, exit through the closest appropriate means of egress.
- If the occupant, resident, or visitor is located above the ground floor, DO NOT USE THE ELEVATOR. Stay in your office or room, or see specific examples below.
- Call the Fitchburg State University Police at (978) 665-3111 and give the dispatcher your name, exact location, room number, and telephone number. Remain by the phone until

contacted by the Fitchburg State University Police. Firefighters will assist persons who are unable to evacuate.

- Persons with hearing impairments can be assisted out of the building, providing that they are made aware of the activation of the fire alarm.
- Persons with visual impairments can be safely helped out of the building, provided that a person is there to assist them, and that most of the other building occupants have already left the building. The evacuation of persons with disabilities at the same time as everyone else might increase the risk of accident or otherwise endanger all persons trying to vacate the building.
- Persons with mobility impairments should most often remain in their rooms until assisted by the Fire Department. Untrained occupants should not attempt to carry people from the building. This could cause stairway restriction for other evacuees and may also result in serious injury to the parties involved as well as others.

Infractions

Failure to Evacuate

Except for emergency response agencies (i.e., Fitchburg Fire Department, Fitchburg State University Police) all occupants in the building will evacuate when a fire alarm has been activated. Individuals or groups failing to evacuate will be subject to disciplinary action. Fitchburg State Residence Halls are required to hold a fire drill each semester and all occupants of the building are required to participate. Failure to participate can result in disciplinary action. Students who fail to vacate the residence hall during a fire alarm are subject to disciplinary action.

Fire Department Access

Persons who intentionally block or otherwise hamper the duties of the Fitchburg Fire Department or Fitchburg State University Police Department during a fire or medical emergency will be subject to disciplinary action, fines, or expulsion from University housing and/or criminal prosecution.

Fire Detection and Suppression Equipment Tampering

Fire alarm systems and fire safety equipment are provided for the protection of the residents. The fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, fire alarm horns, pull stations, and emergency exit signs are critical safety equipment. Tampering with fire safety equipment can result in criminal prosecution, disciplinary action and/or housing occupancy agreement termination. Where fire sprinklers exist, all sprinkler heads must remain free of obstructions to allow them to operate properly. Nothing may be attached, or placed against any part of the sprinkler system, this includes piping.

False Alarms

Any person who, without proper justification, turns in a false fire alarm by activating a fire alarm pull station or calling in a report of fire may be punished with disciplinary action, fines, or expulsion from University housing, and/or criminal prosecution.

Malicious Burning of Building Component(s) or a Building

Any person who knowingly sets fire to components of a building (i.e. doors, bulletin boards, and furniture) and/or the building itself will face disciplinary action, fines, or expulsion from University housing, and/or criminal prosecution.

Smoke Bombs and Bomb Threats

Any person who possesses and/or activates a smoke bomb in a building without the permission of the Fitchburg State University Police, or any person who initiates a bomb threat, will be subject to disciplinary action, fines, or expulsion from University housing and/or criminal prosecution.

Fire Hydrants and Fire Lanes

No vehicle except for emergency response apparatus or cars shall park in designated fire lanes or in front of a fire hydrant. Fitchburg State University shall not be responsible for any damage to a motor vehicle that obstructs the response of the Fitchburg Fire Department or other emergency response agency.



Fire Hazards

Motorcycles, automobiles, mopeds, gasoline, propane, flammable liquids and other similar items are not allowed in buildings other than those facilities specifically designed for that intended purpose and shall be removed at the owner's expense.

Explosives, Fireworks and Flammables

The possession and/or storage of fireworks, explosives, gun powder, ammunition, any flammables or material which may jeopardize the safety of others is strictly prohibited.

Any person possessing and/or discharging fireworks on campus will face disciplinary action, fines, or expulsion from University housing, and/or criminal prosecution.

Exit Doors

Using an Emergency Exit in a non-emergency situation may result in a fine and disciplinary action.

Fire Drills

Fire Drills at Fitchburg State University will be conducted at least twice during the academic year. One drill will be announced and another will be unannounced. Fire Drills are performed to familiarize occupants in the building with the sound of the fire alarm, to verify that the system is functioning properly, and to test the evacuation systems for faculty, staff and students.

Inspections/Fire Drills

Most residence hall fires start in a student room. The cause of the fire could be careless disposal of smoking material, cooking equipment, candles, or improper lights and wiring. Wastepaper baskets, sheets, futons, wall hangings, and furniture are fuel sources for a potential fire; if ignited, each will allow smoke and flame to spread throughout the room, floor, or building.

If during a scheduled fire drill or fire alarm, the Fitchburg State University police or Resident Directors discover any of the above items located in a student's suite the items will be confiscated.

Posters, pictures, and knick-knacks can make a resident feel more at home. Decorations are encouraged as long as they do not create health or fire hazards or damage to the room. Candles are not permitted, even if unburned. Alcohol bottles may not be used for decorations or storage. Tapestries are permitted if they have been fireproofed and are labeled as such. No items may be hung from the ceiling or attached to the outside of student room doors. Nails, screws, and tacks on or in the walls, furniture or fixtures are prohibited. Only masking tape, double stick tape, or poster putty may be used on surfaces. Residents can bring additional furniture, but remember all additional furniture and decorations are subject to the approval of room/suitemates.

Room Entry

The Office of Housing and Residential Services respects the student's rights for privacy within the group living-learning environment and will strive to protect and guarantee this privacy. This policy is designed to ensure only legal and appropriate entry into a resident's room by specifically authorized staff, and to define the conditions under which authorized personnel may enter a student's room.

Rooms may be entered under the following conditions:

- To provide room maintenance inspections, repair service or perform a safety inspection.
- When there is reasonable cause to believe that University regulations or laws are being violated.
- For an emergency situation that requires that the room be entered.
- When a resident vacates a room for a break period, authorized personnel may enter a room to provide room maintenance inspections, repair service or to perform safety inspections.

Illegal materials or items in plain view will be removed if they are noticed in the course of a room maintenance or vacation inspection, or in response to a violation of University or departmental policy. The resident will receive written notification of this action if confiscation of property is required when the student is absent.

A student's room will not be entered without knocking. A sufficient time lapse will be allowed to provide the residents ample opportunity to open the door. If no response is received, the room may be entered under the four conditions listed above.

Before entering a room with the use of a key, staff members will identify themselves.

Authorized University staff members who may enter a student's room are administrative housing staff members, Resident Directors, Resident Assistants and inspection, maintenance, custodial, and safety personnel.



Appliances

For health, safety and sanitation considerations, only the following appliances are authorized for use in the residence halls: small electrical appliances that have a completely enclosed heating element and are UL approved (i.e. coffeemakers and popcorn poppers); and, small microwaves and refrigerators that meet the residence hall specifications:

Refrigerators

- Maximum size, internal dimensions of less than 4.0 cubic feet.
- Maximum of 2 running amps. Remember, your refrigerator must be **unplugged** during semester break periods.

Microwaves

Maximum wattage, less than 1000 watts.

Appliances that are not permitted in the student rooms are electric skillets, toaster ovens, electric blankets, hot plates, items with exposed heating elements, air conditioners, and halogen lamps. The high potential of fires and damage from these items make these provisions necessary.

Candles, Open Flames Devices, and Smoking

Open flame devices (except for cigarette lighters and matches) are prohibited in residence halls. Candles incense, and similar items may not be burned or lit in any residence hall. If lit or previously burned candles or incense are found or reported they will be confiscated. Smoking is prohibited in all academic buildings and residence halls. Smoking is not permitted in buildings or within 25 feet of a building entrance or air intake. Do not dump smoking materials into plastic waste containers or dumpsters without properly extinguishing them with water.

Holiday Decorations

In accordance with the Massachusetts Fire Prevention Regulations, the following decorative items shall not be permitted in the Fitchburg State University buildings and residence halls:

- Candles
- Christmas or other sawn trees (except UL or FM approved artificial Christmas or decorative trees)
- Christmas or other decorative wreaths (except UL or FM approved artificial Christmas or decorative wreath)
- Corn stalks or shucks
- Cotton or confetti
- Dry moss or leaves
- Hay or straw
- Paper streamers
- Sawdust or wood shavings
- Tree branches or leaves



Only UL or FM-approved lighting for indoor use can be used in academic and residential buildings. If used, the lights cannot be run over ceiling tiles or grids, or through walls or doorways. The lights must be hung below the ceiling using non-conductive material (i.e., string or tape). Not more than three sets of lights can be attached to a single extension cord. Lights must be turned off when the area is left unattended.

Electrical Extension Cords

Electrical Cords (primary and extension) must not pass through walls, floors, or above suspended ceilings. Electrical Cords (primary and extension) cannot be beneath carpets or across corridors or fire escapes. This type of placement could cause a fire or be responsible for a personal injury accident. If temporary wiring is required, the cord must be run along the wall, not across an aisle or overhead.

It must be held up with a non-conductive material such as string or tape, and may not run above a concealed space such as a drop ceiling.

Electrical and mechanical closets and rooms are hazardous locations. They are not to be used for general storage and they must be kept clean at all times to reduce the risk of fire.

Electrical panels shall be properly maintained. In accordance with the Massachusetts Electrical Code, there must be at least three square feet of space around any and all electrical panels, boxes, disconnects, fuses, and other associated equipment. Students having questions about electrical closets, disconnects, panels, rooms, or service should contact the Capital Planning and Maintenance Department at (978) 665-3115 or (978) 665-3230.

Fire Doors, Escapes, and Exits

For health and safety reasons, all means of egress and their components must be properly maintained at all times in accordance with the requirements of the State Building and Fire Prevention Regulations. A means of egress shall include but is not limited to corridors, doorways, fire escapes, and stairwells. They incorporate an “exit access” (corridors and stairs that lead to an exit), and “exit” (the door itself), and the “exit discharge” (the exterior side of the door, which could include a fire escape, another building, or sidewalk).



Each corridor and stairwell in our residence halls has the following equipment: emergency lighting, exit signs, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and smoke detectors.

The corridors in the residence halls are required to be free of hazard and obstructions. Corridors, fire escapes, hallways, and stairwells cannot be used for the placement or storage of combustibile material (i.e. boxes, cardboard and/or paper), bicycles or furniture, waste receptacles, or any other item or equipment that would hinder a safer means of egress or firefighting operations.

Corridors, fire escapes, hallways, and stairwells cannot be used as runways for extension cords, telephone wires, or television cables that could create a personal injury hazard.

Fire escapes cannot be used for storage of grills, regardless of size or fuel. Fire doors in corridors and stairwells cannot be chocked open (except smoke-activated fire doors that close when the fire alarm is activated).