

**Complying With the Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act (Part 2 of 2)
Training is the final step colleges and universities should take to ensure students stay safe.**

The equipment upgrades and revised reporting procedures covered in part 1 of this two-part series can put a campus on the right track toward optimal fire safety (see “Complying With the Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act [Part 1 of 2]” in the January/February issue of *Campus Safety* magazine). These improvements, however, can only do so much if students don’t know how to respond should a fire actually occur.

Many campus fire officials believe that routine fire safety training, especially for students who are away from home for the first time, is extremely important. However, many colleges experience challenges getting their fire safety messages across. “We’re competing with so many activities on campus that getting a fire safety message out can be difficult,” says Gini Krippner, fire marshal at the University of California, Merced. “But it’s a vital life safety lesson we’re teaching our students, so we must continuously look for ways to be hands-on and even a little bit entertaining.”

Officials at other campuses agree with Krippner about the difficulties associated with catching and keeping student attention. That’s why universities such as Cornell partner with local firefighters and police to try to make a lasting impression with students through the use of a room burn. “A room burn is a live, controlled situation that simulates a real dorm room fire,” says Joe DeMarco, emergency services specialist for Cornell University. “Students were taken aback by the level of heat and the quick-spreading flames.” [PAGEBREAK] However the training is delivered, the U.S. Fire Administration suggests that campus fire safety programs:

Teach students how and where to properly notify the fire department using the 9-1-1 system
Create and update detailed floor plans of buildings, and make them available to emergency personnel, resident advisors and students

Conduct fire drills and practice escape routes and evacuation plans, urging students to take each alarm seriously

Merced has learned that administrators cannot simply post fire emergency plans and routes because students don’t seem to pay attention. “Practicing those drills is a must,” says Krippner. “And with iPods and other personal music and video devices, students often miss the alarms because they’re wearing headphones. Therefore, we train our resident advisors to knock on doors and check computer labs and laundry rooms, if it’s safe to do so.”

Further, Cornell’s emergency services team partners with its judicial administrator’s office to work with students who are cited for fire-related incidents. “We try to make a learning opportunity for these students,” says DeMarco. “We require them to shadow our emergency services team, review fire safety videos or Web sites, and then write a paper on what he or she has learned.”

Statistics show that a large percentage of campus-related fires occur in off-campus or Greek housing, where fire protection equipment may be inadequate. For Cornell, the hope is that training and educating students while they live on campus will resonate when they move into off-campus housing.

New national legislation is shining the spotlight on campuses’ fire safety records. As parents visit prospective higher education schools with their children, the quality of education will not be the only item parents look to measure. Their children’s safety will surely be top-of-mind as they send them away from their care for the first time. Will your campus’s fire safety program make the grade?

K-12 Fire Facts

Colleges and universities aren't the only educational facilities with fire dangers.

K-12 facilities must know the facts and take essential precautionary steps

43 percent of fires on educational properties occur in middle schools or high schools

21 percent occur in elementary schools, including kindergartens

Fires in K-12 schools usually occur during the school day, and typically in the fall or spring months

While K-12 campuses see fewer fatalities per fire than college campuses, there are typically more injuries

Top causes of K-12 fires include cooking equipment (25 percent); trash cans (25 percent); and intentionally-set fires (22 percent)**

Source: NFPA 2005

**Source: U.S. Structure Fires in Education Properties, NFPA, August 2007

Your Fire Safety Call-to-Action Plan

The Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association recommends these important steps for campus safety leaders:

1. Know the codes. Talk to your local fire marshals about basic code requirements, such as NFPA 1, NFPA 10, NFPA 96, NFPA 17 & 17A and NFPA 14. For more information on these codes, see www.nfpa.com.
2. Assess your buildings for appropriate fire safety equipment needs. Understand the unique functions of each building and ensure proper equipment is readily available in an emergency. When a fire is extinguished at an early stage, deaths, injuries and property damage are significantly minimized.
3. Ensure all fire equipment is up-to-date and properly maintained. Regularly check all equipment to make certain it is in good working condition. Inspect all fire equipment for correct pressure and signs of cracks, leaks or vandalism. Schedule annual maintenance by professionals. After use, have a professional recharge suppression systems and portable fire extinguishers, and re-rack hoses.
4. Create an evacuation plan. Practice escape plans and communications, including primary and secondary exits.
5. Train and educate. Regularly conduct fire drills, and hands-on staff or resident advisor equipment training using portable fire extinguishers and rack hose stations. CPR and first aid are also important components to fire training.

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Published in the March/April 2009 edition of *Campus Safety*.