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Fire Safety Equipment for Off-Campus and Greek Housing ASSE Fact Sheet 4

The American Society of Safety Engineers' (ASSE) Fire Protection Practice Specialty suggests having and knowing how to use the following fire safety equipment. For off-campus housing make sure fire prevention equipment such as smoke alarms, kitchen fire extinguishers, accessible exits, etc. are available before signing a rental agreement, and ask the landlord whether fire code inspections are done by the town or the city. For more information on on/off-campus fire prevention go to www.asse.org/newsroom.

Fire Escape Ladder: For two-story residences, this ladder offers another escape route if the planned route has been blocked due to the fire. It should be stored somewhere close to a window on the second floor for easy access, such as under the bed. One should practice setting it up and using it before an emergency occurs.

Fire Extinguisher: When using a fire extinguisher, people often refer to the P.A.S.S. method-- pull, aim, squeeze and sweep. It is suggested to:

- **Pull** the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
- **Aim** the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **Squeeze** the lever/trigger slowly and evenly.
- **Sweep** the extinguisher from side-to-side, covering the area of the fire.

It is important to read all the instructions on a fire extinguisher before a fire occurs and to also have one installed in the cooking area.

Fire Extinguisher Ratings: Each extinguisher has a rating, located on the canister label, which explains what type of fire it is suitable for. Here are the ratings:

- Class A: This is suitable for small fires involving wood, paper, cloth, rubber and some plastics
- Class B: For small fire involving oil, gasoline, kerosene, and other flammable liquids.
- Class C: For small fires involving electrical equipment.

It is important to check the pressure of the fire extinguisher. Make sure the arrow points to the full section of the indicator gauge. If the extinguisher has a pressure check button, press the button and if it pops back up, your fire extinguisher has adequate pressure.

Smoke Alarms: Tips to Maintain a Working Smoke Alarm

- Test your alarm to see if it is working properly.
- Change batteries every semester or quarter.
- Do not borrow the smoke alarm batteries for other use.

- Do not hit or disable the smoke alarm if it starts to sound due to unrelated fire smoke, such as steam or cooking fumes. Instead, wave the smoke away from the alarm with a piece of cloth or towel until the alarm stops.
- Smoke alarms should be placed in each sleeping area, adjacent to sleeping areas, the cooking area and on every level of the residence.
- When purchasing a smoke alarm, purchase a combination detector -- should be both an ionization and photoelectric type -- and be UL listed or FM approved.
- Smoke alarms 10 years past the manufactured date should be replaced with a new unit.

Fire Detection Alarms

Automatic fire detection systems can significantly reduce property damage, personal injuries, and loss of life from fire in the workplace. Their main function is to quickly identify a developing fire and alert building occupants and emergency response personnel before extensive damage occurs. Automatic fire detection systems do this by using electronic sensors to detect the smoke, heat, or flames from a fire and providing an early warning.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Make sure these are properly installed and maintained to ensure proper carbon monoxide monitoring.

Heat Detectors:

This is ideal for areas where flammable gasses and liquids are handled or any area where a fire will quickly cause a large change in the surrounding temperature. Heat detectors are also suitable for:

- Dirty, dusty or smoky environments.
- Indoor areas without winds or drafts that can prevent heat from reaching the detector.
- Areas where combustible materials are normally present, such as in kitchens, furnace rooms, utility rooms, and garages or where ovens, burners or vehicle exhaust gases are present.

Sources include the First Alert, www.firstalert.com; the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, www.osha.gov; and U.S. Fire Administration, www.usfa.fema.gov. For more information or copies please go to www.asse.org/newsroom or contact customer service at customerservice@asse.org or 847-699-2929.

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