

Ithaca College

The Dangers of Candles and Incense

Candles and Incense: A Burning Issue

As a fire safety precaution, all candles and incense are *prohibited* in residence hall rooms.

Candles are a leading cause of fires in college residential halls. Even if you do not intend to light candles or incense, it is still a violation of Ithaca College policy to possess them in your College residence hall.

Some Facts on Candles and Incense

Annually, candles and incense are responsible for

- Over 12,000 residential fires
- Approximately 160 deaths
- More than 1,200 injuries
- \$171 million in property damage
- Six percent of fire deaths

PROOF IS IN THE PRINT

May 6, 2002

Columbia University

New York, New York

A building's automatic fire sprinkler system controlled a fire started by a candle in an occupied room. The late-afternoon fire started when the candle ignited window curtains. The building's fire alarm system alerted the students, who evacuated the building. They were allowed back in the building at about 10:00 p.m. The fire occurred as students prepared for finals. The room occupant's computer was destroyed.

May 6, 2002

Kansas State University

Manhattan, Kansas

An unattended candle in a residence hall room ignited a sheet that was covering a window. Residents reported smelling smoke at about 5:30 p.m., but the fire department was not on the scene until 6:30 p.m., when they extinguished the small fire. Candles are not permitted in the residence halls.

March 8, 2002

Plattsburgh State University

Plattsburgh, New York

An unattended candle started an early morning fire in an off-campus apartment building. The occupant of the room attempted, unsuccessfully, to put out the fire and suffered minor burns. He was forced to evacuate out of a window. Fire damage was estimated at \$8,000.

January 25, 2002

Binghamton University

Vestal, New York

An unattended candle is believed to be the cause of a fire that damaged a residential room. A mattress caught fire, triggered a smoke detector in the room, and alerted the university's dispatch desk. Injuries were limited to two police officers evaluated for smoke inhalation.

October 5, 2001

University of Massachusetts

Amherst, Massachusetts

A fire started by a candle totally destroyed the Delta Upsilon fraternity house. The mid-afternoon fire started in a first-floor bedroom and quickly spread to the rest of the building. The building was equipped with a supervised fire alarm system. However, its activation was delayed. The smoke detectors were covered with plastic bags from a party held several days earlier.

September 4, 2001

Columbia University

New York, New York

Burning incense in a student's room lit the room's curtains on fire. Flames spread to the mattress and activated a sprinkler head, which extinguished the fire. The student was hospitalized with second-degree burns on her arm, which occurred when she attempted to extinguish the fire.

November 22, 2000

New York University

New York, New York

A 25-year-old graduate student at New York University died in a fire that started when three candles at the foot of her bed ignited the bedding.

About Environmental Health and Safety

- ❖ Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), a unit of the Office of Public Safety, provides a variety of fire safety, building safety, and environmental, health, and safety services to the campus community.
- ❖ Our team includes a New York State-certified building code official, a state-certified fire service instructor, and other skilled, experienced professionals who specialize in fire detection and suppression systems, state and local building safety codes, fire safety training, and fire safety inspections.
- ❖ We continuously inspect, test, and maintain all of the College's sprinklers, heat detectors, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, pull stations, and automatic fire alarm systems.
- ❖ We conduct regular emergency evacuation drills ("fire drills") so students become familiar with the fire alarm signal and escape plan for the residential facility they live in.
- ❖ Through campus resident assistants (RAs), you can arrange to participate in student fire safety training programs, which are available through EH&S.

Questions?

Call the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, (607) 274-3333,
or the Office of Residential Life, (607) 274-3141.

Prepared by

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety

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To report an EMERGENCY, call

911