

# Ithaca College

## Fire Safety Information for Students Moving Off Campus

### FACT

More college students die as a result of fires in off-campus housing than in residence halls and Greek housing combined!

According to a study conducted from 2000-2002, six students (15 percent) died from fires in residence halls, five students (13 percent) in Greek housing and twenty-nine (73 percent) in off-campus housing.

Common factors observed in deaths from off-campus housing fires:

- Missing or altered smoke detectors
- Smoking
- Alcohol

### **Answer these 20 questions *before* you sign a rental agreement:**

1. Are smoke alarms installed? Are they working?
2. How old are the smoke alarms?
3. How often are the smoke alarms checked and batteries changed?
4. Are there at least two ways to exit your living space and your building?
5. Do the upper floors have a fire escape or ladder available for each bedroom (if there are multiple floors)?
6. Are the doors rated for fire?
7. Are fire extinguishers available? Working?
8. Were the fire extinguishers inspected within the last year?
9. Is a sprinkler system installed? Is it working?
10. Do the windows open properly or are they permanently closed?
11. Is the building regularly inspected by the Ithaca Fire Department for safety?
12. What is the owner's policy and method for correcting safety problems in the building?
13. Has there ever been a fire in this building? If so, identify the cause.
14. Are there security bars on the windows that could hinder emergency escape?
15. Is the building used for anything other than housing? (e.g., shop, storage, garage)
16. Where is the nearest fire hydrant on the street?
17. Is access to the building limited or difficult for fire department vehicles or operations?
18. If present, do the fire detection and suppression systems report to the fire department or just alarm within the building?
19. Is the owner a member in good standing with a housing association?
20. Has the fire department received any safety complaints regarding this building?

## **PROOF IS IN THE PRINT**

**April 13, 2003**

**Ohio State University**

**Fatalities: 5**

Smoke inhalation and carbon-monoxide poisoning were likely factors in the deaths of five college students who tried to flee a house fire off campus at Ohio State University.

Two of the students who died in the 4:00 a.m. fire were Ohio State students. Three others were students at Ohio University in Athens, about 70 miles southeast of Columbus. All of the victims were reported to be awake at the time of the fire. They were having a party that night to celebrate the 21st birthday of a roommate.

**December 3, 2002**

**Indiana University**

**Fatalities: 1**

A graduate student died in an off-campus fire. Careless disposal of smoking materials was believed to be the cause.

**February 15, 2002**

**University of North Carolina-Greensboro**

**Fatalities: 2**

A fire in an off-campus apartment complex claimed the lives of two students. Occupants of the building leaped from balconies and climbed out of windows to escape the fire. The building did not have a sprinkler system. It was also equipped with smoke detectors that did not transmit to a central monitoring station.

## **About Environmental Health and Safety**

- ❖ The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), a division 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**