

NOTE: Items printed in green are of particular interest to residents.

1165 SAFETY IS A STATE OF MIND!!

Schools want their dormitories to be as safe as possible for their residents, and staff. However, unless they are in the Fire Safety business, many people are not aware of the ways to keep their facilities fire safe.

The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office has developed these informational brochures so our clients may learn some of the tips for fire safety. These tips are based on the most common Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code infractions we find in dormitory type facilities.

NOTE: Some schools may have more restrictive requirements.

10 HOT FIRE SAFETY TIPS!!

1. **Exits:** Exit doors, stairways and corridors are provided so that people using the facility have ready access to exit the building in the event of an emergency. Most exit ways are marked with exit signs. Often, but not always, these doors are operated by panic type hardware, that a person merely has to push to open the door.

Furniture or anything that will keep people from getting to an exit in normal lighting, darkness, or smoky conditions must never obstruct exit access, even temporarily. Also exit doors must never be locked from the inside to prevent exiting the building.

2. **Emergency Lighting:** Many dormitories have emergency lighting that will provide temporary lighting in the event of power failure. This lighting is not designed to allow normal operations during a power failure but only minimal lighting for up to 90 minutes to allow

Revised 09/19/16

safe evacuation of the building. **CANDLES SHOULD NEVER BE USED IN DORMITORIES!**

At least yearly, emergency light batteries must be tested for 60 or 90 minutes, depending on when the building was built.

3. **Illuminated Exit Signs:** Most dormitories have illuminated exit signs at each required exit door. The lights in these fixtures must be operating at all times. If these fixtures have battery back up they are to be tested as required for emergency lights above.

4. **Extension Cords:** Extension cords are to be used for temporary use of a portable appliance only. Temporary use includes holiday lighting and other uses that will last only a few hours to a few days. Extension cords are never to be run through doors, windows, walls, ceilings or under rugs or carpeting. Cords must be in good condition and the same size or larger than the cord of the appliance.

5. **Multi-Plug Adapters:** Multi-plug adapters are designed to allow more than one cord to be plugged in to a single outlet. Only approved multi-plug adapters with over-current protection are allowed. Relocatable power taps shall be directly connected to a permanently installed outlet

6. **Fire Alarm:** Many dormitories have a fire alarm system. These systems are required to have an annual maintenance inspection and testing by a qualified fire alarm technician. Manual pull stations are required to be visually inspected every six months. Single and multiple station smoke alarms must be tested monthly and logs kept of those tests. The location of all devices and alarms must be included in the inspection reports.

In dormitories that have battery-operated smoke alarms, the devices must be tested monthly and a log maintained. Students in rooms where a smoke alarm has been disabled or removed may be prosecuted.

7. **Fire Drills:** Dormitories are required to have four (4) fire drills annually with the first to be conducted within the first 10 days of the start of classes with one during hours after sunset or before sunrise. Records of drills must be maintained.

8. **Material Storage:** All storage must be 24 inches below ceilings or 18" below the horizontal plane of the sprinkler deflectors in sprinkled areas. If your dormitory has an automatic sprinkler system, residents must never hang clothing, decorations, or anything else from the sprinkler heads and /or piping.

9. **Furnishings:** Furnishings should be arranged in dorm rooms to not obstruct the clear path of egress from the dorm room. **If approved by your school**, electrical appliances and lights should be UL listed and in safe working condition.

10. **Decorations:** Decorations such as burlap, fish netting, parachutes and flags hanging from the ceiling are not permitted in dorm rooms. Decorative materials attached to dorm room walls are limited to up to 50% of the aggregate wall area in buildings with an approved automatic sprinkler system and 20% when provided with an approved smoke alarms system. Decorations in corridors are limited to 10% of the wall area in such buildings.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, OR NEED
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
CONTACT THE REGIONAL STATE
FIRE MARSHAL NEAREST YOU.**

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http://www.vafire.com/state_fire_marshall/

FIRE SAFETY

TIPS

FOR DORMITORIES

Based on the
Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code



Presented by

**COMMONWEALTH OF
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THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S
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