



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

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Director, Environmental Health & Safety

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Dear Fellow Camel,

According to statistics from the U.S. Fire Administration (Part of FEMA), there is an average of 1,700 fires of various degrees of severity every year on college and university campuses around the country. Between January 2000 and August 2009, there were a total of 135 fire-related deaths. Sadly, most if not all of these deaths were preventable. Sadly, most if not all of these deaths were preventable.

- The leading cause of dormitory fires is: 1) Arson, 2) cooking, 3) smoking, and 4) candles.
- ***In at least 28% fo fatal fires, smoke detectors were either missing or rendered inoperable.*** Investigators suspect that that number is actually higher, but because smoke detectors were destroyed in the fire, they were unable to determine if they were operating correctly.
- ***Alcohol was a factor in approximately 50% of student housing fire fatalities.***
- In many instances, student apathy was a factor. Evacuation efforts are hindered since fire alarms are often ignored.

To prevent a similar tragedy from occurring here at Connecticut College, I ask that all of you take note and comply with of the following Fire Safety policies:

## **Prohibited Items and Practices:**

- Connecticut State Law prohibits smoking inside all campus buildings.
- Wall coverings or decorations constructed from combustible materials (paper, cloth, etc.) are prohibited in hallways ("Means of Egress"). Decorations are not allowed in areas of assembly (e.g., Living rooms or party venues) unless they are treated with a fire retardant solution.
- Parachutes, tapestries or other large pieces of fabric should never be hung from the ceiling. Doing so will obstruct the smoke detector and sprinkler heads.
- Use of straw, shredded paper or other combustible decorations are prohibited. Combustible vegetation, including natural cut Christmas trees, or other cut holiday decorations are prohibited. Live "Ball" trees are allowed, provided that they are kept alive with periodic watering.
- Appliances and articles that generate extreme heat or open flames, such as toasters, hotplates or oil lamps are strictly prohibited in student rooms. Special attention is directed to the ban on halogen lamps, candles and incense burners. These last items have been determined to be the cause of several recent fires at Connecticut College.
- Flammable liquids or gases of any type are prohibited in residential buildings. Examples include: Gasoline, kerosene, lighter fluid, lamp oil and propane.
- You must obtain approval from the Office of Residential Education and Living, and Campus Safety, prior to any event where barbecues will be used. There are important safety issues to consider when using barbecues, not the least of which is the proper disposal of coals and ashes. Propane fueled barbecues, or the use and/or possession of lighter fluids are prohibited. Only "Matchlight" type briquettes are allowed, and unused briquettes cannot be stored.

(Over)

- Overloaded electrical circuits are a common cause of fire. Each two-plug wall outlet should have no more than one “power strip” plugged in. Never “piggy-back” power strips (one strip plugged into another.)

**Building egress:** In an emergency, it is imperative that routes of egress from the building be kept absolutely clear of obstacles that could hinder or trip occupants as they attempt to evacuate.

- Storage of furniture, equipment bags, bicycles or other bulky objects in hallways and stairwells is prohibited.

**Fire protection:** Do not prop open doors leading into stairwells! Stairwells tend to act as “chimneys” during a fire, rapidly spreading toxic smoke and flame throughout the building, and rendering those stairwells impassable. It is vital that fire doors be kept closed at all times. Smoke filled Fire doors may remain open only if the door is equipped with an alarm activated, magnetic holdback system.

**Fire safety equipment:** It goes without saying that tampering with emergency equipment is prohibited.

- **Do not remove the battery, disconnect, cover, or otherwise render inoperable, any smoke detector.**
- Do not damage or obscure emergency exit signs, alarm strobes, or needlessly discharge fire extinguishers.
- Do not remove fire extinguishers from their wall mount, unless needed to fight a fire.
- Only attempt to fight a fire if you have received training on how to do so safely, and know how to operate the fire extinguisher.
- Do not hang anything from sprinkler pipes, or paint or cover sprinkler heads.

If you become aware of any inoperable or damaged emergency equipment, please notify Physical Plant at extension 2253.

**Building evacuation/Designated assembly areas:** Whenever the building fire alarm sounds, immediately evacuate the building, and proceed to the designated assembly area and report to your House Fellow, who will be taking roll. Assist individuals with disabilities in leaving the building. If the disabled person cannot be safely evacuated, help them to an enclosed stairwell, which will serve as an “area of refuge” until assistance from the New London Fire Department arrives. Detailed building evacuation procedures, and the list of “Designated Assembly Areas” are posted on the Environmental Health and Safety Web Page at: <http://www.conncoll.edu/offices/ehs/5955>

If you have any questions, or if I can be of any assistance, please call me at extension 2252.

Thank you for helping to make Connecticut College a safer place to live.



Steve Langlois  
Director of Environmental Health & Safety

Cc:  
Dean of Student Life  
Director of Campus Safety  
Director of Physical Plant