



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

19 August 2014

Dear Fellow Camel,

Since 2000, there have been 86 fatal fires in campus dormitories, Greek housing, or in off-campus housing within 3 miles of campus. These fires have claimed the lives of 123 students.

- The leading causes of dormitory fires are cooking, arson, smoking, and use of open flames (e.g., candles).
- ***In at least 28% of 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 (with root 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 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.

Barbecues:

- You must obtain approval from the Office of Residential Education and Living, and Campus Safety, prior to any event where barbecues will be used.
- Propane fueled barbecues, or the use and/or possession of lighter fluids are prohibited in student residential buildings. Only self-starting "Matchlight" type briquettes are allowed.
- Extinguish coals with lots of water. Make absolutely sure that the coals are totally cold to the touch before disposing into the trash.

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Office of Environmental Health & Safety | Campus Box PHY PLT | 270 Mohegan Avenue, New London, CT 06320-4196

Phone: 860-439-2252 | Fax: 860-439-5180 srlan@conncoll.edu | <http://www.conncoll.edu/offices/environmental-health-and-safety/>

Building egress: At the beginning of the school year, be sure to familiarize yourself with the locations of the fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers and all exits out of your residence hall.

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! It is vital that fire doors be kept closed at all times. Stairwells tend to act as “chimneys” during a fire, rapidly spreading toxic smoke and flame throughout the building. Always remember that most fire-related deaths are from smoke inhalation. 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.
- **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 workreq@conncoll.edu, or call (860) 439-2253.

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 room, which will serve as an “area of refuge.” Call Campus Safety by dialing 111 or 2222 from any campus phone, or (860) 439-2222, and let them know the location of anyone taking refuge in the building. Stay put until assistance from the New London Fire Department arrives.

Additional information, including specific building evacuation procedures, the list of “Designated Assembly Areas,” and instructions on how to use a fire extinguisher are posted on the Environmental Health and Safety web page at: <http://www.conncoll.edu/offices/environmental-health-and-safety/firelife-safety/>. Please visit the EH&S page and take the time to familiarize yourself with these important procedures.

If you have any questions, or if I can be of any assistance, please call me at (860) 439-2252, or email at srlan@conncoll.edu.

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 Residential Education & Living
Director of Campus Safety
Director of Physical Plant