



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY

2011 FIRE SAFETY REPORT

Introduction

Per requirements for Fire Safety Reporting in Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), public law 110-315 in August of 2008, this report details elements of the Vanderbilt University Campus Fire Safety Program and includes information on fire prevention policies and practices, fire safety educational and training initiatives, an overview of fire protection equipment in the residence halls, emergency evacuation procedures, fire safety statistics, and proposed plans for future improvements to the student residence fire safety program.



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Vanderbilt Student Residence Building Fire Safety Systems

All Vanderbilt Residence Halls and Greek Houses are protected throughout by automatic sprinkler systems. Each building also has an adequate compliment of multipurpose dry chemical extinguishers in common areas, throughout the halls, and in mechanical and storage areas. Multi-room suites have an extinguisher in the common area.

Every one of these student residence buildings is also fully covered by a fire alarm system that reports to the Plant Operations Building Systems Controls (BSC), an alarm monitoring station that is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. These alarm systems are activated by detection of smoke by detectors located throughout each building, sprinkler water flow, or activation of a fire alarm manual pull station. The alarm systems warn occupants, while BSC initiates notification of the Vanderbilt University Police Department (VUPD) and the Nashville Fire department.

Fire Safety Rules for Student Residents (2011)

Vanderbilt is a [Smoke-Free Campus](#).



Smoking is prohibited inside all buildings on campus, including residence halls and Greek houses. ([Student Handbook, Chapter 1](#)) Smoking is also prohibited outside on the Vanderbilt campus, with the exception of [designated smoking locations](#). Additional smoking areas for campus residents are indicated [on this map](#).

Residents must abide by the fire safety practices and regulations listed below.

The following information was extracted from [Chapter 4 of the Student Handbook](#).

- Combustible materials may not be stored on the premises.
- Cardboard boxes may not be used for storage of items in storage areas.
- The Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Fire Code prohibits the use and storage of grills within ten (10) feet of any combustible materials on any balcony or patio of a multifamily dwelling. Use or storage of grills is prohibited on any balcony or patio, or in any residential facility.
- Motorcycles, mopeds, and other internal combustion machines may not be kept in University housing.
- Bicycles may not be stored in hallways, stairwells, or other common areas because they may block emergency egress. Bicycles may be stored in student rooms.
- Candles, other open flames, oil lamps, and incense, are prohibited in the residence halls.
- Walkways, stairs, and corridors must be kept clear at all times for emergency egress. Student property may not be stored in these areas.
- Heat producing appliances (coffee makers, heating pads, slow-cookers, etc.) must be attended when turned on.
- Flammable materials may not be used to cover or obstruct light sources, heating/cooling sources, or fire-safety fixtures.
- The University's smoke-free campus policy limits smoking to designated outdoor areas. Extinguishing or disposing of smoking materials by any means other than the urns provided is prohibited.
- Access to windows and doors must be kept clear for emergency egress.
- Fire doors may be used by residents or guests only for emergency exit or exit during drills.
- Failure to evacuate a building when a fire alarm sounds is prohibited.

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- Additionally, the following actions are prohibited and will likely result in disciplinary sanctions, including possible suspension from the University or a prorated damage charge among the residents of a particular area if the responsible person(s) cannot be identified:
 - Tampering with door alarms, fire extinguishers, sprinkler heads, water flow or other control valves and other fire-safety equipment,
 - Tampering with smoke detectors, emergency phones, building access systems, elevator systems, surveillance cameras or other safety and security equipment,
 - Tube lights and string lights, except that string lights may be used under the following conditions: Such lights may be used only in individual rooms and not in common areas. The lights must be UL approved and in good condition. No more than three strands of such lights may be strung together, and must be plugged directly into an outlet or into a surge protector that is plugged directly into an outlet.
 - Items suspended from the ceilings, sprinkler heads, overhead piping, or on or near water pipes,
 - Use or possession of fireworks,
 - Disabling fire alarm systems,
 - Arson/igniting fires,
 - Tampering with or damaging fire-exit lights, signs, horns, strobes or other notification devices,
 - Tampering with or obstructing emergency-exit doors.

Fire Safety Rules for Electric Appliances

Small items such as radios, sound systems, electric blankets, clocks, lamps, and coffee makers with enclosed heating elements are permitted in rooms, but no appliances with exposed heating elements, or grills (for either outdoor or indoor use, including "George Foreman" grills and like devices), are allowed. Appliances that draw a large amount of current from each circuit, such as hot plates, air conditioners, electric heaters, and instant water-heating elements, are prohibited. In addition, washers, dryers, and dishwashers are not allowed. Microwave ovens less than six years old, having a maximum power of no more than 800 watts and an interior capacity of no more than one cubic foot are permitted. Refrigerators less than six years old that have no more than a four-cubic-foot capacity may be used. The residential staff of a building may require that any appliance be placed in storage if the manner in which the appliance is used causes interruption of service or endangers the health, safety, or well-being of members of the residential community.

All appliances used in campus residences must be in good condition, with special attention given to seals, electrical cords, and plugs. Only power strips with circuit breakers may be used as extension cords. In consideration of fire safety, halogen lamps or light sources are prohibited in campus residences. The Senior Director of Housing, Facilities Operation and Management reserves the option of revoking authorization for the use of any appliance in individual buildings or throughout the residential campus.

Fire Safety Rules for Furnishings

Student-owned furniture brought into campus residences and Greek houses must meet the hospitality/contract-grade furniture fire-safety specifications of either the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 260 or the California Technical Bulletin 117, section E. (Furniture that complies with either standard will be appropriately tagged by the manufacturer.)

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Residential Fire Safety Education and Training

1. Residential Staff Training

Prior to the beginning of each Fall Semester, the Vanderbilt Fire Safety Coordinator provides fire safety training for all Residential Advisors (RA). Topics covered include RA Fire Safety responsibilities, Fire Safety Rules, evacuation procedures, fire drills and extinguisher training.

2. Student Resident Training

- a. In 2011 all first undergraduate students were assigned Vanderbilt Burning Issues, an online fire safety training which emphasizes evacuation procedures, fire safety rules and fire prevention responsibilities.
- b. The following instructions are posted in every student's residence room on campus:

Fire Evacuation

When you hear a fire alarm or see smoke and fire:

- Exit the building immediately using the nearest exit.
- **Never** use an elevator as an exit during a fire.
- Feel each door as you approach. Never open a hot door.
- If the hallway or stairwell is smoky, seek another path or await rescue in your room.
- Once outside, proceed to the Area Assembly Point. Never reenter the building.

Additional fire safety information can be found on the VU Fire Safety website at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/firesafety>.

- c. At the start of fall semester, RA's are asked to review the [Evacuation Safety Fire Safety Fact Sheet](#) with residents of their floor during the first Residence Hall Meeting.
- d. At the first of each Fall Semester the Fire Safety Coordinator also provides fire safety training for all Greek House Officers (the 6 officers for each chapter are the only student occupants for each Fraternity and Sorority house). This training covers fire prevention, fire safe party decor and evacuation safety.
- e. Each September is recognized as Vanderbilt Fire Safety Month. RA's post featured [Fire Safety Fact Sheets](#) on bulletin boards in residence halls. Fire Safety topics are also emphasized through email tips and InnerVU articles.

3. Fire Drills

Fire Drills are conducted each Fall semester in every Vanderbilt Residence Hall. The drills are planned, coordinated and evaluated by the Vanderbilt Fire Safety Coordinator, with input and assistance from the Senior Director of Residential Education, his Associate Directors and the Area Coordinators for each Residential Area. Vanderbilt Environmental Health & Safety (VEHS) staff members assist in timing and observing the student response to unannounced alarms. The Area Coordinators have RA's check all residence hall rooms to assure that all residents have responded and make observations of conditions affecting the drill. BSC staff members activate alarms and then check operating condition of fire alarm annunciators (audible and visual alarms) in each residence hall being drilled.

Greek Houses with only 6 or 7 residents are not required to conduct fire drills under local codes. However, we do offer to either conduct a drill for Houses that request one.

In Fall 2011, fire drills were held in all 44 residence halls.

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2011 Fire Statistics

Date	Residence Hall	Room/Floors	Description	Injuries	Deaths	Total Damages
9/8/2011	Towers 4	Suite 1206	Unintentional: A resident was cooking onions in a pan in a small amount of oil. He took a call away from the stove and the pan contents caught on fire. He extinguished the fire with water.	0	0	0.00
11/13/2011	Mayfield C	Rooms 11, 12 & 13	Intentional: Several students were playing a video game called ROCK BAND. The fire alarm went off, and they quickly discovered smoke and flames coming from a microwave oven in the small apartment kitchenette. The fire was quickly extinguished, and everyone cleared out of the building. Upon inspection, a burned wooden drumstick used to play the video game was found inside the microwave oven and the microwave timer had been set to cook for over an hour as an apparent prank. The fire did not appear to cause damage to the microwave oven, which remained in service in the apartment.	0	0	0.00
Totals	2			0	0	\$0.00

Though the cooking fire was very minor, the choice to use water to extinguish it was not good. Had there been much oil in the pan at all, this act could have caused more significant damage.

Fire Incident Reporting

After evacuating to the Area Assembly Point, students are instructed to call 911 from a campus emergency phone to report important information to emergency responders. If using a cell phone, they are instructed to call 421-1911.

Once VUPD Dispatch has been contacted by BSC and the information has been relayed to the Metropolitan Nashville Fire Department and VUPD officers for response, the dispatchers initiate call trees appropriate for the scope of the incident. They will typically contact Randal Tarkington, Senior Director of Housing and Residential Education, and the Associate Director responsible for the residence hall involved. Other Housing and Residential Education and/or Dean of Students staff would be contacted depending on the scope of the incident. As the incident progresses, VUPD would also contact the VEHS Emergency Pager Officer, who in turn would advise David Price, Fire Safety Coordinator. The Risk Management staff member on call would also be paged.

In the meantime, BSC would contact the Plant Operations Zone Manager and other appropriate Plant Operations management staff, to deal with facility repair issues.

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2012 Fire Safety Program Improvement Plans

1. We will be providing more information and instruction to Area Coordinators, so that their incident reports may be used as supplemental information on suspected Residential Fires.
2. Emphasize Cooking Safety Training by:
 - a. Update the Cooking Safety Tips Poster and have Housing & Residential Education laminate and post copies in every Residence Hall kitchen.
 - b. Emphasize Cooking Safety in RA training August, 2012.
 - c. Make cooking safety the focal issue for the September, 2012, Vanderbilt University Fire Safety Month. Disseminate Cooking Safety Tips in e-mails, newsletter and Residence Hall meeting formats.