STATISTICS SHOW THAT FIRE IS DANGEROUS

Since January 2000, there have been 113 campus-related fire deaths across the nation. Over 80 percent of these deaths have occurred in off-campus housing where more than 2/3 of the students live. On graduation day 1996, 5 students were killed by a fire after a party at UNC fraternity Phi Gamma Delta. USA Today determined that 25% of off-campus fatalities occurred in a residence following a party.

Phi Gamma Delta house at UNC where 5 students died on graduation day.

Alcohol as a factor in fire deaths...

About half of all adult fire fatalities were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the fire. An intoxicated individual may fail to notice basic fire warnings such as a smoke detector or the smell of smoke. It may also be more difficult for them to find their way out of a house that is full of smoke. Of the 5 students that died in the Phi Gamma Delta fire at UNC, 4 had blood alcohol levels higher than 0.14.

PARTY CHECKLIST

- Drinks
- Music
- Food
- Working Smoke Detectors
- Exits Unobstructed
- Party Safety Officer Designated
- Fire Extinguisher
- No Open Flames
- Neighbors Notified
- Smoking Area Designated (Away from Combustibles)
- Designated Drivers

Uninvited Party Guest: Fire

UNC Chapel Hill

UNC Environment, Health and Safety
919-962-5507
What you can do to make your party safer.

Open Flames
One of the most important things you can do is to reduce your use of open flames. Never leave candles or incense unattended. If you are going to have a large party, don’t use candles to “set the mood”. Don’t allow people to smoke inside and if possible try and designate a smoking area away from the house. Many fatal fires have been started when someone drops a cigarette into a couch located on the front porch or back deck. If you are going to have a cook out try and set the grill away from anything combustible. Make sure that you extinguish the coals once you are done cooking.

Smoke Detectors
It is important to have working smoke detectors in your house or apartment. Missing or disabled smoke alarms in off campus housing are attributed to many off-campus fatalities. If you are missing smoke detectors in your residence, contact your landlord immediately. If they simply need batteries, get new ones. Wouldn’t you feel bad if your friends or roommates died, because your smoke detector didn’t have batteries?

Unobstructed/Secondary Exits
When throwing a party it is important to make sure all the exits are unobstructed in case something happens and everyone needs to evacuate. If you are moving furniture to make room for more people DO NOT block exit doors. Also, if you are attending a party, at a restaurant, nightclub or other public assembly try and locate alternative exits. Often in an emergency the main exit becomes overwhelmed. At the Station nightclub in Rhode Island 100 people died in a fire when the main exit became overwhelmed.

Overloaded Circuits
Do not overload your electrical outlets. Overloaded outlets can cause your wiring to overheat and especially in older houses with older wiring this can easily cause a fire. If you need to power additional equipment for a party such as extra music speakers take care not to overload your outlets. Try and unplug appliances that you won’t be using during the party such as a TV. This will reduce the risk of overloading your outlets. If you need to run extension cords make sure that they are not frayed and that they are protected during the party. Do not use extension cords for permanent wiring.

Party Safety Officer
No party is complete without a safety officer. Try and designate someone who will remain sober (or relatively sober) who can keep an eye on the party. They can make sure that nothing is getting out of hand and that nothing has changed that might impact peoples safety. They can also keep an eye on your stuff so that it doesn’t get ripped off. As the party is winding down and people are starting to go to bed have someone make a quick check to make sure all cigarettes and other flame sources have been extinguished. It was smoking material in a garbage can that started the fire that killed the 5 sleeping UNC students back in 1996.