

Safe Student Accommodations 101

10 tips for a safe place to live.

As students prepare to move into shared or rented accommodations to attend college or university, parents, guardians and students themselves should take an active role in finding a safe place to live. It is essential for caregivers and students to talk about fire and life safety. Whether returning to school or leaving home for the first time, a discussion about good fire safety practices can help to ensure this exciting time in a student's life is not marred by a fire tragedy.

LIVING SAFELY 101

WHAT EVERY STUDENT SHOULD KNOW TO PREVENT FIRE.

- 1 Look While You Cook:** Stay in the kitchen when cooking – especially if using oil or high temperatures. If a pot catches fire, have a proper-fitting pot lid handy to slide over the pot and turn off the stove. Cooking requires constant attention. Distractions like televisions, cell phones, or computers can lead to a tragic cooking fire.
- 2 Candle With Care:** If you use candles in your room or apartment, keep them away from anything that can burn and place them in a safe, sturdy holder with a glass shade or hurricane chimney. Place them where they cannot be knocked over and blow them out when leaving the room.
- 3 Keep An Eye On Excessive Drinkers:** Alcohol is a common factor in many fire fatalities involving cooking and smoking. Be aware of roommates and friends who have been drinking excessively, especially if they are cooking or smoking.

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Smoke Outside:

Establish rules for smokers. If you permit smoking inside, use large, sturdy ashtrays that can't be easily tipped over. Ashtrays should be emptied into a metal container not the garbage can. Check around furniture cushions after people have been smoking, especially if they have been drinking.

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Use Electricity Wisely:

Toasters, coffeemakers and microwaves should be plugged directly into an outlet. If you must use an extension cord, buy one that is the correct gauge for the appliance and has a  or  approval mark on the label.  or  approved power bars may be used for stereo equipment, computers and lights.

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Clear the Clutter:

Keep things that burn away from heat sources like stovetops, space heaters and electronic equipment. Tea towels and paper too close to burners can catch fire. Keep space heaters at least one metre away from bedding, furniture and curtains.

Working Smoke Alarms: It's the Law: Your room or apartment must have working smoke alarms. Test them monthly and notify the landlord immediately if they're not working. Dead batteries must be replaced right away. Nuisance alarms can be avoided by making sure smoke alarms are not located too close to the kitchen or bathroom. Consider getting a smoke alarm with a hush feature. Smoke alarms should be checked after any extended absence such as Christmas break and reading week. Never tamper with or disable a smoke alarm.

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Plan To Escape:

Know two ways out of your room or apartment in case of fire. Identify all exits and make sure you can use them. If you live in a highrise, familiarize yourself with the building's fire safety plan. If you discover fire, call the fire department from a safe location outside.

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Be Equipped:

To stay safe, all students should put together a package that includes a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm, a battery powered lantern or flashlight and radio, extra batteries and a  or  approved power bar.

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Learn More:

For more information about fire safety in student accommodations, contact your local fire department or visit:

www.ofm.gov.on.ca
www.makeitstop.ca
www.esasafe.com
www.csa.ca

