

FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE

To set forth a policy is to establish the minimum requirements necessary to provide a reasonable level of life safety and property protection from the hazards of fire, explosion, or dangerous conditions in new and existing buildings, structures, premises and grounds.

GENERAL

Each year, many lives are lost and millions of dollars in property is destroyed by fire. West Chester University is committed to providing its students, staff, faculty, and guests with a safe environment to learn, live and work. Failure to do so may jeopardize the safety and the well-being of everyone.

DEFINITIONS

1. DEFINITIONS ARE PUBLISHED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION:

- A. **Arson:** Arson is the crime of intentionally or maliciously setting fire to structures, wild land areas, cars or other property. Arson often involves fires deliberately set to property of another.
- B. **Cooking Appliances:** Cooking appliances include ranges, ovens, microwaves, food boilers, food broilers, toaster ovens, griddles, deep-fry fryers, waffle irons, or any other similar type appliances utilized to heat or cook food for consumption.
- C. **Decorative Materials:** Decorative materials include but are not limited to such items as paper products, curtains, draperies, loose fabrics, streamers, cloth, cotton, batting, hay, straw, corn stalks, vines, leaves, trees and moss when in use for decorative effect on wall or ceiling coverings, or when used for acoustical or other affect. This does not include normal floor coverings, ordinary window shades or material one fortieth of an inch or less in thickness applied directly to and adhering tightly to a non-combustible base.
- D. **Emergency Egress:** Emergency Egress consists of the aisles, corridors, exit doors, exit stairways, exit passageways and exit discharges from a structure.
- E. **Exit Stairway:** An exit component, that is separated from all other interior spaces of a building or structure by fire-resistive construction and opening protectives, and provides for a protected path of egress travel in a vertical direction to the exit discharge.
- F. **Exit Sign:** A sign which marks the location of exits that lead to the exterior of the building.

- G. **Fire Egress:** Fire egress includes aisles, corridors, stairways and other approaches to ramps, exterior doors or other building exits.
- H. **Fire Hazard:** Any condition, arrangement, or act which may cause an increase the potential for fire to a greater degree than customarily recognized as normal; or which may obstruct, delay, or hinder, or may become the cause of obstruction, delay or hindrance to the prevention, suppression, or extinguishment of fire.
- I. **Fire Detection Equipment:** Any device or sensor that is used to detect heat or smoke caused by combustion. These devices and sensors are usually integrated with a fire alarm system to alert building occupants to evacuate.
- J. **Fire Suppression Equipment:** Any device that is used to suppress a fire. This includes fixed building equipment such as fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems and kitchen hood suppression systems as well as mobile equipment used by the fire department.
- K. **Fire Rated Stairwell:** An enclosed stairwell with a specific fire rating which connects all floors of a building and provides a ground floor exit.
- L. **Fire Related Violations of Law:** Arson and tampering with fire detection or prevention equipment are criminal acts. Anyone caught intentionally setting fires or tampering with / maliciously destroying fire detection or protection equipment will be subject not only to University disciplinary action but prosecution under the law as well.
- M. **Fireworks:** Any combustible or explosive composition or any substance or combination of substances or any article prepared for the purpose of producing a visible or an audible effect by combustion, explosion, deflagration, or detonation.
- N. **Hot Work:** Hot Work is any temporary operation that involves the use of devices with flames or other method to produce heat or create sparks. This includes but is not limited to operations such as torch cutting, brazing, grinding, soldering, and welding.
- O. **Occupied Building:** Any building in which a person or persons are present.

POLICY

1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for the organization, coordination and supervision of campus fire prevention and protection activities. These duties shall include the following:

1. Enforcing all fire safety related policies and mitigating potential fire hazards
 2. Development and presentation of fire and life safety related educational programming activities on campus to include fire prevention techniques and the proper use of extinguishers.
 3. Inspection, testing and maintenance of all fire and life safety systems, equipment and apparatus and for compliance with all applicable codes and statutory regulations. This will include all fire detection and suppression systems, fire extinguishers and kitchen chemical fire suppression systems.
 4. Reviewing building renovation and new construction plans for compliance with applicable life/fire safety codes, statutes and other regulations.
 5. Inspecting ongoing building renovation and new construction job sites for compliance with all applicable fire safety codes, statutes and other regulations.
 6. Providing consultation services for fire protection systems and fire rated construction techniques to Facilities Design & Construction and Physical Plant Operations.
 7. Approving emergency plans for the control of fires, evacuation of building occupants, salvage of property and control of students and employees during the evacuation of individual facilities.
 8. Providing assistance and/or conducting investigations of fires on campus to determine the cause, origin and extent of such fires and the damage caused. In conjunction with the Department of Public Safety, local fire officials, and the PA State Police Fire Marshal, Environmental Health and Safety shall keep a record of all fires and all facts concerning the same, including contributing factors, deficiencies of personnel or equipment, and actions necessary to prevent similar incidents from occurring. The PA State Police Fire Marshal holds jurisdiction over all fire incidents and shall be the chief investigator in all instances. Determination of crime scene status shall be the responsibility of the PA State Police Fire Marshal and the Department of Public Safety. All fires shall be treated as crime scenes until a determination is made otherwise.
- B. The Facility Administrator assigned to each University building will serve as a point of contact with Environmental Health and Safety for fire safety related issues. This will include the Resident and Graduate Hall Directors from residential facilities as well as those assigned to academic and administrative facilities. Facility Administrators shall assist Environmental Health and Safety

with the implementation of all Fire Safety policies in their respective buildings. The duties of the Facility Administrators shall including the following:

1. Facility Administrators shall address, in an expedient manner, any existing hazards or deficiencies that are documented in inspection reports provided by Environmental Health and Safety for their assigned facility.
2. Facility Administrators shall be responsible for the accounting of occupants during facility evacuations at the designated assembly location. The designated assembly location shall be a safe distance away from the building. Specific work areas or floors of building should gather at separate locations to prevent confusion for accountability purposes. These locations shall be included in the *Fire Safety Preparedness and Facility Evacuation Procedures*.

2. PROCEDURES

- A. **Reporting a fire:** Upon the discovery of smoke and/or flame, regardless of the degree of intensity of the fire the person(s) involved shall immediately initiate the following actions:
 1. Activate the fire alarm system by pulling a manual pull station or verbally notify the building's occupants of the fire if the alarm system is not functioning.
 2. Evacuate from the building and report to the pre-designated assembly area and await further instruction from the Facility Administrator or Public Safety representative.
 3. Even if the fire alarm system has already been activated, locate the nearest telephone or use a cell phone (at a safe distance from the fire) and contact the Public Safety Department at 610-436-3311 to report the fire. When the Dispatcher answers the phone, provide them with the nature of the emergency and the exact location (building, floor and room number or area).
 4. The **Fire Department Response Protocol** shall be followed based on the information received by Public Safety regarding fires on campus.
- B. **Fire Prevention Responsibilities:** Every member of the University community is charged with the responsibility of preventing the occurrence of fires on campus. Specific guidance is as follows;
 1. **Disposal of waste material** – Good housekeeping is basic to fire safety and should be a concern in every type of occupancy, from residential facilities to complex research facilities. Rubbish, trash, waste paper, oily

rags, chemical waste or other combustible materials must not be allowed to accumulate in or about any building. Such materials shall be promptly disposed of in the appropriate receptacles that are provided for such use. These containers will be collected daily and removed from the building.

2. **Storage of flammable material** – Paints, oils, and other flammable liquids and chemicals used for routine maintenance and in chemistry labs must be stored in approved fire resistant cabinets or remote locations away from other combustibles. Gasoline, kerosene, oily insecticides, and other flammable liquids are not permitted to be stored in occupied buildings.
3. **Use of flammable and combustible solvents and cleaning materials** - Materials that are not water based may not be used unless authorized by Environmental Health and Safety. Solvents or cleaning fluids will not be used in occupied buildings or in unventilated rooms, unless specifically authorized by Environmental Health and Safety and the manager of the department using these materials. Whenever an approved solvent or cleaning fluid is used, the user will exercise every precaution to prevent an explosion or fire. Flammable liquids will be stored in safety cans and their contents must be properly identified.
4. **Bulletin Boards & Postings** – Only Bulletin boards and other pre-designated areas can be utilized for the purpose of attaching informational wall posting and posters within campus buildings. Bulletin boards and wall postings shall not be attached inside any exit stairway, nor shall they be placed in such a way as to obstruct exits, access thereto, access from or visibility thereof. Areas adjacent to elevators shall not be posted, except for administrative information postings to all occupants. Bulletin boards and postings shall not be attached to corridor walls within areas of student residential occupancies with the exception of bulletin boards next to Resident Assistant rooms and in general lobbies.
5. **Use of Decorative Materials** – Decorations are permitted for use in all University buildings with certain restrictions. Decorative materials made of paper products and other combustible materials that are not flame retardant should not be used without the prior approval of Environmental Health and Safety. Paper decorations should not cover more than 25% of the surface area of any wall or doorway. Decorations may not be placed as to obstruct fire detection or suppression equipment, walkways, aisles, corridors or other means of egress as dictated by NFPA Code, and emergency exit signs may not be obstructed in any way. Combustible materials are prohibited from being hung from the ceiling or covering the light fixtures within residential rooms. Curtains and/or drapes will be restricted to non-combustible materials which do not require periodic flame proofing. Curtains used in the Asplundh Concert Hall, Madeleine Wing Adler Theater and J. Peter Adler Theater shall be fire-proofed as required.

Holiday decorations shall meet the requirements set forth in the **Holiday Season Fire Safety Policy**.

6. **Smoking** – Smoking or carrying of a lighted pipe, cigar, cigarette or any other type of smoking paraphernalia or material is prohibited in all university buildings. Smoking is only permitted in approved designated smoking areas on campus.
7. **Disposal of Cigarettes** – Cigarettes shall be completely extinguished by mashing them in an ash tray or sand urn. Cigarette stubs may be emptied into metal wastebaskets only after a thorough inspection to preclude the presence of live ashes. Ash trays will not be emptied into waste receptacles when there are less than twenty (20) minutes remaining before the close of business or leaving the area unattended.
8. **Parking of Automobiles** – The parking of automobiles is regulated by Public Safety. In addition to the University Parking Regulations, the following fire precautions will be observed:
 - a. Fire Department inlet connections for sprinkler systems and fire hydrants shall not be obstructed by motor vehicles or any other immovable objects at any time.
 - b. When required by Environmental Health and Safety, approved signs or other approved notices shall be provided for designated fire lanes to identify such lanes or prohibit the obstruction thereof. Signs or notices shall be freestanding signs or marked curbs, sidewalks, or other traffic surfaces that have the words “FIRE LANE–NO PARKING” painted in yellow in an approved size and spacing. Signs or notices shall be maintained in a clean and legible condition at all times and replaced when necessary to provide adequate visibility.
9. **Fire Egress** – Egress areas within campus buildings will be kept free of obstruction at all times to insure their immediate use in case of an emergency. During inclement weather, snow and ice will be kept clear of entrances and exits by facilities or contracted personnel, with periodic inspections by the Facility Administrator to insure that this has been accomplished.

Refer to the **Emergency Egress Policy** for more information on keeping the means of egress safe.

10. **Fire Exit Signage** – All exits will be properly marked with an illuminated “EXIT” sign by Plant Operations on the inside surface above the door leading to the exterior of the building.

11. **Use of Electrical Cooking Appliances and Other Equipment** – All electrical equipment and/or appliances must bear the seal of approval of the “Underwriter’s Laboratories, Inc.” to be approved for use in campus facilities.
 - a. Other than the approved use of microwaves in residential rooms and apartments, cooking is restricted to *areas* designated *as* kitchens within campus facilities.
 - b. With the exception of approved microwaves, cooking appliances such as hot plates, toasters, toaster ovens, electric grills, and other similar type heating devices are prohibited in student rooms in the halls. This restriction does not include the use of these items in the resident Apartment Complexes on campus.
 - c. The use of portable space heaters in all campus facilities will be governed by the **Portable Space Heater Policy**.
 - d. Extension cords shall be for temporary use only. Extension cords shall not exceed 10 feet in length and may not be spliced in any manner. Electrical cords of any type may not be run under rugs or carpeting or be supported by nails or other metal fasteners.
 - e. Electrical outlets and cords shall not be used to supply to more than two appliances simultaneously (toasters, coffee makers, portable heaters, toaster ovens and other similar devices).
 - f. Surge protection strips must be plugged individually into an outlet and shall not be plugged into each other.
 - g. All electrical vending machines shall be properly grounded and shall be maintained to prevent accumulation of dust, grease, and lint on and around the motors or compressors.
 - h. Any alterations or additions to a building’s electrical system shall be approved by Facility Plant Operations and shall conform to the National Electrical Code. Wiring shall not be run from one room to another for the purpose of amplification.

12. **The Use and Storage of Compressed Gases:**
 - a. Where oxygen is being used, it is the responsibility of the user to insure that cylinders are securely strapped to an immovable object or to a wall and to insure that the following sign is prominently displayed: “OXYGEN IN USE-NO SMOKING”

- b. Where oxygen or other compressed gas is being stored, cylinders will be securely strapped to the wall or placed in regular conveyor carts designed for storage purposes.
 - c. Storage areas for flammable gases and gas cylinders shall be designated as “No Smoking” areas, with appropriate signage designating same.
 - d. Compressed air or gas cylinders which have not been subjected to hydrostatic tests within the past five years shall not be used. It is the responsibility of the user to check the last testing date. Markings are branded on steel cylinders in one-half inch figures, indicating the month and year within 10 inches of the neck of the cylinders and immediately under the valve, e.g. “6-80” indicate that the cylinder was tested in June 1980.
13. **Stocking of Supplies** – Storage of materials in any building shall not be higher than thirty (30) inches below ceiling/joists and shall not exceed designed structural floor load capacity. A minimum sprinkler head clearance of 18” shall also be maintained per NFPA standard.
14. **Hot Work:** All work that is done on campus that meets the definition of hot work will require a hot work permit. These permits can be obtained through Facilities or Environmental Health and Safety. This type of work is governed by the **Hot Work Policy**.
15. **Installation and/or Removal of Portable Air Conditioning Units** – No portable air conditioning unit will be installed or removed without the specific approval of Plant Operations.
16. **Spray Painting** – Spray painting with oil base paints is prohibited unless specific approval has been given by Environmental Health and Safety.
17. **Flammable Liquids** – Flammable liquids shall only be stored in containers and cabinets specifically approved for that use. The use of gasoline as anything other than a motor fuel is prohibited and the storage or use inside buildings other those designated by Environmental Health and Safety is strictly forbidden.
18. **Fireworks** – The sale, possession, or use of Fireworks on University property is prohibited unless approved in advance by the Code Enforcement Official representing the municipality in which the fireworks will be used, Environmental Health and Safety and the Department of Public Safety.

19. **Fire Rated Stairwells** – Fire rated stairwells will be kept clear at all times. The storage of bicycles or any other materials or equipment shall not be permitted. Bicycles found in areas of egress and areas designated for the use of physically disabled persons will be removed. Postings of any kind are prohibited in fire rated stairwells.
20. **Fire Exit Doors** – Jamming, blocking, decorating, or propping materials against fire exit doors is prohibited. Fire doors will be kept closed at all times unless connected to an approved hold-open device interfaced with the building's fire alarm system.
21. **Candles and other open flame devices** - The presence or use of incense burners, candles or any other device with an open flame is prohibited in all residential facilities. The use of candles and other open flame devices is restricted in all other facilities. Devices such as Bunsen burners for use in University laboratories, building fireplaces that have previously been approved for use, food preparation activities associated with contracted Food Services are approved uses and do not require a permit. The use of candles or luminaries for sponsored events does require a candle permit issued by Environmental Health and Safety. This process is governed by the **Candle and Luminary Policy**. Battery operated luminaries are available for use in place of candles and open flame devices.
22. **Charcoal and Propane Grills** – The use of barbecue grills on campus is restricted. Grill use by a person, group or organization not directly related to campus contracted Food Services, will require the issuance of a **Grilling Permit** from Environmental Health and Safety prior to grill usage. Non-residential students who wish to use a grill must first register their event with the Sykes Student Union Office. Once registered, notification will be sent to Environmental Health and Safety to begin the permit process. Employees and residential facilities wishing to use a grill will contact Environmental Health and Safety directly to obtain a permit. This permit governs the use of the grill only. Food preparation and handling procedures are governed by the Chester County Department of Health and the required licensing for these issues must be obtained through their agency.
 - a. Barbecue grills must be at least ten feet away from any type of activity or combustible materials. A roped off area or some other means of physically separating the barbecue grill area from the other activities will reduce the chances of an accidental fire or a burn injury from occurring.
 - b. On-site fire extinguishing equipment to deal with a fire emergency must be present. Two fire extinguishers shall be left near the grills throughout the burning phase for fire emergency response. Fire

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extinguishers will be assigned by Environmental Health and Safety for this purpose. Extinguishers placed for general use inside of buildings are not to be removed for use with grilling.

- c. A University staff member or student staff member shall be present at all times to provide a fire watch and to observe the grill(s) while they are in use. The University staff person shall be trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers.
- d. For charcoal grills, only self-lighting charcoal can be used as the fuel source. The use of charcoal lighter fluid, wood, paper or other combustible material to start the fire is prohibited. When done grilling, extinguish the fire and dispose of the charcoal residue by sprinkling the charcoal with water out of a bucket by hand. Stir the charcoal with a wooden stick while applying the water to saturate all the hot coals. Repeat the above procedure until the fire has been completely extinguished. The extinguished charcoal shall be allowed to sit for twenty (20) minutes before disposing of the fire residuals into a metal can.
- e. Both charcoal and propane fired grills are to be left in a well-ventilated area after their use to allow the grill to cool down to a safe temperature before being stored.
- f. The person responsible for the event shall be the one responsible for obtaining the permit and will also insure that an attendant is present at all times while the fire is lit.

23. **Outdoor Burning** – The outdoor burning of combustible materials either natural or man-made to include hay, straw, leaves, twigs, brush, wood, lumber, paper, cardboard, manufactured fire logs or other similar natural or man-made materials in any manner, is restricted on campus property, including burning for recreational or ceremonial purposes. This is to ensure that the University is in compliance with Chapter 62 of the West Chester Borough Code, Chapter 31 of the West Goshen Township Code and Chapter 76 of the East Bradford Township Code regarding outdoor burning.

a. **Outdoor burning exceptions**

- 1. The use of cooking grills fueled by propane or self-lighting charcoal are permissible as long as the guidelines under B22 are complied with.
- 2. Manufactured fire pits that are fueled using Natural Gas or Propane and that are designed to produce a flame without the use of any combustible materials as described above, will be

authorized for recreational use on campus without permit. Manufactured fire pits that use wood are also authorized for use with the following restrictions;

- a. Fire pit equipment specifications must be provided to Environmental Health and Safety and approved prior to use.
 - b. Fire pits that are portable, cannot be used on campus without having a permit issued by the office of Environmental Health and Safety.
 - c. The fuel source for the fire pit must be capable of being secured in such a fashion that the fire pit cannot be operated without authorization.
 - d. The fire pit can only be operated while an authorized employee of the University is present. Authorized status is determined by Environmental Health and Safety upon request.
 - e. While in use, no other combustible materials may be introduced into the flame and people must keep back a minimum of three feet from the flames while the fire pit is lit.
 - f. The Department of Public Safety must be notified prior to igniting the fire pit.
24. **Reporting Potential Fire Hazards** – During normal business hours, Environmental Health and Safety shall be notified of any potential fire hazards that are observed on campus. Such hazards include but are not limited to; defective electrical wiring or fixtures, defective natural gas pipes or appliances, improper use or storage of flammable liquids or chemicals, excessive buildup of trash or other combustible materials and defective fire detection or suppression equipment. Environmental Health and Safety will then be responsible for notifying the appropriate personnel to address the hazard. After normal business hours, on weekends and on holidays, Public Safety should be notified of these types of hazards and Public Safety shall be responsible for notifying the appropriate personnel from Environmental Health and Safety to address the hazards.

3. REMOVAL OF RECORDS AND EQUIPMENT

A. General Guidelines

The primary concern in the event of a fire shall be the evacuation of students, employees and guests from danger areas. No person will be allowed to enter a fire area for removal of records, equipment or personal belongings, except when directed to do so by the Public Safety Department or the West Chester Fire Chief, or designee. All records and equipment will be removed in accordance with the priority levels established herein. Selected record containers and selected items and equipment will be labeled with the wording "Fire Priority". No priority will be placed on drawers containing blank forms or office supplies. It is recommended that departments containing priority documents consider purchasing fire proof containers for said documents. There is no guarantee that documents categorized as "Fire Priority" which are not appropriately protected will be safe from fire and fire-fighting practices.

B. Document Recovery Classification

1. Fire Priority I

- a. Records which require permanent retention and which cannot be easily replaced.
- b. Records which are essential to the operation of the section and which cannot be easily replaced.

2. Fire Priority II

- a. Selected valuable portable equipment necessary to the operation of the section concerned.

4. FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

A. Residential Occupancies

Emergency evacuation drills will be scheduled and observed by Environmental Health and Safety. These drills will be conducted each month that the residence hall is occupied by students for more than 15 consecutive days. The Resident or Graduate Hall Director will be responsible for conducting and documenting the evacuation drill.

B. Other Occupancies

Emergency evacuation drills for non-residential buildings will be planned, observed and evaluated by Environmental Health and Safety. Facility Administrators will be given three weeks advance notice of the date of the drill,

but specific times will not be provided. Drills will be scheduled once each semester either in the AM (8am to 11pm) or PM (1pm to 4pm)

- C. Evacuation drills shall be conducted in accordance to the **WCU Emergency Evacuation Drill Policy**.

5. FIRE EQUIPMENT

Tampering with fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, alarm pull stations, smoke detectors, heat sensors or sprinkler systems is prohibited. Making a false fire report, warning, or threat of fire by any means of communication is also prohibited. Commission of these acts may result in criminal prosecution, University judicial action and possibly civil action.

If any fire safety related equipment is found to be malfunctioning, follow the procedures as outlined in the **Fire Protection and Detection System Impairment Procedure**.

6. MATTRESSES FOR RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

The specifications for the purchase and use of mattresses in residential facilities will be governed by the **Mattress Technical Specification Policy**.

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