

## INFO BULLETIN ON...

If a fire should occur...

- CLOSE the doors to stop the spread of the fire
- SOUND the alarm, alert others to the danger
- GET OUT of the building
- NOTIFY the fire department

DO NOT go back into the building or try to save your stuff.

Clothes, books and papers can be replaced-

**YOU CAN'T!**

### **LIVING WITH FIRE** A PROGRAM FOR CAMPUS AND STUDENT FIRE SAFETY

Living With Fire is a project to develop campus-oriented fire safety material. It is available through the U.S Fire Administration website at [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).

Funding for this project was provided by the following organizations committed to reducing the tragic losses caused by fires involving students:

- American Cancer Society
- National Electrical Manufacturers Association
- National Fire Sprinkler Association
- NFPA International
- SimplexGrinnell
- United States Fire Administration
- University of Texas System

Living With Fire was developed by  
writer-tech.com, llc  
PO Box 1046  
Belchertown, MA 01007  
413-323-6002  
[info@writer-tech.com](mailto:info@writer-tech.com)  
[www.writer-tech.com](http://www.writer-tech.com)

## Smoking and Fire Safety

### **LIVING WITH FIRE** A PROGRAM FOR CAMPUS AND STUDENT FIRE SAFETY

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## Smoking and Fire Safety Information Bulletin

### **What is the danger of smoking materials?**

...Nationwide, smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths. In 1998, these fires killed over 900 people, injured almost 2,500 and caused \$411.7 million in direct property damage. More people die from fires started by smoking materials than any other type of fire-22% of all of the fire deaths in 1998.

This is of significant concern to the college student because according to the U.S. Department of Education, 2/3 of the students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities live off-campus in houses and apartments. The very locations where many of these fire deaths occurred.

And the problem is with cigarettes. Cigars and pipes represent only 2% of the fires.

### **How do these fires occur?**

Almost all of the fires caused by smoking materials are the result of a cigarette being abandoned or carelessly disposed. In other words, someone was not thinking, not paying attention and just not being careful.

### **What is the material most commonly ignited in these fires?**

The three leading materials that were ignited in fires started by cigarettes include:

Mattress	26%
Upholstered furniture	20%
Trash	17%

In 1998, over 73% of the people that died in smoking-related fires were killed by fires that started in either a mattress or an upholstered chair.

### **Fires caused by smoking materials...**

Chapel Hill, NC...Fraternity fire, five dead

Burlington, VT...off campus house fire

Charlottesville, VA...apartment fire

Athens, OH...dorm room fire

Plymouth, NH...house destroyed

New Orleans, LA...dorm room fire

Austin, TX...fraternity fire

### **Where were the victims located?**

The location of the people killed by cigarette-related fires indicates how easily and quickly fire can spread through a building.

About 30% of the victims were involved in the ignition. Another 28% were in the same room as the ignition, while 40% of the victims were not in the room but were either on the same floor or elsewhere in the building.

In other words, 40% of the people killed by the fire were remote from where it started, yet were still killed by the fire.

### **What was the condition of the victims?**

Nationwide, 58% were asleep at the time of the fire when they died, and another 15% were impaired by drugs or alcohol.

### **Were smoke alarms present?**

A significant percentage (48%) of the fatal fires did not have any alarms at all.

### **What are some of the other problems?**

Many colleges and universities have banned smoking in residence halls for both health and safety reasons. However, this does create a problem with students still wanting to smoke and taking extraordinary efforts to conceal this.

For example, smoke detectors may be covered so that they will not be set off by smoking. In one fraternity, the alarm was delayed because all of the smoke detectors had been covered with plastic bags so they would not go off during a party. When a fire did occur, the system was not able to do its job and the building was completely destroyed.

In another case, the students had placed rolled up towels at the base of the door so that the smoke would not be smelled in the hallway. In addition, a stick of incense was placed in the door jamb to help mask the smell. The incense fell down onto the towel and ignited it.

### **Smoking...is it worth it?**