



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Kids in College? State Fire Marshal Urges Fire Safety for College Students**

*On- and Off-Campus Housing Pose Fire Risks That Are Preventable*

**August 24, 2018** - As our young adults start another academic year at Michigan colleges and universities, State Fire Marshal Kevin Sehlmeier today urges students and their parents to make fire prevention a top priority and practice life-saving fire safety measures whether living on- or off-campus.

“Having working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, along with knowing and practicing an escape plan are the most important factors in keeping college students safe,” said Sehlmeier. “Students need to ensure that where they are living is equipped with properly working smoke alarms, that they are tested monthly and have fresh batteries. Smoke alarms must never be tampered with.”

According to Sehlmeier, common factors in on- or off-campus fires include: lack of a fire sprinkler system; missing or disabled smoke alarms; careless smoking; unattended candles; overloaded electrical circuits and extension cords; alcohol consumption which impairs judgment and hampers fire evacuation efforts; and fires originating on upholstered furniture and decks or porches.

Fire safety tips for all college students living on- or off-campus:

- Know all emergency exits and have two ways out ... of a dorm, movie theater, nightclub.
- Use stairs to get out, not elevators.
- Most fatal fires happen at night. Get up, get out and stay out.
- Don't allow smoking inside a dorm room. NEVER smoke in bed.

- Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out. After a party, check for smoldering cigarette butts, especially under cushions. Chairs and sofas catch on fire fast and burn fast.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended. Keep candles away from curtains, furniture, bedding and papers. Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Don't use the stove or oven to help heat a cold dorm room or apartment.
- Keep space heaters away from anything flammable and never leave them unattended.
- Keep a fire extinguisher close by and know how to use it.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into an outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- If a fire starts in a microwave, keep the door closed and unplug the unit.
- Don't overload electrical outlets, power strips and extension cords.
- Use a surge protector for a computer and plug the protector directly into an outlet.

To read the U.S. Fire Administration's report *Campus Fire Fatalities in Residential Buildings (2000-2015)*, go to:

[https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/campus\\_fire\\_fatalities\\_report.pdf](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/campus_fire_fatalities_report.pdf)

For more information about fire safety go to the Bureau of Fire Services website at [www.michigan.gov/bfs](http://www.michigan.gov/bfs)

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