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INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISES
Manila • Cebu • Davao

52 Kundiman Street, Paltok SFDM
1105 Quezon City, MM, Philippines
Tel: (02) 373-3630 to 32 414-2860
Fax: +63 (02) 373-3639
sales@eversafe.com.ph
www.eversafe.com.ph

NFPA MEMBER
05-06

PHILIPPINE MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2005 PEOPLE'S BRANDS AWARDEE

NFPA Fact Sheets
School, college, and university dormitory, fraternity, and sorority house fires

Dormitory, sorority and fraternity house fires have been declining steadily since 1980, partially because of student fire safety awareness.

Facts & Figures*

- In 1998, there were an estimated 1,380 structure fires in school, college and university dormitories and fraternity and sorority housing. These fires resulted in no deaths**, 87 injuries, and $5.9 million in direct property damage.

- The leading cause of fire in these types of

- occupancies was incendiary or suspicious. The second and third leading causes of these on and off campus housing fires were cooking and smoking, respectively.

- An annual average of 141 structure fires occurred in fraternity and sorority houses per year between 1994 and 1998, resulting in no deaths**, 17 injuries, and $2.8 million in direct property damage.

- Smoke or fire alarms were present in 93% of all dormitory fires in 1998, and sprinklers were present in 35% of these fires. On average, direct property damage per fire is 41% lower in dormitory fires where sprinklers are present, compared to those where sprinklers are not present.

  (*From NFPA's *Structure Fires in Dormitory Properties*, April 2002)

Safety Tips:

Cooking

- Cook only where the rules allow.

- Keep the cooking area clean and uncluttered.

- Unplug electric appliances when not in use.

- Never leave cooking unattended.

- If a fire breaks out in a microwave oven, keep the door closed and unplug the unit. Don't try to remove burning containers from a microwave.

Smoking

- Smoke only where it's permitted.

- Use large, deep, non-tip ashtrays.

- Don't smoke in bed.

- It's risky to smoke when you've been drinking or when you're drowsy.

- Soak cigarette butts in water before discarding, and after a party, check around cushions for smoldering cigarettes.

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Candles

- Blow out candles when you leave your room or go to sleep.

- Candles that burn quickly are more dangerous than ones that burn slowly and efficiently.

- Use sturdy candle holders and don't let candles burn down all the way.

- Keep papers, curtains, and anything that burns away from lit candles.

Escape Tips

- Your building has an evacuation plan. Learn it and participate in all fire drills.

- Learn the location of all building exits. You may have to find your way out in the dark.

- If you have to escape through smoke, crawl low to your exit, keeping your head one- to two-feet (30 to 60 centimeters) above the floor, where the air will be cleanest.

- Test doorknobs and spaces around the door with the back of your hand. If the door is warm, try another escape route. If it's cool, open it slowly. Slam it shut if smoke pours through.

- Use the stairs when there's a fire; never use an elevator during a fire.

- If you're trapped, call the fire department for assistance. Seal your door with rags and signal from your window.

- Open windows slightly at the top and bottom, but close them if smoke comes in.

- Smoke alarms cut your chances of dying in a fire in half. Do not borrow smoke alarm batteries for other purposes.

- Fire sprinkler systems protect their immediate area by extinguishing or containing fires. They will not flood the whole building.

- Respond to every alarm as if it were a real fire. Report information on false alarms to authorities.

- If you hear a fire alarm, leave immediately and close doors behind you as you go. In case your escape from the building is blocked by fire, take your room keys with you so you can get back inside your room and call the fire department to let them know you are trapped.

(**Note that these are statistical estimates from records on a sample of fires. Because deaths are very rare, it is possible for the estimate to show no deaths in a year when a fatal fire did occur and is on NFPA's list of fatal campus fires. In particular, the sample omitted eight fatal fires known to NFPA, representing a total of 16 deaths over the five years of 1994-1998. Half of the fires and three-fourths of the deaths were in fraternity or sorority houses.)