

Important Fire Safety Information

Cooking: Cooking fires are one of the leading causes of house fires in Ontario. The use of hotplates and other cooking devices should be restricted to minimize the potential for a fire. Do not allow cooking in student rooms as the proximity of combustibles increases the risk of fire. The use of microwave ovens should be evaluated based on the capacity of the buildings electrical system to handle the load. Post an information sheet in the kitchen reminding students to not leave cooking unattended and if they have to leave the kitchen, ensure they turn off the appliance. Ensure that the portable fire extinguisher located in the area of the kitchen is easily seen and readily accessible. Pots should have proper fitting lids to ensure that in the event of a fire they can be slid over the top of the pot, thus smothering a fire.



Electrical: Electrical problems are a leading cause of structure fires in the City of Hamilton. Many student residences were built prior to the advent of computers, microwave ovens and the nearly universal use of stereo's and televisions. This increased power demand on a homes electrical service may result in the replacement of standard 15amp fuses in circuits with one of a higher amperage or may result in the increased use of extension cords as permanent wiring. Increasing the amperage of an over-current device will overload and subsequently over heat the wiring which could cause a fire. The use of extension cords as permanent wiring is a violation under the Ontario Fire Code. Physical damage can occur to the insulation on extension cords running under furniture and carpets causing not only a shock hazard, but also a fire hazard. Ensure that your home has sufficient circuits and check the fuse panel on a regular basis to ensure over-current devices have not been by-passed.

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Fire Extinguishers: Take the time to ensure that all students are familiar with the location of portable fire extinguishers and more importantly that they are instructed in when and how they should use a portable fire extinguisher in an attempt to extinguish a fire. Explain the different classifications of fire and how the extinguisher works in extinguishing these fires. Inspect all portable fire extinguishers in your property on a monthly basis and subject them to the required maintenance and testing as required by the Ontario Fire Code. Maintain written records of all inspections, maintenance and testing.



Smoke Alarms: Smoke alarms provide the earliest possible warning of fire but only if they are properly installed and maintained. You as the landlord are responsible to ensure all testing and maintenance is carried out. If you have a lease agreement with students, ensure that it contains a provision for access to carry out the necessary maintenance and testing. Although more frequent testing and cleaning schedules will provide greater assurance of operability, as a minimum smoke alarms should be tested under the following conditions: during a change in tenancy, when the occupants have been absent for seven or more days (vacation) and following installation of a new battery which should be done on an annual basis. Keep a written record of all inspections and tests.



Although not required by law, it is recommended that you install a carbon monoxide detector outside of the sleeping areas in your residence.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding fire safety in your residence, contact Hamilton Emergency Services – Fire, Fire Prevention Division at (905) 546-2424 ext. 1380 weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30p.m. Additional information can also be found on our web-site at <http://www.hamilton.ca/Fire>
e-mail address: fire_department@hamilton.ca rev09/07

FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION FOR OWNERS OF OFF – CAMPUS HOUSING



For any emergency
In Hamilton dial

911

Fire Safety is a Shared Responsibility



As the owner of a dwelling rented out to students, you have a responsibility to ensure that your home is in compliance with all applicable fire regulations in order to provide a fire safe environment for students.

Residential fires can quickly spread out of control if appropriate safeguards are not in place. Building owners need to be aware of not only the legislative requirements for fire safety in their home, but also the behavioral activities that students may partake in that can lead to a tragedy.

With many students, there is a certain sense of immortality, the idea that “it won’t happen to me” which in turn can lead to foolish, even dangerous behavior. This behavior can increase the risk of fire.

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act, along with the Ontario Fire Code regulate fire safety requirements for all occupancies, including student housing. Hamilton Emergency Services – Fire conduct inspections in all premises occupied as student housing on a complaint basis.

Failure to comply with the Ontario Fire Code could result in charges being filed in Provincial Offences Court. The maximum fine for a Corporation is \$50,000 while for an individual it is \$25,000 or a year in jail or both. Building owners can face civil liability and possible criminal charges if a fire occurs and the building is not in compliance. Insurance companies may be reluctant to pay claims if the lack of compliance leads to the spread of fire. Ignorance of the law is no defence. Take the time now to ensure that your building is in compliance with all fire safety regulations.

Types of Residential Occupancies and Fire Safety Requirements

Single Family Dwellings (Can Include a Group of Students Living in a Home)



If not more than four students are living in a home as a single housekeeping unit the occupancy is classified as a single family dwelling. The Ontario Fire Code requires that an operational smoke alarm (battery operated is acceptable) be installed on each floor level of the home and outside of each sleeping area.

If a group of five or more students are living in a home, the home could be classified as either a single family home or a lodging house. That determination would be based on whether the owner or the occupants have the largest degree of control over the use of the house and property. An in-depth investigation examining various factors will be conducted by an Inspector from Hamilton Emergency Services – Fire.

Boarding, Rooming and Lodging Houses

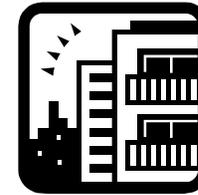


If a group of five or more persons (including students) live independently of each other in a residence and the building owner of that residence exercises a large degree of control over the home, the occupancy is classified as a lodging house. A lodging house will also have common washroom and kitchen facilities for the use of all residents. Lodging houses are typically required to be licenced by the City of Hamilton, a process that would initiate inspection activities by various municipal enforcement agencies. The building is required to have as a minimum, an interconnected alternating current smoke alarm system with one smoke alarm on each floor level, a 45mm (1 ¾”) solid core wood door on each bedroom

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and a minimum 5BC rated portable fire extinguisher in each kitchen. Additional fire safety requirements will include but are not limited to fire separations of exits and dwelling units, proper exits (number and location) and emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency

Apartments (Low-rise and High-rise Buildings)



The Ontario Fire Code regulates fire safety requirements in both low-rise and high-rise residential buildings. Each apartment unit must be equipped with an operational AC or DC powered smoke alarm outside of the sleeping areas. Additional fire safety requirements will include but are not limited to fire separations of exits and dwelling units, exits; including number of and location of, alarm and detection systems in common areas of the building and emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

Duplexes (Two-Family Dwellings)



The Ontario Fire Code regulates minimum provisions for fire safety in existing residential buildings (in detached homes, semi-detached homes or row houses), which contain two existing dwelling units operated as individual housekeeping units. Each dwelling unit must be equipped with an operational AC or DC powered smoke alarm outside of the sleeping area. Additional fire safety requirements will include but are not limited to fire separations of exits and dwelling units, exits (including number of and location of) and a specific requirement for the building’s electrical system to be inspected and approved by the Electrical Safety Authority.