



Subject/Title	Fire Safety
Status	Student Guidance

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to inform student residents of the potential risk of fire/unwanted fire alarms.

Background

This document was developed to ensure that all student residents are aware of the potential risks which can be influenced by their behaviour within residences. There are sanctions where breaches in fire safety are found.

Implementation

Living Support and Site Management teams are responsible for ensuring that this procedure is adhered to by residents – through inspection etc.

Adherence

All student residents are to adhere to the Fire Safety requirements within this document. Student residents must also ensure that guests to their accommodation also adhere to these requirements.

Failure to adhere to these requirements can lead to fines and/or disciplinary action which could result in a student's permanent removal from residence.

1. General Student Education

a) All incoming residents will be required to participate in a compulsory online induction prior to arrival. This includes viewing a Fire Safety video and answering questions relating to Fire Safety. A report will be compiled of those who have not completed the induction and Wardens and their teams will pursue those who fail to complete it.

b) On arrival, students will be given an envelope with their key and included in this envelope will be a Fire Safety information sheet.

c) Fire Safety posters and other information is provided in flats and common areas.

d) Fire Drills will be carried out as early as possible in Semester One to ensure all students are aware of how to behave in the event of a fire alarm activation. A further Fire Drill will be held in semester Two.

2. Fire Safety

a) Fires

There have on occasion been fires within our residences. While it is accepted that none of these fires were deliberate, they have been caused by student neglect of basic fire safety principles.

b) Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS)

These cause a great deal of stress to our students, staff and members of the public living in close proximity to our residences. They also place great strain on the resources of the Fire Service in staff and cost terms (estimated Audit Scotland cost of a call-out is £2300).

The main causes of UFAS:

i) Fumes/Smoke from Cooking

Heat detectors are provided in the kitchen in many properties and will not sound when cooking. However, the alarm will be activated by the smoke detectors in the hall or corridor. Activation can be prevented by ensuring the kitchen door is closed during and after cooking, together with the correct use of extractor fans. The fire alarm is often activated because the fire door to the kitchen/pantry is wedged open. Propping open the fire doors is a very serious offence and puts students' lives at risk because the spread of fire happens more quickly and affects escape routes.

ii) Unattended Cooking/ Toasters - Burnt Food & Grill Pans

When cooking, food should never be left unattended. If called away, the toaster/cooker should be switched off and all food removed from the heat source. It is also important that the toaster/grill is cleaned daily to stop deposits collecting in or near heating elements. Cooker tops and ovens also require regular cleaning. If failure to do so results in a fire situation, students will be held responsible for the cost of the damage or the excess on the insurance policy.

iii) Smoking in Residence

Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is prohibited inside all accommodation provided by Accommodation Services.

iv) Use Of Candles, Joss Sticks, Incense Burners or Naked Flame

Candles have been the cause of very serious fires in student accommodation in the past and we would draw students' attention to their contract, which states that the burning of candles, joss sticks incense etc. is prohibited.

v) Using Cooking Appliances within Bedrooms

Cooking within bedrooms is strictly forbidden. The introduction of a heat source/cooking in a bedroom can cause fires/ unwanted fire alarm activations. This includes appliances such as kettles, toastie makers, rice cookers, etc. Where resident student(s) are found to be using equipment in their room, they will be told to remove and re-locate into the kitchen area.

Vi) Use of aerosols

You should not use aerosols in the vicinity of fire alarm detector heads. Products such as deodorant and hair spray can set off smoke detectors. Consider using alternative products

4. Fire Safety Breaches

There has also been a significant increase in the past academic year of the amount of recorded fire safety breaches. These breaches put the student and their fellow residents at risk; not accounting for the real potential of fire and the risk to those attending to it.

i) Detector Interference

This is an extremely dangerous and illegal practice, which places at risk the life of all occupants in the event of fire. Interference would include removal of the detector, damaging/covering the detector head, squirting liquid onto the detector head, or any act that damages equipment or renders it ineffective.

Students should be aware that fire management systems can pinpoint the exact location where interference has taken place.

ii) Malicious Use of Fire Alarm System & Extinguishers

This is a criminal offence. Both Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service can prosecute anyone who maliciously activates a Fire Alarm System whether it is activation of a detector or breaking glass in an alarm point.

iii) Soft Furnishings within Kitchens

The addition of soft furnishings into a kitchen environment can be extremely hazardous and can cause fire. Soft furnishings unless specifically supplied in designated seating areas must not be brought into the kitchens. This includes chairs, bedding, clothes on airers etc. If found, then the resident student(s) will be required to remove these items with immediate effect.

iv) Obstructing Fire Doors/Escape Routes

Obstructions can have serious implications if they impede the evacuation of a room, flat or building. If obstruction is found e.g. bikes, rubbish, ironing boards, vacuums etc. in corridors/stairwells/escape routes, resident student(s) must remove with immediate effect.

v) Overloaded Sockets and Use of Foreign Adaptors

Overloaded sockets can catch fire – if extensions are required then they should be a British or EU standard four plugs type with a maximum amp load of 20. International adaptors must not be used within the sockets/extensions. Residents should seek to replace these with British or EU approved plugs. Any other type of extension/adaptor will be immediately removed. More information of suitable extensions can be found in your residence guide.

vi) Wedging Open/Misuse of Fire Doors

Fire doors are provided for both the protection of the resident of the room and the flat as well as others in the household. In the outbreak of a fire/excessive smoke, a fire door will contain the fire/smoke for 30 minutes. Wedging open fire doors not only increases the risk of fire/smoke spreading but also will cause the door to 'drop' within the frame and effectively prevent the door from sealing when shut. Disconnecting the closing arm can also prevent the door from closing properly and is prohibited. Fire doors must never be wedged open.

Similarly, the use of over door hangers and hooks screwed into the doors will compromise the integrity of the door – these are not permitted within the residences.

vii) Mis-charging of Electrical Devices

There have been fires attributed to devices overheating and catching fire on soft furnishing e.g. duvet/bed. Devices should only ever be charged on hard surfaces e.g. desk. When resident is out of room for extended periods then devices should be switched off and unplugged from the socket.

iii) Covering or tampering of Light Fittings

The covering or tampering of light fittings and their automatic control units, either completely or partially, by anything other than the covers supplied by the manufacturer will increase the risk of overheating and catching fire. Any non-compliant coverings will be removed.

5. Sanctions for Non-Adherence

Fines/Disciplinary Action

Due to the serious Health & Safety implications, those found in breach of fire safety advice will be subject to action – see Appendix 1.