



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**

**Protecting Our Community**

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 14**

### **FIRE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS**

Going to university or leaving home for the first time is an exciting adventure for many young people and potentially a harrowing experience for their parents! Moving into halls of residence or taking a room in a shared house presents a number of hazards to the carefree and unsuspecting student. Fire safety may not feature high on the list of priorities whilst a student is busy studying and socialising, but take time to read the following basic fire safety tips from Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) and it could help save your life.

All universities and colleges have a person responsible for fire safety in their buildings. If you have spotted a fire risk or have any concerns about fire safety in university buildings, then speak to them. If you are a disabled student and need assistance to evacuate in the event of a fire then make the university aware. Make sure you pay attention to fire drills and never ignore alarms.

Many students live in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) where fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, fire doors and extinguishers are provided for your safety. If you have any concerns about fire safety in these premises, speak to your landlord. Additional advice is available from Northern Ireland Housing Executive and NIFRS.

#### Cooking

- Keep the cooker and grill pan clean and free from the build-up of any oils or grease.
- Don't leave the cooker unattended when in use, not even for a minute.
- Don't cook if you have been drinking alcohol, especially late at night, get a take-away instead.
- **Never** put water on an oil fire or grill pan fire as it will turn into a fireball.

#### Candles and Smoking

- Take extra care when smoking inside, it is safer to smoke outside.
- Empty ashtrays regularly and ensure cigarettes are completely extinguished before putting into the outside bin.
- Never smoke in bed and make sure that you have extinguished cigarettes properly before going to sleep.
- Keep candles/tealights away from flammable surfaces or textiles eg curtains, televisions, bath tubs.
- If you do use candles, never leave them unattended and ensure you use a proper holder.
- Remember to extinguish candles before going to bed at night.

#### Heating and Electrics

- Plugging too many electrical items into one socket can lead to overheating; it is good practice to keep one plug to one socket.
- Use trailing leads rather than block type connectors.
- Switch off and unplug appliances at night unless they are designed to be kept on eg fridge/freezers.
- Switch off and unplug any charging devices before going to bed.
- Hair straighteners can get extremely hot; switch off after use and leave to cool on heatproof surface.
- Only buy approved chargers for rechargeable devices; cheaper options may be unsafe.
- Never place portable heaters too close to combustible surfaces or materials.
- Position portable heaters safely and never leave on if you have to leave the house.

#### Prepare and Plan

Many fires happen at night when occupants are asleep; always carry out a night-time check and close all doors before going to bed to reduce the risk.

Plan your escape route. Make sure everyone knows the quickest way out in the event of a fire and consider an alternative route. Keep escape routes clear of clutter.

Only a working smoke alarm will alert you to a fire. Your accommodation should be fitted with a fire alarm system. Alarms must be tested weekly to ensure they are operating.

If a fire starts, get everyone out of the property, close all doors behind you and dial 999 for the Fire & Rescue Service.

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit [www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)



**#STOPfire**