

**INFO BULLETIN
ON...**

If a fire should occur...

- CLOSE the doors to stop the spread of the fire
- SOUND the alarm, alert others to the danger
- GET OUT of the building
- NOTIFY the fire department

DO NOT go back into the building or try to save your stuff.

Clothes, books and papers can be replaced-

YOU CAN'T!

LIVING WITH FIRE
A PROGRAM FOR CAMPUS AND STUDENT FIRE SAFETY

Living With Fire is a project to develop campus-oriented fire safety material. It is available through the U.S Fire Administration website at www.usfa.fema.gov.

Funding for this project was provided by the following organizations committed to reducing the tragic losses caused by fires involving students:

- American Cancer Society
- National Electrical Manufacturers Association
- National Fire Sprinkler Association
- NFPA International
- SimplexGrinnell
- United States Fire Administration
- University of Texas System

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**Fraternity
Fatal Fires**
*Phi Gamma Delta
Phi Kappa Sigma*

LIVING WITH FIRE
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SCHOOL LOGO HERE

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HERE**

Greek Housing Fires Information Bulletin

Chapel Hill, North Carolina...A fire on Sunday, May 12, 1996 claimed the lives of five students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This fire occurred in the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity following a party the night before, and occurred on graduation day and Mother's Day.

The building was a three-story fraternity with a basement. The fire started in the basement where the party had been held, and traveled up an open stairway to all three floors. The students that were killed were asleep on the second floor.

Following the fire, an investigation by the NFPA determined that the following were significant contributing factors to the fire:

Open Stairway...the fire was able spread, unimpeded, up a central stairway that was not equipped with any fire doors. A closed fire door could have slowed the spread of the fire and given the five students enough time to escape.

Lack of a fire alarm system...there were some smoke detectors in the building, but they were not interconnected. This means that when one smoke detector was activated, the others in the building, close to where the students were sleeping, were not activated. This could have helped to provide the early warning that they needed to escape from the fire.

Lack of a sprinkler system...Sprinklers unquestionably would have stopped the fire, sounded the alarm and avoided the loss of life that occurred. As a direct result

Updated 10/13/01

of this fire, all fraternities and sororities in Chapel Hill are now required to have sprinklers in their houses.

Improper disposal of smoking materials...the fire is believed to have started in a pile of combustible materials in the basement after the party. If someone had made sure that all smoking materials had been disposed of properly, and that there was nothing smoldering, this tragedy would certainly have been avoided.

Four of the five students that died had blood alcohol levels of 0.14 or greater.

FACTS ABOUT FIRES IN STUDENT HOUSING...

The leading cause of fires in Greek housing and dormitories is arson (31%).

Fires cause an average of \$2.8 million in damage per year in fraternities and sororities.

Since 1990, 32 students have died in dormitory and Greek fires. Three-quarters (24) of these deaths have occurred in fraternities and sororities. All but one fatality has happened in fraternities.

From 2000 to mid-2001, Campus Firewatch has identified a total of 26 students that have been killed in fires.

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Berkeley, California...A fire in September 1990 killed three students at the Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. The fire was started by a male visitor who ignited a couch in the living room on the first floor. Arson is the leading cause of fires in dormitories and Greek housing, causing almost one-third of the fires.

According to the NFPA, significant contributing factors to this fire included:

Open stairways...just like the fire in Chapel Hill, an open stairway allowed the smoke and fire to spread from the area where it started to other parts of the building. The stairs were equipped with doors, but they were open at the time of the fire.

Combustible interior finishes throughout the building...the room where the fire broke out was reported to sparsely furnished and therefore did not have much furniture that would contribute to the fire spread. However, the mahogany paneling and other combustible finish in the building helped to spread the fire extremely quickly.

The three fatalities had blood alcohol levels of 0.2, 0.07 and 0.11. All three people were found on the third floor, two levels above where the fire had started.

The lack of a sprinkler system and a building fire alarm system were also certainly significant contributing factors to the deaths. If either, or better yet, both, of these systems had been in place the outcome of the fire would have been dramatically different.