

SECTION 6- RESIDENCE HALL SAFETY

Safety for residents, staff, and visitors to the residence halls is the responsibility of the Residential Life Department. The department reports unsafe hazards or conditions to the Physical Plant for correction. Rules which apply to Student Residents are found in the "Dawg Town Community Bulletin" located on the Louisiana Tech web site: Programs and procedures for the purpose of insuring a safe residential environment administered by Residential Life shall be as follows:

SAFETY INSPECTIONS OF RESIDENT HALLS

Residential Hall rooms shall be inspected monthly for fire safety by the resident assistants (RAs). Written reports shall be made and filed within the Residential Life Office. There shall be mandatory clean up (by the student) and re-inspection (by the staff) of any safety violations.

FIRE SAFETY IN RESIDENT HALLS

Although the buildings themselves are fire resistant, the contents (furnishings and personal belongings) are flammable. In addition, all buildings are remote monitored with direct reporting to the Louisiana Tech Police Department as well as the Ruston Fire Department.

Therefore, the program for fire prevention and emergency evacuation shall include the following:

1. Emphasis on fire prevention and safety at all new student orientation sessions and initial hall and floor meetings each quarter.
2. Fire training meeting scheduled by Housing Department for staff each quarter.
3. An unannounced fire drill conducted in all residence halls each quarter.
4. Inspection and maintenance of fire safety equipment by Physical Plant.
5. Evacuation plans prominently posted in all residence halls. Copies of these plans shall be submitted to the Environmental Health & Safety Department for evaluation.

FIRE DRILLS IN RESIDENT HALLS

For persons to respond properly when a fire occurs, they shall know there is a fire (alarm), they shall have adequate means of egress (escape), and they shall have a plan of action. A fire drill is needed to test that plan of action.

The purpose of the fire drill is to be able to anticipate what can happen during an actual emergency and also to provide for prompt, effective action.

The goals of the fire drill are to minimize loss of life and personal injury, to protect property with a minimum of damage, and to restore normal operations as soon as possible.

The fire drill also helps to minimize panic and confusion among the occupants who sometimes may change rooms/halls every quarter.

Unannounced fire drills shall take place at least once a quarter, preferably between the hours of 5pm and 8pm. The RA for each hall shall fill in the short Fire Drill Report.

These shall be incorporated into the primary Fire Drill Report for each hall, copies of which shall be sent to Environmental Health & Safety. (See "FORMS" section of the EHS web page for the form)

Hall Directors and RAs have the primary responsibility for fire safety and the development and execution of plans for fire drills and evacuation, which include:

1. Testing the alarm system the day prior to opening halls each quarter and summer term. Problems shall be reported to the Residential Life so that they can be reported to the Physical Plant.
2. Maintaining flashlights in all buildings to be issued to all resident assistants.
3. Maintaining current fire drill procedures for each resident hall and providing a copy to the Residential Life Department. The procedure shall include:
 - a. Location of fire alarm call boxes.
 - b. Control panels
 - c. Explanation of alarm signals, if coded, and how to activate general alarms.
 - d. How to deactivate alarm and reset system.
 - e. Evacuation routes and duties of staff members.
 - f. List of staff members.
4. Explaining the purpose of the fire drills and procedures for residents to follow at hall and floor meetings.
5. Removing the building floor roster chart, and master keys in the event of fire requiring evacuation of the building.
6. Instructing the staff each quarter of assigned duties.

Upon completion of selecting the building in which to have the drill, a meeting shall be held to explain procedures and plans for fires and fire drills and to inform the staff of the location of alarm boxes, types of signals, location of and how to use fire extinguishers, safe evacuation assembly points (at least 50 feet from the building), procedures to use in accounting for students, all clear signals, and the staffs responsibility to note problem areas for evaluation after fire drills. This meeting is to be held approximately five days before the opening of the building to occupants.

Duties for staff members include:

1. Locating and assisting resident assistants when fire alarms sound.
2. Observing execution of fire drill evacuation.
3. Verifying that building is clear.
4. Advising evacuated students when "all clear" is given for re-entry to the building.
5. Meeting with fire personnel for drill evaluation.
6. Submitting Fire Drill Report within 48 hours of drill.

GUIDE FOR FIRE-SAFE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS IN STUDENT ROOMS

Because Christmas decorations are an extreme fire hazard, the following limitations on decorations are necessary:

1. All decorations shall be fire resistant.
2. Natural Christmas trees are not allowed in residence halls. Because most Christmas trees must be cut well in advance of use, they dry out to a considerable degree and are too combustible for safe use.
3. The use of burning candles is very dangerous and is therefore prohibited.
4. Door decorations or foil shall be suspended from the edges of the door. Remember that tape and other adhesives may cause damage on the door surfaces. Keep electrical decorations away from the metal door frames; do not string lights so that the door could close on the wiring.
5. Check extension cords to insure that they do not have breaks in the insulation. Keep the use of extension cords to a minimum. Use them only for a limited number of small lights, not for appliances. Also, all extension cords must be UL listed.
6. All decorations shall be removed prior to Christmas vacation to facilitate hall cleaning.

From a fire safety viewpoint, metal trees are desirable because they are not combustible. Illuminate metal trees with indirect lighting (remotely located spotlights or flood-lights). Lighting sets placed on the tree may "charge" the tree with enough voltage to burn or fatally injure someone touching it.

Artificial trees made of non-burning materials may be used. Only approved cool bulbs shall be used on lighting strings.

When decorating rooms and room doors, use only noncombustible material such as glass, or metal. Do not use untreated cotton batting, flock, or paper as they ignite easily and burn continuously. Approved for the door decorations are: (1) all foil wrapping paper and (2) small Christmas pictures applied to foil. Doors may be totally decorated if decoration or foil is suspended from the edges of the door.

No cut boughs shall be used in student rooms or on doors. Placing cut tree boughs around a burning candle is extremely dangerous, and therefore is prohibited.

No exit from the individual floors or halls shall be blocked by Christmas decorations.

If a fire occurs, (1) clear everyone out of the building by pulling the evacuation (fire) alarm, (2) call University Police at x4018, and (3) contact a Coordinator.