

# Frequently Asked Fire Safety Questions

## General Information

### **Who should I call in the event of a fire?**

If there is a fire, call 9-1-1 from a campus phone, cell phone, or off-campus phone to notify the Auburn Fire Division.

### **What should I do if I notice a fire safety violation on campus?**

Contact the Auburn University Department of Risk Management and Safety (RMS) via phone (844-4805) or e-mail us let us know your concerns. In the event of an emergency or fire, please call 9-1-1 immediately.

### **Where does Auburn University keep their fire trucks?**

Auburn University does not have fire trucks. The Department of Risk Management and Safety's primary mission is to provide fire prevention measures to the University community, through construction plans review, building fire and life safety inspections, fire safety education and code consultation. The City of Auburn Fire Division is contracted to provide University fire suppression services.

## Training

### **Who needs to take portable fire extinguisher training?**

Anyone who uses a laboratory or works with flammable and/or combustible materials should enroll in a portable fire extinguisher training session. We welcome all interested members of the University community to enroll in a session, and we encourage you to learn more about fire extinguishers on campus. Remember: you should never attempt to fight a fire if you are not trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers.

### **Who needs to take building evacuation training?**

If you are responsible for the safe building evacuation of others on campus because of your role as an instructor, residential assistant, or building evacuation coordinator, you should enroll in a building evacuation training session. We welcome all interested members of the University community to enroll in a session, and we encourage you to always have an exit strategy for everywhere you study, work, and play.

## Special Events

### **Do I need to notify Risk Management and Safety (Fire Safety Services) if I am planning a special event on campus?**

Yes, you need to notify RMS Fire Safety Services any time you are planning a public event on campus.

## Seasonal Decorations

### **Are Christmas trees allowed in University buildings?**

Natural Christmas trees are not allowed in campus buildings. Artificial trees are permitted, but they must be located in a common area (such as a lobby or reception area), and must not be placed in exit corridors or obstruct exit doors, exit aisles, fire hose cabinets, manual fire alarm pull-boxes, or portable fire extinguishers.

### **Can I use Christmas tree lights in my office?**

Yes, you can use Christmas tree lights in your office if you remember to always unplug them when you leave.

### **How can I prevent fires when using seasonal decorations?**

The best way to prevent fires due to seasonal decorations is to limit the amount of decorations you use. Make sure your decorations do not obstruct doorways, walkways and stairs, and limit the amount of combustible materials you put on the walls and ceilings. Always keep combustible decorations, such as cloth flags, paper streamers, or plastic garlands, away from lights and other ignition sources.

## **Smoking**

### **Is smoking permitted in University buildings?**

No. Auburn University policy prohibits smoking of any tobacco products inside University facilities.

## **Candles**

### **Are candles and incense allowed in University buildings?**

No. Burning candles or incense are not permitted in University buildings.

## **Fireworks**

### **Are fireworks permitted on campus?**

There is a general prohibition on fireworks on campus, which means you are not allowed to use sparklers, poppers, or similar devices anywhere on campus. Fireworks are only permitted on campus for special events when the location and use has been approved in advance by Risk Management and Safety and the City of Auburn Fire Division.

## **Halogen Lamps**

### **Are halogen lamps allowed in University buildings?**

Halogen lamps are not allowed in residence halls, and Risk Management and Safety strongly discourages using them in other campus facilities. If you decide to use a halogen lamp in your office or other non-residential campus facility, follow these guidelines:

- Make sure the lamp is labeled as "listed" by the Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) or another recognized testing agency
- Do not use Halogen bulbs that exceed 120 watts
- Make sure lamps have a glass or wire guard that protects the bulb
- Keep lamps away from drapes, curtains, and other combustibles
- Do not place lamps in a high-traffic area, or anywhere someone may easily trip over them
- Turn lamps off when you leave the room

## **Space Heaters**

### **Are portable space heaters allowed in campus facilities?**

Portable space heaters are not permitted in residence halls. Portable heaters fueled by gasoline, kerosene or propane are not permitted in other campus facilities. Refer to the [AU Portable Space Heater Policy](#) for more information. Portable electric space heaters are allowed in office areas, subject to the following guidelines:

- Space heaters are not permitted in University dormitories or apartments.

- Space heaters must be electrically powered except as noted in item # 3 below.
- Fuel powered or propane space heaters are only permissible in construction sites and athletic facilities upon approval of the Risk Management and Safety Fire Safety Program Manager.
- Any space heaters used must be UL or FM approved and must be labeled accordingly.
- Space heaters must have a thermostat that shuts off the unit when a certain temperature is reached.
- Space heaters must have a tip over shut down feature. If a space heater is knocked over the unit must automatically shut off.
- Space heaters should be rated not to exceed 120 Volts, 12.5 Amps, 60 Hz, 1500 Watts and 5200 BTU's.
- Space heaters must be kept at least 3 feet away from any combustible materials such as files, curtains, and trash cans.
- Space heaters shall not be placed under desk or in other enclosed areas.
- Nothing shall be placed on top or touching a space heater.
- Space heaters must be turned off and unplugged when the area being used is not occupied. When unplugging, pull by the plug and not the cord.
- Space heaters must always be plugged directly into a 120-volt wall receptacle when in use. Extension cords cannot be used with space heaters.
- Do not operate space heaters with a damaged electrical cord.
- Do not run space heater's electrical cord under carpeting or throw rugs.
- Space heaters shall not be used in bathrooms, laundry areas or other areas where water is present.
- Space heaters shall not be used in areas where gasoline, paint or flammable liquids are stored.
- Space heaters must be kept in good working condition. Replace missing guards and controls at once. Have the heater checked periodically and all necessary repairs done by a qualified person.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- If a space heater trips a circuit breaker, report this to the Facilities Work Management Center (844-4357) immediately.
- Risk Management and Safety reserves the right to inspect and require removal of any space heater that creates a hazard or is inappropriate to a particular location based on specific circumstances, codes and/or legal requirements.

## Extension Cords and Power Strips

### Can I use extension cords on campus?

You are not allowed to use extension cords in place of permanent electrical wiring on campus. In other words, you can only use extension cords for temporary purposes, such as accommodating the wiring needs of a meeting or setting up special lighting for a short term project. If you need additional outlets installed in your office, classroom, or lab, you must submit a Project Initiation Form to the AU Office of Planning and Space Management.

### Can I use power strips on campus?

You may use U.L listed power strips on campus, as long as you plug them directly into the wall and never plug more than one power strip into a single outlet. Because power strips need to be plugged directly into a wall outlet, you should never plug a power strip into another power strip. Always use power strips that are equipped with overload protection.

## Storage near Electrical Panels

### Can I store things near electrical panels or transformers?

You must maintain a clear space around all electrical panels, so keep storage at least 36 inches away and do not store anything on top of electrical panels or transformers.

## Storage in Mechanical and Electrical Rooms

### Am I allowed to store things in electrical and/or mechanical rooms?

No. Combustible materials must not be stored in boiler rooms, mechanical rooms, or electrical equipment rooms.

## Storage in Exit Corridors

### Is it okay to store things in exit corridors?

Combustible materials must not be stored in exits or exit enclosures. Exit corridors must be kept free of all obstructions or impediments at all times to ensure full instant use in the event of a fire or other emergency. Storage of any kind or use of laboratory or office equipment in hallways is not permitted unless approved by Risk Management and Safety. Normally, only water foundations, fire protection equipment, and safety equipment will be installed in hallways. Permanently attached lockers, bulletin boards and display cabinets of non-combustible construction may be permitted in some locations, subject to approval of RMS. Transparent covers on bulletin boards and display cabinets must be safety glass or other non-splintering material. Refer to the [Auburn University Entrances, Exits and Hallway Policy](#) for more information.

## Storage in Stairwells

### Is it okay to store things in stairwells?

No, storage is prohibited in stairwells. This means you are not allowed to store anything on the stairs, in the stairwell, or under the stairs.

### Is it okay to leave stairwell doors blocked open?

No. Stairwell doors should never be blocked open, unless they are being blocked open for an isolated period of time (for example, while someone is moving in furniture).

## **Automatic Sprinkler Systems**

### **What are the safety guidelines for automatic sprinkler systems on campus?**

If there is an automatic sprinkler system in your classroom, office, or residence hall, make sure all storage is kept at least 18 inches away from the sprinklers and never attach items to the sprinklers or pipes. If you notice a violation, please correct it or notify Risk Management and Safety. RMS performs inspections, testing, and maintenance on campus automatic sprinklers, standpipes and fire pumps periodically as required by State Code.

## **Fire Alarm Activations**

### **What should I do when the fire alarm is activated in my building?**

Exit the building immediately, once outside the building, call 9-1-1 to report the fire alarm, assemble in a safe area (at least 100 feet) away from the building, do not re-enter the building until the City of Auburn Fire Division has searched the building and gives permission to re-enter the building. Facilities Division performs inspection, testing and maintenance services on all campus fire alarm systems.

## **Portable Fire Extinguishers**

Who do I call if I find a fire extinguisher that needs to be recharged or is missing?

Call Risk Management and Safety to report a missing fire extinguisher or extinguisher requiring service. RMS inspects all campus fire extinguishers monthly.

## **Range Hood and Special Hazard Fire Protection Systems**

### **Who do I call when a range hood or any other type of special hazard fire suppression system is activated?**

Call 9-1-1 if there is a fire emergency. Then call Risk Management and Safety to report the activation so they can recharge and reset the system. RMS performs inspections, testing and maintenance on range hood and special hazard fire protection systems in accordance with State Fire Codes.

## **Building Fire Inspections**

### **When are fire inspections performed on campus buildings and what agencies perform the inspections?**

- **Residence Halls**

Risk Management and Safety fire inspectors perform fire and life safety inspections at residence halls annually. Inspection components include: means of egress, fire rated construction, emergency lights, exit signs, portable fire extinguishers, fire alarm systems, and automatic sprinkler systems. Auburn University's Department of Housing and Residence Life's Safety Officer performs frequent safety inspections in all residence halls throughout the year. Residential facilities provided with automatic sprinkler systems, standpipes, and fire alarm systems are inspected throughout the year in accordance with State Fire Code requirements.

- **Fraternity Houses**

A contractual agreement was entered into between Auburn University and the City of Auburn to provide regular fire code compliance inspections at all on-campus and off-campus fraternity houses with in the first 8 weeks of fall semester and spring semester each year. In addition, each fraternity is required to attend fire safety education provided by Risk Management and Safety at the beginning of the fall and spring semester. Each fraternity is required to appoint a member that resides in the fraternity as the Chapter Fire Marshal. All Chapter Fire Marshals and Chapter Presidents are required to attend the AU fire safety class. Chapter Fire Marshals are required to conduct monthly self-fire inspections of their houses and to submit self inspection reports to the Interfraternity Council monthly. Fire drills are conducted by the Auburn Fire Division within the first 8 weeks of each semester. Failure to comply with these requirements can result in fines and/or the fraternity being placed on social probation.

- **Other Campus Buildings**

Risk Management and Safety fire inspectors perform campus building fire and life safety inspections. These inspections are performed to ensure compliance with State Fire Codes and to ensure safe building environments.

## **New Construction and Renovation Inspections**

### **Who conducts inspections on new construction and renovation projects?**

Risk Management and Safety fire inspectors perform fire and life safety inspections on new construction and renovation projects. Items inspected include: building fire access, fire rated construction, fire protection and life safety systems, portable fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, exit signs, and elevators. Mechanical, electrical, plumbing and structural inspections are performed by AU Facilities Division. The Alabama Building Commission also performs building inspections on new construction projects.

## **Fraternity House New Construction and Renovation Projects**

### **Who is responsible for inspecting new construction and renovation projects at fraternity houses located on and off campus?**

Risk Management and Safety fire inspectors, City of Auburn fire inspectors and the State Building Commission perform fire and life safety inspections in fraternity houses under construction and during any renovations.

### **What are the required fire protection systems and equipment in fraternity houses?**

Auburn University requires commercial range hood fire protection systems and a Class K portable fire extinguisher in side kitchens, a building fire alarm system that is monitored 24/7, hardwired smoke detectors with battery backup inside each bedroom, and portable extinguishers within 75 feet of travel distance in the exit corridors. Auburn University has mandated that automatic sprinkler systems be retro-fitted in all fraternity houses and party barns by fall 2008.

For additional fire safety information at Auburn University, please contact the Auburn University Department of Risk Management and Safety's Fire Safety Program Manager at 334-844-4805.