



**THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY**  
WASHINGTON, DC

**Responsible University Official:** Senior Associate Vice President for Safety and Security

**Responsible Office:** Division of Safety and Security

**Last Revised Date:** March 16, 2017

## FIRE PREVENTION

### Policy Statement

Every member of the university community is responsible for assisting in the prevention and proper handling of fire hazards and for being familiar with the university's Fire Prevention Plan. The Fire Prevention Plan outlines the university's plan to promote fire safety and reduce the risk of fire-related incidents and injuries.

### Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety of the university community, prevent damage to university property, and comply with applicable laws, regulations, and best practices.

### Who is Governed by this Policy

Faculty, staff and students

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## **Policy**

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Every member of the campus community has the responsibility to help prevent fires. Faculty, staff, and students should be aware of potential fire hazards and know proper emergency procedures and phone numbers.

The university has developed the Fire Prevention Plan to promote fire safety and awareness to reduce the risk of fire-related incidents and injuries. The plan provides information relating to proper handling and storage procedures for potential fire hazards, procedures for regular maintenance of heat-producing equipment, contact information for employees responsible for fire prevention and protection, prohibited items in residence halls, and employee training information. All members of the university community are responsible for being familiar with the Fire Prevention Plan. A copy of the Fire Prevention Plan is available from Health & Emergency Management Services for review.

Prevention is the most effective tool against fires on campus. The university community should be aware of common fire hazards in their respective places of work and residences. The leading fire hazards in university buildings include improper or unattended cooking, smoking materials, open flames, combustible decorations, flammable liquids, furniture, and trash.

In order to prevent accidental ignition of these combustible materials, regular maintenance of heat-producing equipment must be performed. Heat producing equipment such as burners, heat exchangers, boilers, ovens, stoves, and fryers must be properly maintained and kept clean of flammable residues. In addition, flammables must be stored in accordance with the Fire Prevention Plan and applicable regulations.

Fire alarm and detection systems (such as smoke and heat detectors, manually-activated pull stations, sprinkler systems, standpipe systems, and fire extinguishers) are used in university buildings to facilitate evacuation and for effective fire protection. Most buildings are equipped with fire alarm detection and notification systems that are continuously monitored for smoke or fire.

Fire safety training is provided to employees charged with fire prevention and protection. This knowledge is necessary to help protect employees in the event of a fire emergency.

Health & Emergency Management Services conducts residence hall inspections three to four times a year and periodically inspects all other buildings on campus.

Inspectors have the authority to confiscate prohibited items and order repairs when necessary for the safety of the university community in accordance with applicable university policies.

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## Related Information

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Fire Prevention Plan  
Residence Halls Fire Evacuation Drills  
[OSHA "Fire Prevention Plans" \(29 C.F.R. § 1910.39\)](#)  
Appendix A - Prohibited Items List

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## Contacts

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Contact	Telephone	Email
Health & Emergency Management Services	(202) 994-4347	<a href="mailto:safety@gwu.edu">safety@gwu.edu</a>

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## Document History

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- **Last Reviewed Date:** March 16, 2017
- **Last Revised Date:** March 16, 2017
- **Policy Origination Date:** February 21, 2002

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## Who Approved This Policy

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Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer  
Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

*This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance and Privacy's](#) home page.*

## **Appendix A - Prohibited Items**

The following items are prohibited in all residence halls and may be restricted in certain academic and administrative buildings:

- Candles
- Extension cords (except where described below)
- Halogenated lamps
- Portable heaters
- Incense
- Flammable liquids
- Lanterns and Oil lamps
- Charcoal and Charcoal grills
- Live holiday decorations
- Fireworks and explosives
- Weapons
- Firearms and ammunition
- Cooking devices in rooms not equipped with a kitchen

### **Candles**

The use of candles and open flame is prohibited in all university owned property.

Candles caused 3% of reported home fires, 5% of home fire deaths, and 7% of home fire injuries in one recent reporting period. Candles and incense (burned or unburned) found in residence halls during inspections will be confiscated by inspectors and not returned.

### **Extension Cords**

The use of extension cords is prohibited in university-owned or -controlled buildings and facilities except in the following limited situations:

- Maintenance staff may use insulated, grounded extension cords for normal maintenance activities, including construction, renovation and related activities.
- Custodial staff may use insulated, grounded extension cords as needed to operate cleaning equipment and to perform minor maintenance activities.
- Faculty and staff may use insulated, grounded extension cords for use of classroom audio-visual and computer equipment.
- Buildings constructed after 2010 that are equipped with AFCI receptacles throughout
- When approved by The Office of Health and Safety prior to use.

When wall outlet availability is insufficient, and electrical equipment/appliances are positioned as close to electrical wall outlets as possible, power strips with surge protection shall be used rather than

extension cords. Power strips must be used for the intended purpose, and in accordance with the following use and maintenance procedures:

- Power strips and power strip cords shall be kept in good condition, and must be examined on a regular basis for cracks, splits and general wear and tear. Exposed wires, knots, burn marks, loose connections, or other damage may cause fire or electrocution. Damaged devices shall be removed from service and discarded.
- Power strip cords will be grounded and listed by the Underwriter's Laboratory and bear the U.L. label.
- Power strips must not be used in excess of the manufacturer's rated capacity.
- No device (such as a power strip, extension cord, plug extender, multi-plug power strip, 3-prong adaptor, etc.) may be attached to another such device (i.e. "Piggybacked").
- Power strip cords shall not be covered by carpeting, clothing, furniture, or other objects that could prevent adequate ventilation, circulation and cord cooling.
- Power strip cords shall not be run through any doorway or window opening.
- Power strip cords shall not be semi-permanently or permanently fixed in place.

Under no circumstances may extension cords be used in lieu of permanent fixed wiring, and all allowable temporary uses shall be kept to a minimum. During announced and unannounced health and safety inspections, authorized personnel have the authority to confiscate non-surge protected extension cords and wall adaptors. These items will not be returned to students and will be donated to local charities.

### **Plug Locked items**

Certain prohibited items may be plug-locked in lieu of confiscation at the discretion of the Inspector. The following is a list of the most commonly plugged locked items:

- Halogen lamps
- Space heaters
- Cooking equipment

It is the responsibility of the owner to have the item unlocked at the end of the semester or at the earliest opportunity to remove the item from campus. Occupants of residential units with plug locks who fail to arrange for the release of the lock will be charged \$50.00 per lock. In the event that ownership of the item cannot be determined or is in dispute, the fee shall be divided equally among all registered occupants.

## **Tampering with Life Safety Equipment**

Tampering with life safety equipment is not only prohibited by university policy but depending on the offense can be considered as a misdemeanor offense under applicable law. Inspectors who observe evidence of tampering, such as covered smoke detectors, will notify GW Police Department to complete a report. Occupants will be referred to the student judicial system.