



P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857
www.doj.state.wi.us

J.B. VAN HOLLEN
ATTORNEY GENERAL

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
August 28, 2008

For More Information Contact:
Bill Cosh 608/266-1221

FIRE SAFETY

A Major Concern for Students Living Both On- and Off-Campus

The Wisconsin Attorney General's Office and the Wisconsin State Fire Marshal, along with the National Association of State Fire Marshals and the Center for Campus Safety, recognize the month of September as Campus Safety Month. I and the State Fire Marshall's Office would like to encourage students to keep safety in the forefront as they return to campus. Each year, lives are lost in campus-related fires. The following are a few simple precautions recommended by the National Association of State Fire Marshal's and could mean the difference between life and death.

Candles: Although many higher education facilities have already banned the use of candles in on-campus housing, over half of college students are living off-campus. Many students reside in one- and two-family dwellings and apartment buildings, which places them in a high-risk category. In 2005, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reported that over 15,000 home fires, 150 deaths, 1,270 injuries and \$539 million in property loss resulted from the improper use of candles. Living on- or off-campus, students should be aware of these safety tips:

- Extinguish all candles when leaving the room or going to sleep. Candle fires often occur when left unattended or while people are asleep.
- Keep candles away from things that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, paper, curtains, Christmas trees or decorations, and don't place lit candles in windows, where they may ignite blinds or curtains. Candles don't spread the fire, it is what they ignite that spreads the fire.
- Place candles on stable furniture in sturdy holders that won't tip over and that are big enough to collect dripping wax. Place candles only in areas where they won't be

knocked over by children or pets. If a candle gets knocked over, it can ignite other combustibles such as furniture, papers, blankets, etc.

- Avoid candles with combustible materials embedded in them, or with holders or decorations that could ignite. A candle with materials imbedded in them may look pretty, but could possibly ignite and spread the fire beyond the candle.
- Use globes to cover the flame. Better yet, consider battery-powered flameless candles.

Cooking Safety: According to the United States Fire Administration, cooking fires are the number one cause of fire injury on college campuses.

- Follow the dormitory rules regarding possession and use of cooking appliances.
- Use cooking appliances correctly. Never overload electrical outlets or extension cords.
- Pay attention when cooking. Don't get sidetracked or leave cooking unattended.
- Move items such as potholders or dishtowels away from cooking surfaces.
- Applying a lid to a small grease fire is usually the most effective and safest method of controlling it. Do not use water on a grease fire. Trying to carry a pan that's on fire is extremely dangerous because it can ignite clothes or spill, causing severe burns.

Smoking/Drinking: Smoking combined with alcohol and/or other drugs could prove deadly. People are aware that smoking is bad for their health, but one of the dangers that people often forget is the relationship between smoking and the potential for fire, especially when combined with alcohol or other drugs. Studies have shown that more than half of all alcohol-impaired fire deaths were the result of fires caused by careless smoking. If you must smoke, only smoke outside of the building and encourage others to do the same.

Following these few simple tips will ensure that students have a safe and successful school year.

#