

Fire Safety

The subject of fire safety is one that is taken very seriously at WPI. Fire-related incidents are generally preventable by observing and following fire safety regulations.



CONTACT

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Electrical Abuse

Use of electrical "octopuses" to obtain more outlets can result in overloaded circuits and fire. Match your appliance power requirements to the circuit power. Most electrical circuits supply only 15 to 20 amps per room for all the outlets. Extension cords should be limited to temporary use. For your own safety and to safeguard your belongings, we recommend using a power strip or surge protector.

Fire Drills

All occupants must evacuate the building when a fire alarm is sounded. Failure to evacuate during a fire alarm is a violation of Massachusetts state law and WPI policy and will result in disciplinary action. Campus Police & Facilities, in collaboration with the Housing & Residential Experience Center, conducts fire drills twice a year and student cooperation and support is essential during all fire drills.

Fire Alarm Pull Stations

Fire alarm pull stations are located on every floor in every building. They can be activated by pulling the red alarm handle. Alarms will be set off if a smoke or heat detector is activated. The alarm will ring continuously until the building has been cleared. Campus Police or building staff will notify residents of the "all clear" to re-enter the building. Do not re-enter the building unless the "all clear" signal has been given.

Tampering with Fire Equipment

Fire safety equipment that has been tampered with may fail to operate correctly in an emergency. This could prove fatal. Tampering with fire safety equipment (including but not limited to fire extinguishers and local smoke and heat detectors) will result in disciplinary action.

We encourage you to report anyone who pulls an alarm. Such a prank can endanger and inconvenience you and others in your building.

Fire Doors

There are fire doors at the end of hallways and in stairwells. The doors are specially constructed to delay the spread of fires. Most regular doors have a burn-through time of about one hour. Fire doors have a rated burn-through time of up to two hours.

It is for this reason that fire doors, especially in corridors, should never be propped open. They are a primary factor in slowing the spread of fires.

Smoke Detectors

All residences are equipped with smoke and/or heat detectors. The detectors will set off the building alarm. It is possible that from time to time a detector may malfunction and set off an alarm. You should still vacate the premises but report the problem immediately to your Resident Advisor or the Housing & Residential Experience Center.

Elevators

Elevators automatically shut down when a fire alarm is sounded. Use the stairs to exit a building when the fire alarm sounds.

In the Event of a Fire

At the first indication of a fire, whether it is a persistent smoke or fire alarm, smoke, or flames, follow the procedure outlined below. Please be familiar with this procedure. It could save your life.

- **Sound the alarm:** Sound the alarm, if available, as soon as you find or suspect a fire. Wake up everyone in the room, apartment, or area. Warn other occupants - - knock on doors and shout as you leave.
- **Dress:** If time permits, take a jacket and shoes, and a towel to cover your face.
- **To survive a fire:** If you get caught in smoke, get down and crawl. Cleaner, cooler air will be near the floor. Feel any door before opening it. If it is cool, brace yourself against the door and open it slightly. If trapped by heat or heavy smoke, close the door and stay in the room. Stay next to windows so that fire fighters can get to you quickly-- help is on the way. Do not jump!
- **If you are trapped:** Keep the doors closed. A closed door can protect you from fire, heat, and smoke elsewhere in the building. Seal cracks and vents from incoming smoke. Do not break your window with a chair or other objects; this may draw smoke into the room.
- **Signal for help:** Stay where you are, and hang something like a sheet or shirt from the window to attract the fire department's attention. Call Campus Police (508-831-5555) and give them your building name and room number.
- **Check the hallway:** If the hallway is relatively clear of smoke, close your door behind you and proceed to the nearest exit as quickly as possible. If heat, fire, or smoke blocks the nearest exit, stay low and go to another exit. Use exit stairs, not elevators. Elevator shafts may fill with smoke or the power may fail, leaving you trapped. Stairway fire doors will keep out fire and smoke-- if they are closed-- and will protect you until you are outside.
- **If you are on fire:** Stop, Drop, & Roll! If your clothes catch on fire, stop, drop and roll wherever you are. Rolling smothers the flames.

Protect Yourself

Participate in fire drills: Drills are used to familiarize you with the building's alarm, emergency exits you may not normally use, and the procedure for calling the fire department.

Students with physical disabilities: Even if a disability is temporary, learn about fire safety, plan ahead for fire emergencies, and know your own capabilities and/or limitations. In case of fire drill/fire or other emergencies limiting elevator use, a person using a wheelchair/scooter should go to the nearest, safe stairwell to await assistance and two people should accompany them. One person should stay with them in the stairwell, while the other should leave to inform the proper authorities (Campus Police, emergency or firefighting personnel) of the location of the individual. Campus Police, emergency or firefighting personnel will immediately come and assist the individual out of the building.

The two person rule helps insure that the authorities will find the person quickly and not have them left alone in the stairwell wondering whether the emergency is real or not and whether someone will find them.

Contact [Accessibility Services](#) for more information.

Alcohol and Drugs: If you use either of these, you are especially vulnerable to being killed from smoke inhalation. You cannot smell smoke when you are asleep. Even healthy young people may not be able to escape a fire if they are intoxicated. You may not be able to hear the alarm or find the exit. Let the fire department know if you think

someone has not been able to evacuate the building.

Health and Fire Safety Inspections/Right of Entry

The Housing & Residential Experience Center Staff will conduct a scheduled Health and Fire Safety Inspection each academic term. The purpose of these inspections is to inspect student rooms for damage, health and fire safety violations, security concerns, and other violations of college policies. The inspections are designed to seek out and correct potentially hazardous situations in order to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of community members. Students will be notified in writing of any violations found during an inspection and will be required to remove or eliminate the identified safety hazard. If other violations of WPI policies are observed during the inspection, they will also be documented and followed up on. During vacation periods, WPI personnel from the Housing & Residential Experience Center or Facilities may enter student rooms at any time to make routine maintenance repairs and safety checks to ensure that students are in compliance with the terms of the housing contract.

Campus Safety & Security

**Housing & Residential
Experience Center**

**Environmental Health &
Safety**