

TEN COMMON FIRE CODE VIOLATIONS

Listed below are ten fire code violations that are commonly encountered during campus fire safety inspections. Explanations are provided below for why these seemingly innocuous violations can be considered a fire and life safety hazard.

1. **Fire Extinguishers:** Fire extinguishers shall not be obstructed or obscured from view, and must remain visible at all times. Fire extinguishers should be mounted to a wall surface to protect them from physical damage. Also, if you happen to notice the needle gauge is pointing in the red area rather than the green area, please notify the Fire Marshal's office. When a fire strikes, we want these invaluable tools functioning properly!
2. **Extension Cords:** If you see one in use, please remove it. Extension cords are strictly prohibited from use in University buildings as permanent wiring. Should you have the need to use an extension cord on a permanent basis, you must contact Facilities to have the area of use inspected to determine if additional wall outlets can be installed to accommodate your needs. Extension cords cannot tolerate numerous electronic devices, they can become overloaded, resulting in fires. Extension Cords must be replaced with UL rated surge protectors.
3. **Misuse of Surge Protectors:** If you are using a surge protector, they must be plugged directly into a wall outlet and not into one another. Do not plug surge protectors into extension cords to make up the distance to an outlet. Submit a work order to Facilities for a new outlet to be installed. Again, extension cords are meant for temporary use. An extension cord will not offer any protection if a surge occurs in the electrical line, but a surge protector will. Please use surge protectors.
4. **Storage Too Close to the Ceiling:** The fire code requires a 24-inch clearance between stored materials and the ceiling in non-sprinklered rooms. The clearance must be 24-inches to allow manual hose streams to effectively reach the top of burning materials and to project over and beyond to reach other burning materials. Rooms that are equipped with sprinklers must have an 18-inch clearance between the bottom of the sprinkler head and the stored materials. Materials stored too close to the sprinkler head will prevent heat from reaching the sprinkler's fusible link and prevent water from reaching the seat of the fire once the sprinklers have been activated.
5. **Blocked Emergency Exits and Corridors:** Keep emergency exits and corridors free of chairs, filing cabinets, small tables and miscellaneous storage that could cause people to trip. In the event of a fire, this is your pathway to safety. Fires can kill the power to a building. During a fire, the corridors can become smoky and dark; any blocked emergency exits or corridors may slow down the evacuation of the building and compromise your path to safety!
6. **Electrical Panels:** Most electrical panels will be located inside mechanical or custodial closets that normally have limited access, however, electrical panels need to have a clearance on all sides as well as

clearance in front so that they can be easily accessed to shut off electricity to various parts of the building in the event of a fire. Please keep all electrical panels free of obstruction.

7. **Door Chocks:** Door chocks are not allowed on any stairwell or fire rated door(s). Fire doors serve to protect you in the event of a fire. Some offer more protection than others. Doors with a fire rating will indicate how long they are expected to hold up in a fire. If the door is chocked open, it has a fire rating of zero minutes and offers no protection! If you need to have a non-fire rated door held open by a door chock, please remove it once you complete your task or leave your office. Even if the door is not a fire door, it can help to limit the spread of fire and/or smoke.
8. **Missing or Damaged Ceiling Tiles:** Ceiling tiles serve to prevent fire and smoke from traveling through the ceiling shaft to other parts of the building. Building maintenance personnel and outside contractors often remove ceiling tiles to make repairs without putting them back once the service is complete. Some ceiling tiles consist of fire rated material and must be replaced if damaged or removed. Please submit a

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Princeton University Fire Marshal's Office

dpsfire@princeton.edu is your single point contact link for any fire safety related question, concern or assistance request.

