

## Avoiding False Alarms

Most emergency fire calls to student accommodation are false alarms. Many false alarms are caused by carelessness or negligence and are easily avoidable. Some are due to deliberate actuations of fire detection and warning equipment, misuse or reckless behaviour that can result in the persons responsible being reported to the Police and/or losing their tenancy.

Firefighters answering a false alarm could be delayed in saving lives on a real fire or road accident.

Smoke alarms are sensitive and can be triggered by:

- Aerosol sprays e.g. deodorants and hair spray
  - *Never use sprays directly under smoke detectors.*
- Candles and incense sticks
  - *Take extra care if you use candles or incense sticks\**
- Cooking fumes, steam and smoke
  - *Take extra care if you use a portable cooker or heater in your room\**
- Steam from bathrooms and irons
  - *Keep bathroom doors closed*
- Smoking materials
  - *Never cover a smoke detector head.*

**\*It is against University halls accommodation policy to use candles or incense sticks and portable cookers and heaters in your room or kitchen.**

**If you have caused the fire or alarm, make yourself known to the Fire and Rescue Service and explain the circumstance.**

## Leaving Home

If you are a first year student at the University - you're probably leaving home for the first time. You might be moving into a flat within a halls of residence or a private house of multiple occupancy. Wherever you live, you'll be responsible for looking after the place you are living in. That means keeping it safe from fire. It's not just for your own safety. You've also got a responsibility to the people around you and to the community that you're now part of. Fire safety is just common sense, and making sure you've checked out a few of the basics could be a lifesaver. You're looking forward to having a great time as a student. Keep it that way!



## Hoax Calls

Hoax or false alarm calls are sometimes called 'nuisance calls'. But nuisance calls are not harmless fun, ever. Firefighters react to every alarm call they receive. If they're answering a false alarm call, they're not able to deal with a real emergency. That can cost lives. People who make hoax calls are prosecuted. The penalty is imprisonment, a fine or both.



**To view the University's student orientation and fire safety video visit:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuovhl8Kb1U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuovhl8Kb1U)



### Safety, Health and Environment Team

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# Fire advice for students living in halls and rented accommodation



## Fact.

Whether a **student** in **halls** or in **private accommodation** you'll be **responsible** for looking after the place you're living in. That means keeping it **safe from fire**

Guidance and Information for Students



## Living in Halls of Residence

There'll be automatic fire detectors in key areas. They're activated by heat or smoke, and sound an alarm. If you hear a fire alarm, go to your designated assemble point (you will find this on the Emergency Action Notice at all final exit doors).

There'll be break-glass fire alarms near exit doors. If you discover a fire - or if you suspect there's a fire - break the glass to sound the fire alarm. That will warn other students. Then go to your designated assembly point.

There'll be fire resistant doors in key areas. When they're shut they protect your escape routes from smoke and fire. Never wedge fire doors open. It's dangerous to open a fire door if there's a fire behind it. Touch the handle with the back of your hand. If it's hot, don't open it.



If you discover a fire don't put yourself in danger.

**GET OUT - STAY OUT  
PHONE THE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
SERVICE**

## ESCAPE ROUTES ESCAPE PLANS ASSEMBLY POINTS

Keep escape routes clear of rubbish, bikes, furniture or any items which could impede your escape.

Make sure you have an escape plan.

Know how you would get out safely in the event of a fire?

Make sure you know the assembly point to report outside.



## Living in Rented Accommodation

If you're sharing rented accommodation, there's a bigger risk of fire. That's partly because rented accommodation isn't always well maintained. Landlords of private rented housing must always provide you with information that provides advice and guidance about your tenancy and safety. It is recommended that you choose accommodation from the list of privately rented accommodation maintained by the Accommodation Services Team.

In rented accommodation always:

- Check there are working smoke/heat alarms in the flat/house and on stairs and landings.
- Check there are no bars on the windows and that they can be easily opened from the inside.
- Check for fire resistant labels on the furniture. Furniture made before 1988 may not be match fire resistant. It can catch fire easily and will give off toxic smoke.

If 3 or more of you are renting/sharing, the landlord must have a licence from the local council for operating a House of Multiple Occupation. If there's no licence, don't rent the property. Report the landlord to the council. If it has a licence, it must have:

- Smoke/heat alarms to detect and warn of fire.
- An emergency plan showing the nearest exit.
- An escape route
- Fire extinguishers.

Remember that if you have consumed alcohol and/or drugs your judgement and decision making will be substantially impaired and you or other residents/tenants will be at risk of fire and fire injury. In particular cooking or smoking whilst under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will place you at considerable additional risk of fire and injury.