History of Campus Fire Safety

On January 19, 2000 three students were killed and 62 students and firefighters were injured when a fire erupted at Seton Hall University. This fire, originally lit as a prank, proved to be one of the deadliest college fires in recent history, as three couches in a third floor lounge approached 1500 degrees F in less than 5 minutes.

In this tragedy’s aftermath, then NYS Governor George Pataki created a Task Force on Campus Fire Safety in February 2000. The result of this task force today is annual wall-to-wall fire inspections of all NYS colleges and universities, with the assistance of the NYS Office of Fire Prevention & Control (OFPC).

Hamilton College is committed to fire safety as a priority in student residences and other campus facilities. As evidence of that commitment, 100% of Hamilton’s on-campus residential facilities have sprinkler systems. However, no fire alarm, detection or suppression system can 100% guarantee that a Seton Hall-like tragedy will not occur here, as most OFPC violations tend to be behavioral in nature. While there are a number of College departments charged with administering Hamilton’s fire safety programs, all students and employees must DO THEIR PART and abide by this Fire Safety Notice.

Best Practices & Recommendations

Power Strips
- Instead of extension cords, use power strips which will “trip” in the event of a power surge.
- But be sure to never “piggy-back” such devices, one to another.

Fire Extinguishers
- These devices are staged throughout campus.
- But extinguishers are not intended to enable “fire-fighting”, especially by those not formally trained in their use.
- If you would like to be trained to use a fire extinguisher, please contact Frank Coots or Brian Hansen.

Gas/Charcoal Grills
- Use gas/charcoal grills at least 10 feet from your building.
- Propane tanks may never be stored indoors, but up to 1 bag of charcoal may be stored in dry, indoor locations.

Faculty/Supervisor Roles
- Wherever you teach/supervise students or other employees, YOU play a critical role in the success of our fire safety program.
- Always treat a fire alarm signal, even if it’s a fire drill, as a potential emergency.
- Know the building evacuation “muster points” for all facilities you teach or supervise others in, and ensure you communicate those locations accordingly.

Emergency Phone Numbers
- Campus Safety x4000
- Residential Life x4023
- Student Health Services x4111
- HCEMS x4000
- Env. Protection & Safety x4647
- Facilities Management x4500

Note—This document is not inclusive of all fire safety programs at Hamilton College. Please see this website for additional information: [http://www.hamilton.edu/epss/fire-safety](http://www.hamilton.edu/epss/fire-safety)
Prohibited Items, Actions & Nevers…

No Light Duty Household Extension (or Zip) Cords
These devices are only suitable for non-commercial/household use, and are not permitted on campus at any time.

Heavy-Duty Extension Cords
• These devices are only suitable for periodic use, like to run a vacuum or other mobile equipment.
• A heavy-duty extension cord running a desk lamp is not periodic use, and will result in a fire safety violation.

No Multi-Plug Adapters
These devices are only suitable for non-commercial or household use, and are not permitted on campus.

No Piggy-Backed Outlet Strips
• These devices are acceptable for safely extending an electrical circuit.
• Do not piggy-back one outlet strip to another.

Other Banned Items
• Holiday Lights
• Halogen Lamps, Lava Lamps, Heat Lamps
• Candles/Incense
• Natural Christmas Trees
• Space Heaters or Air Conditioners

Storage Issues
• The excessive storage of materials in an office such that it obstructs your timely exit from the space is prohibited.
• The storage of combustible materials on walls/shelving must observe an 18” clearance from ceilings in sprinkled buildings, or 24” in non-sprinkled buildings.
• You may not place anything that obstructs access/egress paths in your building’s hallways, stairwells or storage spaces.

Food Storage/Cooking/Prep
Employees should utilize designated kitchenettes.
• For energy conservation reasons, employees are discouraged from having personal refrigerators in their offices.
• The only permissible food warming devices outside of kitchenettes include those with internal/self-contained coils.

Smoking and Vaping
• By College policy and the NYS Clean Indoor Air Act, smoking and vaping is prohibited in all College buildings, entranceways and College-owned vehicles.
• As a further courtesy, smokers/vapers should stay at least 25’ away from all buildings to protect non-smokers from unwanted exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

Never tamper with or otherwise obstruct fire safety equipment installed in your building, such as:
• Smoke/heat detectors;
• Sprinkler heads/piping;
• Fire extinguishers;
• Fire/smoke doors;
• Fire alarm panels;
• Pull stations; or
• Exit/egress signage

Corrective Actions
All college facilities, including employee offices, are subject to regular inspection by the offices of Env. Protection & Safety, Campus Safety, Facilities Management and the NYS Office of Fire Prevention & Control.

Depending on the nature and severity of any fire safety related-violations discovered during an inspection, corrective actions may be levied upon the responsible party(ies), including but not limited to, additional instruction, on-the-spot confiscation or disciplinary action.