Dear Student,

Welcome to UMass Amherst! We are glad that you have joined our residential community this fall. The personal safety of every member of our community is of primary importance to all of us. As we begin a new academic year, we are writing to share some information about fire safety in the residence halls.

**Residence halls are equipped with fire/smoke detection systems and sprinkler systems.** These systems are in place to save lives. Tampering with or covering smoke detectors or sprinkler heads can significantly delay the detection of fire/smoke and the activation of sprinkler systems in the residence halls. Tampering with equipment is a violation of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and is also enforced by the Town of Amherst Fire Department.

Check the fire safety equipment in your room to be sure it is not obstructed. Students are expected to immediately notify their [Residential Service Desk](#) if the fire safety equipment in their room is obstructed or malfunctioning. Students found responsible for violating Code of Student Conduct fire safety policy are subject to housing removal.

**Fire safety is everyone’s responsibility.** Residential students are expected to abide by the Code of Student Conduct, including residence hall policies related to fire safety, to ensure the safety of the residence hall community. Candles and incense are not permitted in campus residences. Smoking of tobacco, marijuana, or other smoking materials is also not permitted. In addition, many appliances are not permitted for fire safety reasons. UL approved appliances with an auto shut-off feature are allowed. Refer to the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and [Residence Hall Policies](#) for a list of items not permitted in the residence halls.

**All members of the residence hall community are expected to evacuate the residence hall during a fire alarm** using the closest stairwell and exit. Identify the two closest exits to your room so you are prepared in the event of an alarm. Each residence hall has an outside Emergency Assembly Area where you should gather when an alarm sounds.

In the event of a fire, close the door to the fire area (if possible), activate the building fire alarm system, and evacuate using the closest entrance. Use a portable fire extinguisher if the fire is small, you can use it safely, if you have been trained, and only after the building fire alarm system has been activated.
Fire drills will be conducted in every residence hall during the first few weeks of each semester. If you are not present during your hall’s fire drill, check with your RA to learn the location of your emergency assembly area.

For more information about fire safety in the residence halls, review the Code of Student Conduct and Residence Hall Policies. Thank you for your assistance in keeping our residence hall communities safe. If you have questions about fire safety in the residence halls, please do not hesitate to contact your Resident Assistant or Environmental Health and Safety staff (413-545-2682).

Sincerely,

Michael Swain, Campus Fire Marshal
Jean MacKimmie, Director of Residence Education