Dear Student,

Welcome to our new students, and welcome back to returning students! We are glad that you will be part of the UMass Amherst residential community this semester.

The personal safety of every member of our campus community is of primary importance to all of us. As we begin a new semester, we are writing to share some information about residence hall Fire Safety.

**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.

**Fire Safety is everyone’s responsibility.** Residential students are expected to abide by all Residential Life policies related to fire safety to ensure the safety of the residence hall community. Candles and incense are not permitted in residence halls or on campus apartments. Smoking of tobacco, marijuana, or other smoking materials is also not permitted. In addition, many appliances are not permitted in residence hall rooms for fire safety reasons. UL approved appliances with an auto shut off feature are permitted.

**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 the fire drill for your hall, check with your RA to learn where the emergency assembly area is for your hall.

For more information about Fire Safety in the residence halls, review [Residential Life Community Standards](https://reslife.umass.edu/policies-and-guidelines/safety-and-security/fire-safety). 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**

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