



Institute Policy on Fire Safety

It is the policy of the California Institute of Technology ("the Institute") to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, codes, and standards in regard to fires, fire safety, and fire protection. The Institute recognizes that campus fire safety is vitally important to the Institute community, and thus is committed to maintaining a safe environment for Institute faculty, staff, students, and other members of the Institute community.

The purpose of the Institute Policy on Fire Safety (Policy) is to provide guidelines for establishing and maintaining fire safety procedures with respect to the undergraduate and graduate student houses and dormitories ("student living areas" or "student housing") at the Institute.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Environmental, Health & Safety Office ("Safety Office")

The [Safety Office](#), in conjunction with the [Housing Office](#) ("Housing"), ensures that the student living areas are a safe environment. The Safety Office conducts periodic walkthroughs of student housing in order to identify fire/life safety issues; inspect emergency exit signs and lighting; inspect and maintain fire extinguishers; assist in timely correction of fire code deficiencies; and assist in the design of fire suppression, detection, and alarm systems. The Safety Office also investigates fire incidents and follows-up with fire safety recommendations. Furthermore, the Safety Office provides fire safety training for students (including fire extinguisher and evacuation training) and, with Housing, conducts fire drills. The Safety Office works closely with the Institute's insurance carrier and the Institute Risk Manager and acts as liaison to the local fire department.

Facilities

Operations and Maintenance (O&M) in the Facilities division performs annual inspections, testing, and maintenance of the electronic fire alarm and fire suppression systems. O&M assists in evacuation drills. Design and Construction in Facilities designs and installs fire alarm detection and suppression systems in accordance with fire and building codes.

Campus Security and Parking Services Office ("Security")

[Security](#) is responsible for responding to all fire safety alarms and emergency calls involving fire safety. Security also monitors fire detection and suppression alarms. Security completes fire incident notifications, including "false" fire alarms.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

The [Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs](#) ensures that the Housing Office, the Undergraduate Dean's Office, the Graduate Studies Office, and other appropriate offices within the Division of Student Affairs are enforcing fire safety programs in areas under their control. In addition, they provide assistance to the Safety Office in conducting safety inspections, correcting violations, scheduling fire safety training and evacuation drills, and implementing fire prevention and evacuation policies.

Housing Office

[Housing](#), in conjunction with the Safety Office, ensures that the student living areas are a safe environment. Housing coordinates with the Safety Office to schedule required fire safety and evacuation drills. If any fire hazards are identified, Housing will promptly notify the appropriate Institute office(s). Housing will notify students regarding any items that have been or will be removed from the undergraduate or graduate student living areas. In the case of hazards that pose an immediate risk to life safety, Security, Safety, Housing, and Facilities may take corrective action immediately.

Students

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Institute's Fire Safety Policy, and complying with all Institute fire safety rules and applicable laws. Furthermore, students are responsible for reporting fire hazards to Safety, Security, or the Housing Office. Students are encouraged to take an active role in furthering fire safety in their residences.

FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES

Barbecues

Prior to their initial use, barbecues must be approved by Housing. Gas burning barbecues are permitted. Charcoal barbecues are only permitted for use in conjunction with Dining Services events. Propane tanks must be stored separately from the barbecues when not in use. Barbecues may only be used outdoors. Dining Services will provide storage for propane tanks at the Chandler cage dock. Propane tanks cannot be stored indoors.

Bonfires

Bonfires are not permitted on campus.

Candles

Candles and any other open flame items are not permitted in campus housing.

Decorations

In general, decorations must not cover, block, or hide exit signs, lights, or fire safety equipment. To the extent possible, students should minimize the amount of combustible materials that are used in the house. Combustible materials used for events must have an approved State of California fire retardant applied to the material prior to use. Decorations such as fishnets, parachutes, and fabrics are a source of fuel and can spread a fire. Old newspapers, cardboard boxes and magazines can also accelerate a fire. Particular attention should be given to decorations for special occasions. Fresh cut Christmas trees must be treated with approved State of California fire retardant and artificial trees must be labeled as made of non-combustible material. Fresh cut Christmas trees must be taken down by a certain time limit. Trees cannot be stored at any Off Campus Alleys. Any fire safety equipment including, but not limited to: smoke detectors, pull stations, fire sprinklers, etc., must not be painted over or covered at any time.

Electrical Appliances

All equipment utilized (lights, halogen lights, wires, plugs, connections, etc.) must be Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM) approved and in good condition. Pole or torchiere halogen lamps are not permitted. The use of improvised wiring and multi-outlet adapters (i.e., adapters that allow two or more appliances to be plugged into one outlet) are prohibited. Extension cords are not allowed but surge protectors or power strips are allowed as long as they are not ganged or joined together. Electrical cooking appliances such as coffee pots and hot plates and other cooking appliances must be used only in kitchen areas, and should be attended at all times while in use. Housing approved space heaters may be used in student rooms and must be attended while in use.

Explosives and Improvised Explosive Devices

Explosives, including fireworks, are extremely hazardous and it is illegal and against Institute policy to possess either manufactured or improvised explosives in residences or living quarters. Use and storage of explosives is strictly controlled by local, state, and federal laws and with the exception of a few specific research labs, are not allowed on campus. Explosive materials used for the Fleming Canon must be stored with Security. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) regulates types of explosives from fireworks to dynamite. See <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-09-20/pdf/2012-23241.pdf> for the latest list of such materials. Misuse of chemicals and stockroom privileges is a serious matter.

Flammable Liquids and Gases

Flammable liquids and gases pose a particular hazard when stored or used in living areas. The hazard is typically created by the evaporation of fuels or solvents in confined spaces, mixing with air to form a flammable region, and ignition by open flame pilot lamps, stove, cigarette lighter, or faulty wiring. Gasoline, acetone, camping stove fuel (white gas or butane), lighter fuel, and propane torch canisters are common items that can supply the fuel. The propellant in aerosol spray cans (paint) is also a flammable gas in some cases. No such materials may be used or stored in student living areas. Certain household combustibles such as hair spray and nail polish are exempt

from this requirement and may be possessed by students in their living areas. Mopeds and motorcycles must not be stored inside residences since the gas shut-off valves can leak or not be properly used, creating a flammable vapor hazard. Caltech does not provide campus residences with approved storage locations for flammable materials.

Electronic Cigarettes

Caltech prohibits the use, possession, and storage of electronic cigarettes in all Caltech Housing locations.

Fire Alarms

It is a violation of Institute policy to intentionally set off a false fire alarm. Actions such as setting off a false fire alarm, tampering with a smoke detector, disabling a fire alarm, discharging a fire extinguisher, or suppressing a warning device are illegal and may result in criminal penalties as well as campus disciplinary actions.

Fire Doors

Fire doors must not be tampered with and must be kept closed at all times.

Fire Drills and Evacuation Procedures

Students must understand and conform to all Institute procedures for fire drills and evacuation procedures. Housing provides clear evacuation procedures. These procedures can be found on the back of each student residence room door. When a fire alarm is sounded, all individuals in the building must exit promptly to their designated evacuation site, and must fully cooperate with any responding emergency personnel.

Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are located, labeled, and maintained so that they may be easily identified and in good operating condition. All fire extinguishers are checked monthly by Safety to provide reasonable assurance that they operate properly.

Hallways and Walkways

Hallways, walkways, exit corridors, staircases, doors, and passageways leading to exits must be kept clear of all items that may obstruct the hallway or impede evacuation. The Safety Office, Housing, Security, and Facilities reserve the right to remove any combustible materials or items that may impede normal passage or evacuation routes.

Hoverboards

Caltech prohibits the use, possession, and storage of hoverboards, hands-free segways, and self-balancing scooters (collectively “hoverboards”) on campus and in campus-owned or controlled buildings.

When safety standards can be developed and implemented by the manufacturers, this prohibition will be revisited.

Indoor Fireplaces

Indoor fires are permitted only in fireplaces inside the student houses and apartments. These fireplaces must be used safely and in accordance with accepted practices. Only natural gas may be used in the indoor fireplaces. The fireplace screens must not be removed. The burning of wood or other material is strictly forbidden.

Open Burnings

No open burnings shall be allowed on Institute property.

Outdoor Fireplaces

Outdoor fireplaces are not permitted on Institute property.

Smoking

NO SMOKING POLICY

Resident will not smoke in or around the Premises and agrees to keep the Premises (including use of e-cigarettes) smoke free at all times. (Ord. 8.78.085- Reduction of drifting tobacco smoke in multi-unit housing- <http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=16551>.)

Sanctions

Violations of this Policy may result in investigation and disciplinary action by any of the following, including but not limited to: the Housing Office, the Conduct Review Committee, the Dean of Students, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Dean of Graduate Studies, or the Graduate Review Board. In addition, the setting of a fire or tampering with fire safety equipment in violation of this Policy will result in a fine of up to \$500 for each person involved, in addition to reimbursements for damage. Further violations will result in eviction from Caltech Housing. In the event of a violation of law, state and federal authorities may also take action.

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