



FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES

Your safety is the most important priority for all of us at Cal Poly. It takes all of us doing our part to protect the health and well-being of our community.

What to Bring/What to Leave Behind

University Housing has guidelines around what can and cannot be used in campus housing, based on fire prevention policies that keep our communities safe. Check our lists for what is/is not permitted for [residence halls](#) and [apartments](#). For your safety, donate items that are not permitted or take them home.

Electrical Safety

Every power outlet in campus housing provides a certain amount of electricity based on engineered design. The amount of electrical power is typically a 15-amp breaker. Appliances are rated based on their use of amps. If too many amps are drawn from a 15-amp breaker, the result is an overloaded power circuit.

These guidelines can help us prevent electrical fires.

- Only power strips with overload protection are permitted in our buildings. Please check that you are using power strips with overload protection in your residence. A surge protector, which is a facet of some but not all power strips, may protect your electrical equipment (such as your computer) from damage in the event of a surge of electricity; it does not function to prevent fires.



- Flammable materials (clothing, paper, etc.) should be kept at least 12 inches away from power strips.



- Damaged power strips from spills or breakage should be unplugged and inspected or replaced.
- All extension cords, including [zip cord-style extension cords](#), are not allowed. Purchase a power strip with a longer cord to ensure adequate reach.
- Do not overload or “daisy chain” or plug power strips together. Each strip must be plugged into an outlet on the wall.
- Plug your compact refrigerator or other appliances (where allowed) directly into an outlet on the wall.
- Kitchen appliances with a 30-inch or less supply cord must be used in kitchens, either in campus apartments or in the residence hall community kitchens). These include toasters, hot water kettles, rice cookers and coffee makers. Kitchen appliances are not allowed to be used in individual residence halls room but can be used in common area kitchens.
- Only use personal care appliances (hair dryers, straighteners, etc.) in the common bathrooms.
- Be sure building heaters and/or installed heaters are in good working condition with no leaks. Submit a maintenance request in your Housing Portal on MyCalPoly if repairs are needed.
- Space heaters and air conditioners are not permitted in any residence hall room. Fans that circulate air are allowed.
- Plug-in air fresheners are not permitted, as the liquid contained within them is flammable.

Cooking Safety

- Cook only in designated areas – cooking/using appliances is not permitted in residence hall rooms or apartment bedrooms.
- Keep metal, including aluminum foil out of microwaves.
- Turn stove handles in, over a counter so they’re not pointed out ready to tip hot contents on you or anyone else. Ouch!
- Never leave appliances unattended while cooking, including microwaves. If a fire breaks out in a microwave, keep the door shut and unplug the microwave. Leave the contents behind the shut door and call a staff member immediately.
- In the event of a [grease fire](#), cover it with a metal lid if you can do so safely. Use a fire extinguisher to put it out. Never try to put it out with water. Throwing water on a grease fire can cause burning grease to explode, which can make the fire spread and potentially burn you. It is dangerous to move a pan or pot of burning oil for the same reasons. Keep the item on the stovetop and call a staff member immediately.

Fire Response and Evacuation

- Keep fire sprinklers uncovered and free of any hanging items.
- Avoid tampering with or trying to cover your smoke alarm. Campus systems alert us of room numbers with tampered fire alarms.
- Do not use a fire extinguisher or pull fire alarms except in the event of a fire.
- Keep bedroom and apartment doors closed. Do not prop open fire doors in interior or exterior hallways. They provide important protection in the event of a fire.
- Evacuate buildings immediately when fire alarms sound. Go directly to the designated evacuation site and await further instructions.

There are many other things we can do to prevent fires, too. [Section 9 of University Housing’s Policies Guide](#) outlines our community fire and life safety regulations. These standards are in place to avoid injury or death during a fire or other emergency.