

Fatal Fires in Student Housing January 1, 2000 to April 30, 2005



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Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Fatal Firelog Compilation

This document contains information on fatal fires that have occurred in student housing. These incidents occurred during the period from January 2000 to April 30, 2005. **NOTE: One incident in 2005 was misidentified and was corrected on 4/26/05 (Vestal, New York).**

The information about these incidents is obtained primarily from media sources and were reported in the monthly electronic newsletter, Campus Firewatch (www.campus-firewatch.com). A number of different sources are used to obtain as comprehensive a report as is possible. The fatalities are predominantly students but do include several parents and children that have died in these fires.

Because the media does not necessarily report all fires as involving students, it is reasonable to assume that there are more incidents involving students than are compiled in this document.

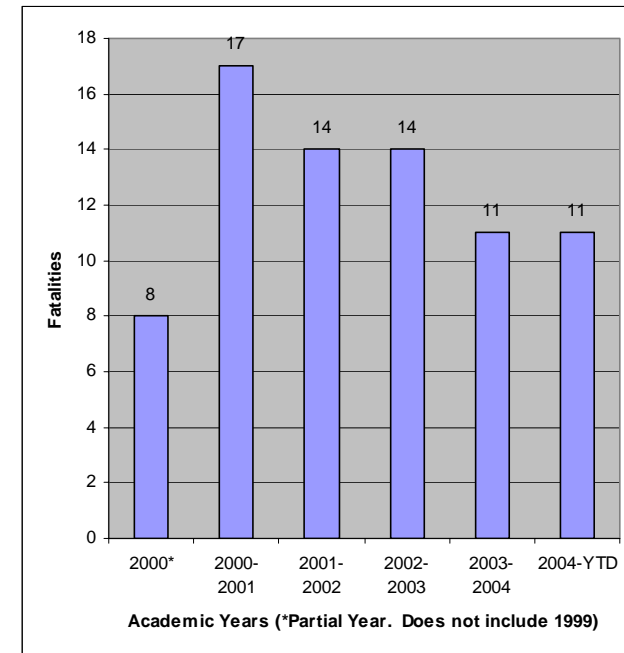
Incident Overviews (current as of 4/30/05)

Total number of fatalities (includes several parents and children of students):75

Occupancies	Fatalities (%)
Off-campus	57 (76%)
On-campus	10 (13%)
Greek	8 (11%)

State	Fatalities
Ohio	12
Indiana	7
North Carolina	7
Pennsylvania	6
California	4
Texas	4
Massachusetts	3
Minnesota	3
Mississippi	3
New Jersey	3
Virginia	3
West Virginia	3

State	Fatalities
Georgia	2
Kansas	2
Kentucky	2
New York	2
Washington DC	1
Iowa	1
Illinois	1
Louisiana	1
Michigan	1
Missouri	1
Rhode Island	1
Tennessee	1
Maryland	1



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The Center for Campus Fire Safety

The Center for Campus Fire Safety is a non-profit organization devoted to reducing the loss of life and property from fire. Through education and advocacy, the Center strives to provide information to students, parents, administrators, fire officials and legislators about the complex issues of campus fire safety. The Center's operations are guided by a Board of Advisors comprised of experts and advocates from across the country and representing a variety of backgrounds. Funding for the Center's operations is provided by a variety of organizations, including SimplexGrinnell, the National Electrical Manufacturer's Association and Underwriters Laboratories. More information is available at the Center's website at www.campusfire.org.

Ed Comeau, the director of the Center, is the publisher of Campus Firewatch, a monthly electronic newsletter focusing on campus fire safety. He is the former chief fire investigator of the National Fire Protection Association and has 25 years of experience in fire fighting, fire protection engineering and fire investigations.

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4/13/03	Ohio State University	Columbus	OH	5	Off-campus	<p>On Sunday, April 13, one of the worst campus fire tragedies in recent history occurred. Five students were killed in an early morning off-campus house fire.</p> <p>According to fire officials, the fire occurred in a three story, wood-frame building (two stories plus an occupied attic). The building was normally occupied by 13 students, but it is not clear as to how many people were in the building at the time of the fire. The fire broke out after a birthday party for one of the victims that had been held earlier in the evening.</p> <p>The fire department received the call from a passerby at 4:05 a.m. Upon arrival, they found heavy fire involvement on the first floor, which stopped crews from initially entering the building. After the fire was knocked down crews were able to enter the building. Three victims were rescued from the upper floors. Unfortunately, five people died in the fire from smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide poisoning. The coroner reported that it appeared they were attempting to escape from the fire when they were overcome.</p> <p>The building was equipped with single-station smoke alarms that were operating upon arrival of the fire department. It was not equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system.</p> <p>According to Battalion Chief Futz from the Columbus Division of Fire, the cause of the fire was determined to be incendiary, and the area of origin was on the exterior front porch of the house. At this time, no suspects have been arrested.</p> <p>This fire is the largest loss of life in an off-campus occupancy recorded by Campus Firewatch since we started tracking these fires in January 2000. It equals the number of students killed at the University of North Carolina fraternity fire in 1996.</p> <p>Of the five students killed, two were men from Ohio State University and three were women from Ohio University. The three women were members of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority</p> <p>Alan Schlessman, 21, sophomore, Ohio State University</p>

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						<p>Andrea Dennis, 20, junior, Ohio University</p> <p>Kyle Raulin, 20, Ohio State University</p> <p>Christine Wilson, 19, sophomore, Ohio University</p> <p>Erin DeMarco, 19, sophomore, Ohio University</p>
2/15/02	University of North Carolina-Greensboro	Greensboro	NC	4	Off-campus	<p>A fire in an off-campus apartment complex has claimed the lives of four occupants. According to fire officials, the fire was reported at 2:20 a.m. Upon arrival, fire department units observed a large fire extending from the rear through an open common area. Occupants of the building were leaping from balconies and climbing out of windows to escape the fire. Fire officials report that it took 40 minutes to bring the fire under control.</p> <p>The remains of four bodies were found in the debris. Two of the victims were students at the UNC-Greensboro. A woman has been charged with four counts of first-degree murder in the fire.</p> <p>The building was a three-story, wood frame apartment complex with a large open-air breezeway in the middle. The building was not equipped with a sprinkler system and was equipped with single-station smoke detectors that did not transmit to a monitoring station.</p>
4/10/05	Miami University	Oxford	OH	3	Off-campus	<p>Oxford, Ohio Fire Chief Len Endress reported that the fire on Sunday that killed three Miami University students in an off-campus two-story house was caused by smoking materials igniting a couch located on the first floor.</p> <p>Two occupants were found in upstairs rooms and one occupant was found at the base of the stairs on the first floor. All of the occupants, who were of legal age to drink alcohol, had elevated blood alcohol levels.</p> <p>There were a number of smoke alarms in the building. Several were found in the debris but were missing batteries, according to Endress. At least one occupant was alerted to the fire by the sound of a working smoke alarm.</p>

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						<p>Eight occupants were able to escape from the building by climbing out first story windows, climbing down a fire escape ladder from the second story and jumping from a second story window.</p> <p>The victims were:</p> <p>Julie Turnbull, 21, of Milford, Ohio Kathryn Welling, 21, of Bronxville, N.Y., Stephen Smith, 22, of Bethesda, Md</p>
8/27/04	University of Mississippi	Oxford	MS	3	Greek-Fraternity	<p>A fire broke out at approximately 4:30 a.m. and claimed the lives of three students. Twenty-one other residents were safely evacuated and the fire was declared under control at 12 p.m. Residents have been moved to alternative housing. The building lacked fire sprinklers. The cause of the fire remains under investigation. According to media reports, the house had undergone a routine fire inspection Aug. 17 that found problems including a lack of fire extinguishers in the kitchen area, paint stored in the basement and doors blocked with mattresses. No citation was issued to the fraternity.</p> <p>After an investigation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, it was announced that the cause of the fire was believed to be accidental, but that the exact cause of the fire could not be determined. The fire originated in a room on the first floor and was detected by an occupant from another room. He attempted to enter the room, which did not have a door, but was unable to do so. The fire spread to the rest of the structure through both the interior and exterior of the building.</p> <p>The victims were:</p> <p>William Townsend, 19, of Clarksdale, Mississippi Jordan Williams, 20, of Atlanta Howard Stone, 19, of Martinsville, Va</p>
5/22/04	Indiana University	Bloomington	IN	3	Off-Campus	<p>A fire in an off-campus house killed three students from Indiana University. There were four occupants in the house at the time of the fire, and the lone survivor was probably saved because the door to his bedroom was closed at the time of the fire.</p>

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						<p>One victim was found in the living room while two of the other victims were found on the second floor. According to press reports the fire department reported that the smoke detectors were working because they could be heard in the background of the 911 call that was made from a cell phone from inside of the building at 4:55 a.m.</p> <p>At press time, the cause of the fire had not been determined.</p> <p>The victims were Jacob Surface and Joseph Alexander, both 21 years old and Nicholas Habicht, 20. All three students grew up together in Greenwood, Indiana.</p>
9/20/03	University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	Minneapolis	MN	3	Off-campus	<p>A fire that started on the porch of a two-story, wood frame duplex claimed the lives of three students. The fire was reported at 4:51 a.m. The three students died of smoke inhalation. At press time, the investigation had not been completed and the fire department would not release any additional information. The three students that died were Amanda Speckien, Brian Heiden and Elizabeth Wencl.</p>
11/2/01	Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond	VA	3	Off-campus	<p>Investigators believe that the estranged husband who was killed in the fire started the fire that killed a couple and their two children. His wife was a third-year dental student at Virginia Commonwealth University.</p>
8/20/00	University of California	Berkeley	CA	3	Off-campus	<p>A 21-year-old senior from the University of California-Berkeley was moving into an off-campus house before the start of the fall semester and was being assisted by her parents. At 6:42 a.m., the fire department responded to a fire in the two-story house. Upon arrival, they reported heavy smoke and fire conditions on the first and second floor of the building.</p> <p>One occupant was rescued by neighbors from a second floor window before the arrival of the fire department. Unfortunately, the senior and her parents were unable to escape the fire and were killed. The cause of death, according to press reports, was smoke inhalation. The fire was reported to be started when moving boxes were placed on top of a furnace.</p> <p>Three other girls were also reported to be moving in, yet not all</p>

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						were in the house at the time of the fire. It was reported that fire officials could not find any evidence of a smoke detector in the house, which is required.
3/19/00	Bloomsburg University	Bloomsburg	PA	3	Greek-Fraternity	A fire in a fraternity killed three occupants. This fire occurred in a two story, wood frame building that was not equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system. There were six residents in the building at the time of the fire. Two were able to escape by jumping from upper story windows. This is the second fire in a fraternity that occurred in Bloomsburg. A fire in 1994 killed five students at another fraternity. Following this fire, a special ordinance was enacted that addressed off-campus housing. An inspector was hired who was responsible for enforcing this ordinance.
1/19/00	Seton Hall	East Orange	NJ	3	Residence Hall	On Wednesday, January 19, 2000, a fire occurred at approximately 4:30 a.m. in a common area on the third floor of Boland Hall at Seton Hall University. Three freshmen were killed in the fire that apparently was started in some upholstered furniture. A grand jury was empanelled to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident. As a direct result of this fire, New Jersey passed landmark legislation that required all dormitories and Greek housing be sprinklered within four years. Funding was also provided by the state for this program.
7/31/04	Texas A&M University	College Station	TX	2	Residence Hall-Family Housing	An explosion at 9:20 p.m. killed a four-year-old girl, and critically injured her mother and grandparents. One apartment was engulfed in flames, while surrounding apartments sustained light smoke damage. Firefighters extinguished the blaze in minutes. The explosion remains under investigation, but some residents reported smelling natural gas before the incident. Residents share gas and electricity in the building, which was built in 1959, so all fourteen residents were temporarily displaced from their homes. On August 2, as maintenance workers for the university worked to replace the natural gas lines for the site of the explosion, they struck another gas line, releasing gas into the air. Residents were

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						<p>evacuated again. No one was injured and the gas did not ignite.</p> <p>9/6/04</p> <p>The mother of a doctoral student succumbed to injuries she suffered on July 31, 2004 when the apartment where she was visiting her son exploded. In addition to the mother, Rabeya Chaundhury, the student's four year old daughter, Lamiya Zahin, died earlier from her injuries on August 2.</p>
2/18/03	Eastern Carolina University	Greenville	NC	2	Off-campus	<p>An off-campus apartment fire killed a 24-year-old male student and an 18 year-old female student. The fire occurred in a two-story apartment building with 10 apartments. The building was not equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system. The apartment units were equipped with single-station, hardwired smoke detectors (not interconnected). The smoke detector in the apartment of origin had been removed before the fire.</p> <p>The fire department received the call at 2:06 a.m. from the occupant of an adjacent apartment. The original call was for a gas odor investigation. Upon arrival, the fire department traced the odor to the second floor apartment. When they entered, they found smoke in the apartment and the sofa on fire. The fire department conducted a search operation and found the two victims in a rear bedroom area. According to fire officials it appears that they were trying to escape from the fire.</p> <p>The cause of the fire was careless disposal of smoking materials that ignited the sofa. The victims are Caroline Allen, 18, a freshman and Owen Carr, 24, a sophomore.</p>
9/30/01	Ivy Tech State College	Fort Wayne	IN	2	Off-campus	<p>A fire in an off-campus house killed a 29-year-old woman and her 15-year-old-son. The fire, which broke out at 3:30 a.m., was not considered to be suspicious. The mother was studying business at the Ivy Tech State College.</p>
7/29/01	Emporia State University	Emporia	KS	2	Off-campus	<p>An explosion in her apartment killed a 19-year old Emporia State University student and her 13-month-old son. Investigators have determined that the explosion was arson-related.</p>
5/19/01	Ohio	Athens	OH	2	Off-campus	<p>A 22-year old senior was killed in a house fire that was started in</p>

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	University					<p>an electrical strip. She was found in a bedroom by fire fighters. A second person, who was not a student, was seriously injured in this fire and subsequently died from his injuries six days later. The battery for the house's smoke detector had been removed.</p> <p>In an interview with Campus Firewatch, Chief Troxel reported that one of the occupants had walked down to the corner convenience store. By the time this person had walked back, the house was on fire. Upon arrival of the fire department, fire had extended out the front of the building.</p> <p>Fire fighters first found the female victim in the bedroom, and then found the male victim in the bathroom.</p> <p>There were three apartments in the building, one in the basement, one on the first floor with five occupants and one on the second floor. The occupants of the second floor apartment had gone home for the weekend.</p> <p>Four people have been killed in off-campus house fires in Ohio within the past six months.</p>
4/30/05	University of Maryland	College Park	MD	1	Off-campus	<p>A fire at 4:30 claimed the life of one University of Maryland student and critically injured another.</p> <p>According to officials, the fire started on the exterior porch of a house located one block from the University campus. It extended up the exterior and then into the interior of the building. There were six occupants at the time of the fire and four were able to escape safely. One individual on the second floor was forced to jump and was transported to an area burn center due to burn injuries, smoke inhalation and injuries sustained by the fall. He is currently listed in critical condition.</p> <p>Fire fighters arrived on the scene and located another individual on the second floor. He was removed from the building in respiratory arrest and transported to a nearby hospital where he died.</p> <p>The cause of the fire is under investigation at this time.</p>

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						<p>The building had been inspected several months prior to the fire and there were working smoke alarms. It is unknown if there were working smoke alarms at the time of the fire, and according to a fire official since the fire appeared to have started on the exterior, extended vertically and then into the building, the presence of smoke alarms may not have had a factor on the fire detection.</p>
4/26/05	Southern Adventist University	Collegedale	TN	1	Residence Hall	<p>Details pending</p>
4/24/05	Penn State	State College	PA	1	Off-campus	<p>At approximately 6:42 am, heavy smoke and flames were seen coming from the third floor of a house by two passing civilians who notified 911 and then entered the building to warn the occupants. Police officers joined in the evacuation but were unable to gain access to the third floor due to the heavy volume of fire. According to officials, there were approximately 12 people in the building with five of them on the third floor.</p> <p>Some of the occupants were rescued from a second floor rooftop by the police officers using a ladder provided by a neighbor, and all of the occupants were accounted for except for Raspanti. The investigation into the cause of the fire is continuing at this time, and it was reported that several of the smoke alarms were disabled or missing.</p> <p>The victim was:</p> <p>Christopher R. Raspanti, 21, of Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania,</p>
10/17/04	Georgetown University	Washington	DC	1	Off-Campus	<p>A senior in the business school died in a two-alarm fire in a rowhouse, where he lived in the basement. Firefighters responded to the blaze just after 9 a.m. Metal bars were welded to the basement's windows, exit doors were blocked, and the basement did not have smoke detectors. Faulty electrical wiring leading from the furnace was initially determined as the cause of the fire. However, during a subsequent investigation conducted several weeks after the initial one, the determination was that the area of origin was in the living space and a possible cause of the fire was thought to be either candles or smoking materials. The other five students who lived in the rowhouse escaped unharmed. Damages</p>

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						<p>are estimated at approximately \$35,000.</p> <p>This was the second electrical fire in the past month in the same block. The first, which severely damaged a rowhouse several doors down from this fire, started in the basement, and was caused by a malfunctioning switchbox.</p> <p>The victim was:</p> <p>Daniel Rigby</p>
8/19/04	Savannah College of Art and Design	Savannah	GA	1	Off-campus	<p>A college student died as the result of smoke inhalation due to a 3:30 a.m. fire at her home. Older construction may have contributed to spread of smoke and fire. A cigarette appears to be the cause of the fire.</p>
3/08/04	Iowa State University	Ames	IA	1	Off-campus	<p>Information was obtained by an interview with fire officials.</p> <p>A fire in a duplex killed Edgar Delpilar, 21, of Puerto Rico. The fire occurred at approximately 3:15 am and is believed to have been started by a candle.</p> <p>A smoke alarm in the basement alerted one of the occupants who woke to find smoke coming out of the other bedroom in the basement. The occupant of the room of origin had left at 6:00 pm, approximately 9 hours prior to the fire.</p> <p>Two calls were made to 911 from the occupants of the house, one of which was from the victim. When the fire department arrived on the scene there was heavy fire extending from the basement and first floor. The basement was completely involved upon arrival. The occupants of the house had broken out a window where the trapped victim was located, but they were unable to rescue him.</p>
10/18/03	Louisiana State University	Baton Rouge	LA	1	Off-campus	<p>A student was killed in an off-campus apartment fire. The fire department arrived on the scene at 4:56 am and reported that there was heavy smoke venting from the eaves and heavy fire visible at the front door and window. A resident who lived at the opposite end of the 10-unit complex was awakened by people banging on the doors and yelling.</p> <p>Kurt Latiolais was a senior at LSU.</p>

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9/22/03	West Virginia University		WV	1	Off-campus	A student died in a mobile home fire. His body was found when his roommates returned on Monday from a weekend trip. It is believed that the fire started in the sofa.
5/4/03	Western Kentucky University	Bowling Green	KY	1	Residence Hall	<p>A female student burned in a fire in her residence hall room died. The fire, which is considered incendiary, was controlled by the activation of a single sprinkler head in her room. The woman was found beaten, stabbed and burned in her room.</p> <p>Two men have been arrested and charged in the incident. According to press reports, the two men and the victim had all been attending a fraternity party the night before and had all been drinking.</p> <p>Both men were later acquitted.</p> <p>The victim was:</p> <p>Melissa Autry</p>
4/5/03	University of Massachusetts	Amherst	MA	1	Off-campus	<p>On Saturday, April 5 a fire broke out in an off-campus duplex, killing Katya Yerozolimsky, a 21-year-old junior from the University of Massachusetts.</p> <p>According to Fire Chief Keith Hoyle, a fire captain was driving by the house on his way to work when he spotted the early morning fire. He was unable to enter the unit that was on fire because of the volume of heat and smoke that was coming from the unit. He then went into the adjoining unit, awoke the sole occupant and called 911 to report the fire at 7:08 a.m.</p> <p>The wakened occupant went back into this bedroom, and the captain had to again remove him from the room. He made a third attempt to return to his bedroom when he was removed from the building.</p> <p>Fire crews arrived on the scene and then entered the basement of the building where three more people were sleeping. These occupants were wakened and removed from the building by the fire fighters.</p>

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						<p>Additional crews entered the floor where the fire was located and extinguished a relatively small couch fire. During operations the body of Yerozolimsky was found on the floor next to her bed. According to officials the cause of death was smoke inhalation.</p> <p>The Massachusetts State Fire Marshal's office conducted an investigation and determined that the cause of the fire was accidental, and most probably the improper disposal of smoking materials in the couch.</p> <p>The house was not equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system. In January, the landlord's insurance company had conducted an inspection of the property and there were operating smoke detectors located in the units. Fire officials report that there were no smoke detectors sounding upon their arrival, and that the smoke detector in the apartment of origin had been removed from the ceiling before the fire.</p>
3/11/03	Southeast Missouri State University	Cape Girardeau	MO	1	Off-campus	<p>A fire in an off-campus house killed a 23-year old student.</p> <p>The building was a two-story, wood-frame structure with a basement that housed five students. It was not sprinklered. It was equipped with a smoke alarm in the basement and the first floor, but the battery had been removed from the smoke alarm on the first floor.</p> <p>The fire was reported at 7:45 a.m. At the time of the fire there were five people in the house. A passerby observed the fire and pounded on the front door, alerting the occupants to the fire. Everyone was able to safely escape the fire except for the victim who was in a bedroom on the first floor. One of the occupants reported that he tried to go down the stairs from the second floor but was driven back and had to jump out a second-story window.</p> <p>Upon arrival the fire department observed that there was heavy fire in the rear of the structure. They made entry and located the victim on the floor in the back bedroom. The cause of death was reported to be smoke inhalation.</p> <p>The victim was Katrina Krumrie, 23, majoring in elementary</p>

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2/22/03	Allegheny College	Meadville	PA	1	Off-campus	<p>education. She was from Jackson, Missouri.</p> <p>A fatal fire occurred in an off-campus, three-story, wood frame house that had been converted into apartments. There were three apartments, one on each floor. There were single-station, battery operated smoke detectors in the apartments. There were no sprinklers.</p> <p>At the time of the fire there was one occupant in the second floor apartment and two on the third floor. It is unknown if there were occupants on the first floor. The first and second floor apartments were rented to students.</p> <p>According to fire officials, the fire started in the second floor apartment. Numerous calls were made to 911 reporting the fire at 1:42 a.m.</p> <p>Upon arrival, the fire department reported that the second and third stories were heavily involved in fire. Initially, an exterior blitz attack had to be made to knock down the fire and then fire crews were able to enter the building and conduct search and rescue operations and fire suppression. The victim was found in the second floor apartment, in the living room, approximately eight feet from the apartment door. It appeared that he had been attempting to escape.</p> <p>Following the fire smoke detectors were found in the apartment of origin. However, the batteries had been removed from them, rendering them inoperable. Fire officials interviewed the occupants and they reported that they did routinely remove the batteries because cooking activated the smoke alarms.</p> <p>Cause of the fire is inappropriate handling of combustibles, most likely a cigarette. Fire officials reported that alcohol was probably a factor in the fatality. Cause of death was asphyxiation.</p> <p>The victim, Raymond Tricomi, 21, was a senior. He was majoring in Theater and Communications Art.</p>
1/18/03	Tufts University	Medford	MA	1	Off-campus	<p>A fire in an off-campus apartment claimed the life of a 20-year-old junior, Wendy Carman, from Tufts University. The fire occurred in</p>

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						<p>a makeshift apartment that was located over a garage. According to reports, access to the loft was gained by climbing a set of stairs and then crawling through an opening into the apartment.</p> <p>The fire was reported by a passerby to the Medford Fire Department. Upon arrival, fire was showing out of the windows on the second floor of the building. The fire fighters attempted an interior attack but were forced back when the floor to the apartment collapsed into the garage space. The victim was found after the fire had been suppressed in the garage area.</p> <p>A smoke detector was found, but the battery was missing. It was reported that the occupant of the apartment did smoke.</p>
12/3/02	Indiana University	Bloomington	IN	1	Off-campus	<p>A graduate student died in an off-campus fire that was believed to be caused by careless disposal of smoking materials. The fire department was called to the apartment complex after a resident reported smelling something burning. Upon arrival, the fire department found a fire inside of the student's apartment and extinguished it. The 42-year-old male was found crouched inside of a closet. It is believed that he became disoriented because of the smoke.</p>
8/13/02	Michigan Tech University www.mtu.edu	Houghton	MI	1	Greek-Fraternity	<p>A fire in a three-story, wood frame fraternity has claimed the life of one student. The fire started in a stove in the kitchen on the first floor that had been left on in the Phi Kappa Theta fraternity. The grease in the hood was ignited and the fire spread upwards into the structure. In an interview with Chief Lightfoot from the Houghton Fire Department, he said the he did not believe that the hood was equipped with a suppression system.</p> <p>The building was equipped with a local fire alarm system that alerted the five occupants in the building. It was not equipped with a fire sprinkler system.</p> <p>The fire department was notified by a delivery person at the grocery store across the street at 6:09 a.m. Upon arrival at 6:14 a.m. the building was heavily involved in fire and the fire fighters were unable to make an interior attack. Floors were beginning to collapse at this point in time. The crews were advised that there may be victims inside, and later during the fire attack this was</p>

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						<p>confirmed.</p> <p>Four people were able to escape the building. The victim was found five feet from a window in his room, and the chief indicated that he had been attempting to escape.</p>
7/17/02	University of Rhode Island	Narragansett	RI	1	Off-campus	<p>A URI junior was killed in a fire that destroyed a house that she was renting for the summer.</p> <p>According to Captain Smith with the Narragansett Fire Department, the building where the fire occurred was a two-story duplex with one apartment over the other. The first floor was concrete and the second floor was wood frame. The apartment was equipped with a single-station, battery powered smoke detector, but it is not clear as to whether the smoke detector operated or not during the fire.</p> <p>One of the occupants of the house was awakened by the smell of smoke. When she opened her bedroom door she saw smoke in the living room with orange flames rolling over her head. She went to her bedroom window and climbed out and then went to the building next door to report the fire.</p> <p>At 4:31 a.m. the fire department received several calls reporting a working fire. Upon arrival of the first engine it was reported that there were flames coming out of all of the windows on the first floor. An attack was initiated, and it was known that there was one victim located in one of the bedrooms. Once the fire was knocked down, crews began search and rescue operations and located the victim at approximately 5:15 a.m.</p> <p>According to officials, the cause of the fire was smoking materials improperly disposed of in a couch in the living room. The cause of death was smoke inhalation.</p> <p>Both of the occupants were smokers, as well as the two visitors that had been over earlier in the evening.</p>
10/28/01	Catawba College	Salisbury	NC	1	Residence Hall	<p>A 20-year old student was killed in a Sunday morning fire at Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina.</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>According to Assistant Chief Fesperman, the fire occurred in a two-story, wood balloon-frame residence hall. The ground floor contained one suite and a laundry area, and the second story had two suites. Each suite was made up of four bedrooms, a common area and a bathroom.</p> <p>The building was not equipped with a fire sprinkler system. There were single station smoke detectors in the suite common areas.</p> <p>At approximately 1:30 a.m. a small fire occurred in a pile of leaves that was extinguished. About an hour later another fire occurred in a plastic trash bin in the laundry that was also manually extinguished. In both cases campus security was not aware of the fires until after they had been extinguished. The fire department was not notified of either fire.</p> <p>Approximately an hour after the laundry room fire the fire department received multiple calls from the students and campus security about a fire in one of the suites on the second floor. Upon arrival the fire department reported that one victim, who had escaped through the fire, was lying on the lawn in the front. His roommate had jumped out a window at the rear, dropping approximately 15 feet to the ground.</p> <p>The fire had started in the suite common area and gutted the common area and one bedroom.</p> <p>Prior to this fire, the fire department reported that the smoke detectors had been disabled. Who had disabled them and when is under investigation. The exact cause of death is unknown at this point, but the victim had suffered extensive burns.</p> <p>The college had not been holding fire drills in the year prior to this fire. As a result of the fire, they are now holding unannounced fire drills and will file sanctions against students that do not evacuate. Furthermore, they have changed their policy regarding notifying the fire department. The fire department is now notified of all fires, no matter how small.</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						The victim was: Andrew Grooms
9/1/01	University of Kentucky	Lexington	KY	1	Off-campus	A 19-year old student was killed in an off-campus apartment fire. The fire appeared to have started when combustibles, ignited by a stovetop burner, filled the apartment with smoke. The fire, according to press reports, was limited to the immediate area around the stove. The student died of smoke inhalation.
8/30/01	Anderson University	Anderson	IN	1	Off-campus	A 24-year old student was found dead after an early morning fire that destroyed a law office and a four-bedroom apartment. The landlord had ordered the student and his three roommates to leave by 8/30 because of wild parties. The other three roommates had already moved out.
8/18/01	University of West Virginia	Morgantown	WV	1	Off-campus	<p>A West Virginia University sophomore was killed in a two-story, off-campus apartment fire. There were seven people in the building at the time, and six were able to successfully evacuate the building and advised fire fighters that there was one person inside. The cause of the fire has not been determined at this time.</p> <p>In an interview with Campus Firewatch, Chief Fetty of the Morgantown Fire Department provided the following details.</p> <p>The building was a six bedroom, wood frame building. It was comprised of a basement that contained living quarters, a first floor and an occupied attic level. The building was built on a sloping grade, so the basement level was actually at ground level at the rear of the building.</p> <p>At the time of the fire there were seven occupants in the building.</p> <p>There were three smoke detectors in the building. The one in the basement was disconnected.</p> <p>The call came in at 5:20 a.m. from an occupant in the basement. The occupants of the room of origin were awakened by a smoke detector. They ran through the house alerting the other occupants and asked the occupant in the basement to call the fire department.</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>The students were just moving into the building for the school year. The victim did not normally occupy the attic room, but did on this particular evening. This led to some initial confusion as to whether he was in the building or not.</p> <p>The Morgantown Fire Department was on the scene by 5:23, and they reported it as a fully involved structure with victims trapped. Upon arrival, the occupants advised fire fighters that there was one victim still in the building.</p> <p>A fire fighter attempted to make an initial entry, but was forced back because of the intensity of the fire. A second fire fighter with a hoseline joined him, and they were able to gain access to the second floor where they found the victim. He was removed from the building and CPR was initiated. He was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.</p> <p>Three other occupants were transported to the hospital with injuries. Two were treated and released while one was held overnight.</p> <p>The room of origin was on the first floor, and the victim's bedroom was directly above it. The cause of the fire had not been determined at press time.</p> <p>This is the second off-campus fire fatality in Morgantown. Another student died in a fire on January 1, 2001.</p>
5/19/01	John Carroll University	Cleveland Heights	OH	1	Off-campus	<p>A senior was killed in a house fire that was started by a carelessly discarded cigarette following a party. In an interview with Campus Firewatch, Bob Broestl, fire warden with the Cleveland Heights Fire Department, reported that the occupants smelled something burning and checked the couch at 5:00 a.m. They were unable to find anything, and they went to bed.</p> <p>At 6:00 a.m. two of the students sleeping in the living room awoke to find the couch on fire. They ran upstairs to get a fire extinguisher, and by the time they returned the room was fully engulfed in fire. They ran back upstairs and the occupants then</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>had to escape by jumping out of second story windows. There were seven people in the building at the time of the fire.</p> <p>The victim was scheduled to graduate the next day.</p> <p>There have been a total of four people killed in off-campus house fires in Ohio in the past six months.</p>
5/1/01	University of Texas	Austin	TX	1	Off-campus (privately run residence hall)	<p>A student has been killed, and another critically injured, in an early morning fire. The fire occurred in an off-campus high-rise tower that housed 200 students from the university.</p> <p>According to fire officials, the fire occurred at 6:19 a.m. The fire department was notified of the fire by a telephone call from another resident of the building.</p> <p>Upon arrival, fire crews reported seeing fire coming from the window of a second story unit. They advanced hose lines into the building and found an injured victim in the hallway. Firefighters entered the unit that was on fire, extinguished the fire and found the victim.</p> <p>The building was a ten-story, privately owned dormitory that housed students from the University of Texas. There were approximately 200 students living in this particular tower, with a total of 600 students living in the entire complex. According to officials, there are a number of similar types of occupancies in the vicinity of the university.</p> <p>Following this fire, emergency legislation was filed at the state level that would mandate sprinklers in high-rise buildings that housed students.</p> <p>Officials determined that the fire was intentionally ignited by the deceased victim who had a blood alcohol level of 0.11. Officials also reported that the victim has been involved in at least two other fire-related incidents prior to the fatal fire.</p>
2/26/01	Binghamton University	Binghamton	NY	1	Off-campus	<p>The following information was obtained from press reports and provided by officials interviewed by Campus Firewatch</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>A fire started by a lamp killed a 23-year-old junior in an off-campus house. The building was a two-story, wood frame with six bedrooms. There were seven tenants living in the building, but officials did not know how many occupants were in the building at the time of the fire.</p> <p>Earlier in the evening the police had been called to the house because of a party.</p> <p>The fire department received a 911 call from the occupancy at 5:30 a.m. When they arrived, the smoke was so thick that initially they were not able to tell which building it was coming from. The incident commander was told that everyone had made it out of the building.</p> <p>Fire fighters entered the building, conducted a primary search and did not locate any victims. The fire had now extended to the attic. Fire fighters did a secondary search and located the victim in a bathtub on the second floor.</p> <p>According to press reports the victim had a blood alcohol level that would be classified as legally drunk.</p> <p>The fire started by a lamp in a room on the second floor and was able to work into the wall and travel vertically towards the room above.</p> <p>Fire officials reported that there were a number of disabled or missing smoke detectors in the occupancy. Furthermore, they believe that the occupants may have attempted to fight the fire because they found evidence of pots and pans in the vicinity of the fire. It is believed that there may have been a delay in notifying the fire department.</p>
1/30/01	University of California-Berkeley	Berkeley	CA	1	Off-campus	<p>A 23-year old student was killed in a fire in an off-campus house. Bradley Evans, who was a senior psychology major, did not live in the house but was sleeping there following a party the night before. Six other occupants were in the house at the time of the fire and were able to escape. One had to jump from a second story window, and four were treated at an area hospital and</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>released.</p> <p>This is the second fatal off-campus fire in Berkeley in five months. A fire in August, 2000 claimed the lives of another senior and her two parents.</p>
1/19/01	University of Georgia Law School	Athens	GA	1	Off-campus	<p>A fire in an off-campus house killed a 24 year old woman. Authorities have determined that she was murdered, and are treating the incident as arson.</p>
1/1/01	West Virginia University	Morgantown	WV	1	Off-campus	<p>The following information was obtained in an interview by Campus Firewatch with fire officials.</p> <p>A fire in an off-campus house has killed one student and left another man critically injured.</p> <p>The fire occurred in an off-campus house that had been converted into apartment units. There were three people living in the building, but one was not home at the time of the fire.</p> <p>There were two smoke detectors in the building. One was operational, but the smoke detector on the second floor, where the fatality was found, did not have a battery. The person that was critically injured was awakened by the operation of the smoke detector on the first floor.</p> <p>The fire department responded to the fire at 8:31 a.m. As soon as the first engine was pulling out of the station they could see heavy smoke and upgraded the response.</p> <p>Upon arrival the fire fighters attempted to rescue the trapped victim on the second floor. However, due to the heavy fire involvement they were not able to make access.</p> <p>The cause of the fire has been determined to be electrical.</p> <p>According to fire officials, they have been having a serious problem with student-related fire activity. In 2000 there were over 100 street fires set in the Sunnyside section of Morgantown, which is notorious for partying. Several of these fires have escalated into bonfires and into structure fires.</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

Sorted by number of fatalities



Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						The university has become involved in helping to curb this behavior. According to fire officials if a student is convicted of setting a fire they will be expelled. As a result of this and other efforts, the number of fires has been curbed.
12/10/00	University of Dayton	Dayton	OH	1	Residence Hall	<p>A fire in a house owned by the University of Dayton killed a student on Sunday, December 10. Austin Cohen, 21, of Loveland and a senior at the university, died in the fire. There were eight students living in the house at the time of the fire. According to reports, the residents had extinguished an earlier fire at the house. One of the occupants, a University of Dayton student, was later arrested and charged with involuntary manslaughter and arson.</p> <p>According to fire department officials, the fire alarm system was disconnected at the time of the fire.</p> <p>The building was a two-story, wood frame building that was owned by the University of Dayton. According to fire officials, the university was buying a number of properties to use for student housing.</p>
11/22/00	New York University	New York	NY	1	Off-campus	<p>A graduate student was killed in an apartment fire. Three candles at the foot of her bed that ignited her mattress started the fire. The woman, Helen Carnegie, 25, was found lying on the floor next to the bed. At the time of the press account, an autopsy had not been completed, but it was reported that she appeared to have died of smoke inhalation.</p> <p>According to Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen, there have been 239 fires started by candles this year. This fire was the 13th fatal candle fire, an increase of eight from the previous year.</p>
11/16/00	Lee College	Baytown	TX	1	Off-campus	<p>An off-campus house fire claimed the life of a 21-year-old student. The fire occurred in a house where there was no heat because it was being remodeled. The fire started in the back bedroom where the student was sleeping. His body was found in the dining room. There was no evidence of a space heater or smoke detector found.</p>
9/29/00	University of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	PA	1	Off-campus	<p>A student was killed in an off-campus house fire that was determined to be arson.</p>

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Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>The fire was reported at 6:36 a.m. to the Pittsburgh Fire Department.</p> <p>The fire was started on the second floor in the apartment by the ex-boyfriend of the occupant, who was not home at the time of the fire. It was reported that there were eight people in the three-story building at the time of the fire. All, except for the student on the third floor, were able to escape from the building. The cause of death for the occupant on the third floor was smoke inhalation.</p> <p>The building was equipped with smoke detectors, some of which were hardwired and some were single-station, battery-powered. Officials reported that some were not operational at the time of the fire, although it is unknown which ones did not operate.</p>
6/8/00	Millikin University	Decatur	IL	1	Greek-Fraternity	<p>A fire occurred in an occupied fraternity at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. The fire claimed the life of one male student.</p> <p>The building where the fire occurred was a three-story wood frame structure with a brick veneer. It was about 60 to 70 years old, with a two-story addition that was built in the late 1960's. The structure had originally been built as a house and was converted into a fraternity sometime in the past.</p> <p>The building was not equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system.</p> <p>The building was equipped with single station, battery-powered smoke detectors in each of the residence rooms. These detectors were replaced every year.</p> <p>There was a fire alarm system in the building that would only sound a local alarm. It was equipped with detection in the common areas and not in the individual rooms. It was reported that at the time of the fire the alarm system was functional, but the audible devices had been silenced.</p> <p>At the time of the fire, there were 20 people in the building.</p> <p>It was reported that there were two means of egress throughout</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

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Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>the structure. One was an interior stairwell that extended to the third floor. Another interior stairway extended two floors. The second means of egress on the third floor was onto an exterior deck where an exit ladder was located.</p> <p>The stair that extended to the third floor was connected to a common room on the third floor, which was the area of origin for the fire. There was a door between the stairway and the common room, but it was open at the time of the fire. The door, which was a metal, fire-rated door, was not equipped with an automatic door closer.</p> <p>There were four residence rooms on the third floor. Two of the rooms were immediately off the common area where the fire occurred. One of the rooms was equipped with a hollow-core door between it and the common room, while the other had a solid wood door.</p> <p>At the time of the fire, there were two people in two separate rooms off the common room on the third floor. Normally, there would be five occupants living in this area.</p> <p>The fire started in an upholstered chair in the common room. The cause of the fire is officially undetermined, but fire officials speculated that it might have been started by careless disposal of smoking materials. The chair was located approximately eight feet from the room equipped with the hollow core door.</p> <p>The fire extended from the chair and involved the contents in the common room, blocking any possibility of egress from the two residence rooms.</p> <p>A passerby, who notified the fire department, detected the fire. However, this person did not know the exact address. He/she pounded on the front door of the fraternity to waken the occupants, and then was able to notify the fire department of the correct address.</p> <p>The occupant in the room equipped with the solid wood door was</p>

Fatal fires in student housing

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Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Synopsis
						<p>awakened when the smoke detector in his room activated. Using a cellular telephone, he contacted the fire department and was in constant contact until the fire fighters rescued him.</p> <p>It is unclear what actions the person in the room with the hollow-core door took. He normally slept in the top bunk, and he was found out of bed, approximately six feet into the room. The door between the residence room and the common room failed during the fire, letting smoke and heat extend into the residence room. According to the fire department, the fire was limited to the common room and did not extend into the residence room where the fatality occurred.</p> <p>The cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.</p>
4/10/00	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Cambridge	MA	1	Residence Hall	<p>Officials have ruled "self-inflicted thermal burns," according to her death certificate, caused the fire that occurred on April 10, 2000, that killed a female student. The student died on April 14, 2000. The fire occurred in her dormitory room at MIT.</p>

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