



Office of the University Auditor

AUDIT GUIDANCE - FIRE SAFETY AT STUDENT HOUSING FACILITIES

Updated: April 25, 2018

This Audit Guidance, along with Federal and State laws, regulations, and SUNY guidelines, should be used to ensure the Campus' FSP is adequate.

Useful Links:

Federal & SUNY Compliance Regulations for Fire Safety:
[Higher Education Opportunity Act Section. 488](#)

[CFR Title 34-Education: Part 668.49-Institutional Fire Safety Policies & Fire Statistics](#)

[SUNY Policy #3451: Minimum Living Standards](#)

Helpful Guide for Reporting Requirements (Fire Log & FSR):
[The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting](#)

State Law on Fire Drill Requirements:
[NYS Education Law Section: 807-Fire Drills](#)

State Guidelines for Fire Safety Training:
[NYS Campus Fire Safety Training Guidelines](#)

State Law on Fire Inspection at Colleges:
[NYS Education Law Section: 807B-College Fire Inspections](#)

Overview

The health and safety of our campus community is of paramount importance. A Campus' Fire Safety Program (FSP) should encompass safety systems inspection and testing; fire safety training; written policies and procedures; quality assurance review; recordkeeping; and reporting. While this document includes recommendations relating to these areas, they are not comprehensive and do not address all requirements but rather represent key operational activities and controls.

Audit Guidance

Fire Safety Systems Inspection and Testing

Campuses should:

- Document that all fire safety systems and equipment are inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with manufacturer requirements and the New York State (NYS) Fire Code.
- Ensure individuals performing the inspections, testing, and maintenance are licensed and certified.
- Ensure that any third party vendor inspection and testing reports are comprehensive, consistent, and accurate.
- Develop a process for tracking violations and repairs of fire safety systems and equipment to include the following:
 - Date and nature of violations;
 - Responsible individuals for correcting the violations;
 - Description and date the corrections/repairs were completed; and
 - Documentation maintained in accordance with applicable requirements.

Fire Safety Training and Awareness

Campuses should:

- Ensure all students and employees associated with student housing facilities are annually trained on fire safety.
- Ensure all required elements of the NYS Campus Fire Safety Training Guidelines are included in the campus fire safety training program and materials.
- Develop a process to track attendance at the fire safety training sessions for students and employees and maintain the attendance documentation.
- Ensure the campus conducts four fire drills per year in accordance with the NYS Education Law Section 807 for each occupied student housing facility.

Policies, Procedures, and Quality Assurance Review

Campuses should develop:

- Formal comprehensive policies and procedures that address compiling data; recordkeeping; reporting; quality assurance review; retaining records; and inspection, testing, and maintenance of fire safety systems for the campus FSP.
- A quality assurance review process that helps to ensure all required data elements and components are complete and accurate for all records and reporting.

Did you know that SUNY System Administration has an office to help with your fire safety efforts? Check them out at: [Environmental Health & Safety](#)

Contact OUA with any questions, requests for an audit, or additional information:

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Recordkeeping

Campuses should ensure:

- The campus community has access to the Fire Log and is informed of its location and availability.
- All reportable fires are recorded in the Fire Log within two business days of notification.
- The following required data elements are included in the campus Fire Log:
 - Date the fire was reported to a campus official;
 - Date and time of the fire, consistently using the most accurate data source to populate the date and time data elements;
 - Description of the nature of the fire that allows the reader to know what type of fire occurred (For example, state “a bulletin board was set on fire” in place of “arson”); and
 - General location of the fire.

Reporting in the Annual Fire Safety Report

Campuses should ensure the following are included in the Annual Fire Safety Report (FSR):

- Descriptions of each student housing facility fire safety system;
- Number of fire drills held during the previous calendar year;
- Evacuation procedures;
- Policies regarding fire safety education and training programs for students and employees;
- Policies on portable electrical appliances, smoking, and open flames in student housing facilities;
- Entire policies and procedures as it is not sufficient to simply state their titles, state that policies and procedures exist, or utilize links or cross referencing materials as the sole source;
- A list of individuals or organizations that a fire should be reported to;
- Description of future improvements in fire safety, if any, and why the improvements are necessary (It is not compliant to simply state that the Campus has plans for improvements; likewise, if there are no plans, then it must be stated); and
- The three most recent calendar years of fire statistics for which data is available (For example, the 2018 FSR must include fire statistics for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017). In addition, the fire statistics section should include all of the following data elements for each student housing facility:
 - List of each student housing facility, including name and street address, regardless of the number of fires. If no fires occurred in the facility, simply state there were no reported fires for that facility;
 - Number of fires and the cause of each fire;
 - Number of individuals who received fire-related injuries that resulted in treatment at a medical facility;
 - Number of deaths related to a fire; and
 - Value of property damage caused by a fire that consistently use either the ranges provided by the Federal Department of Education (DOE) or actual amounts.