



# THE EHS CONNECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2018

## OFPC INSPECTION COMING IN FEBRUARY

Spencer Slayton from the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) will begin conducting SUNY Oswego's Annual Campus Inspection on February 26th. Every structure on campus will be inspected to identify fire safety issues such as excessive clutter and improper use of extension cords. Please have your office area/work area/student room maintained in a fire safe condition and clear of debris.

### PRE-INSPECTION WALK THROUGH TIPS

- Remove all Extension Cords and replace them with Power Strips with Over Current Protection Breakers.
- Extension Cords not being used shall be disconnected from the outlet and properly coiled up. No Power Strips can be plugged into another Power Strip or Extension Cord. Device used must be plugged directly into an outlet.
- Repair/Replace Frayed Electric Cords and have any Junction Boxes or Electrical Covers replaced so that connections and wires are not exposed.
- Have any Junction Boxes or Electrical Covers replaced so that connections and wires are not exposed.
- Labeled Fire Doors cannot be propped open. Remove any prop open devices.
- Properly secure any Gas Cylinders to prevent them from falling over by using Chain and/or Straps to a fixed point.
- Combustible Storage cannot be within 18 inches in rooms that are protected by Sprinklers and 24 inches without sprinklers.
- Check Flame Retardant requirements for Curtains/Drapes in Assembly Spaces of 50 or more people and Lab Spaces.
- Ensure that all Hallways and Stairwells are free of obstructions-especially Combustible Material Storage.
- Ensure that all Exit Signs are Illuminated and in Good Condition.
- Ensure that All Ceiling Tiles are in place and not broken.
- Ensure that all Fire and Life Safety equipment is accessible and not obstructed.
- Maintain Unobstructed Exits and Egress.

### Annual OFPC Fire Inspection Top 10 Cited Violations

- Improper Use of Extension Cords
- Swinging Fire Doors Do Not Close & Latch
- Obstructed Means of Egress Including Snow & Ice
- Excessive & Unsafe Accumulation of Combustible Storage
- General Electrical Hazards-Frayed Cords, Damaged Outlets, Etc.
- Extinguishers Improperly Installed and Maintained
- Propped Open Fire Doors
- Fire Resistance Rating Not Maintained
- Excess Combustible Storage in Mechanical Rooms
- Illegal Power Taps to Outlets, Electrical

The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) was originally established shortly after World War II as the Division of Safety in the state Office for Local Government.

In 2010 the Office of Fire Prevention and Control was merged into the newly created Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES). This merger brought together several state offices which all provide public protection services; collectively under one agency these offices together produce synergy resulting in effective and efficient collaboration and coordination benefiting emergency services, citizens and businesses throughout New York State. OFPC's main goal is the effective and efficient delivery of essential fire and life safety protection to all New Yorkers.

Among its many other tasks, OFPC inspects over 25,000 buildings-including every building on the SUNY Oswego Campus-annually.

If you have ANY questions or concerns about the upcoming OFPC inspection please feel free to contact SUNY Oswego Fire Marshal Ken Ayhens at x3156 or [kenneth.ayhens@oswego.edu](mailto:kenneth.ayhens@oswego.edu)

# SMOKE AND FIRE DOORS



Smoke doors and fire doors create a seal that provides protection from the deadly effects of smoke and flames during a fire. Smoke doors block smoke and other combustible products, while fire doors stop flames by compartmentalizing. Many public buildings and apartment complexes have fire or smoke doors for protection in an emergency.

**IDENTIFICATION** Fire doors and smoke doors are easily identified, as they are required to be clearly marked with signage. Signs will let you know the purpose of the door and how it will protect you during an emergency. You can also identify the door based on the material used to make it. Smoke doors are generally made from wood, steel, or aluminum. Many have glass that meets specific standards. Fire doors are made from steel, and although they can contain specially manufactured glass, they are generally solid.

**PROTECTION** Fire doors are designed to protect you from flames, compartmentalizing fire for between 30 and 120 minutes. Special fire-resistant seals sit between the door and the door frame, eliminating gaps that would allow the passage of flames. Although some have automatic closing devices, most fire doors remain closed so they work properly in an emergency. Most fire doors also protect from the harmful effects of smoke. Smoke doors contain special smoke seals that block smoke in the event of a fire, however they are not designed to protect from flames. Smoke doors operate just like a normal door, although many have special closing mechanisms.

**FIRE AND SMOKE DOORS CAN'T PROTECT YOU IF THEY ARE HELD OPEN OR DO NOT CLOSE PROPERLY!** All the protection smoke and fire doors have to offer in time of fire is useless if the doors are not closed. Designed to contain smoke and fire—sometimes automatically these doors help provide occupants time to escape. On average, more than 5000 violations related to obstructed, damaged, or compromised fire doors are identified on college campuses in New York State each year.

## OFFICE SAFETY & GOOD HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES

Many office accidents are caused by poor housekeeping practices. By keeping the office both neat and clean, you can eliminate most slipping, tripping, and falling hazards.

### OTHER GOOD HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- ◆ Ensure that office lighting is adequate and available. Request that burned out light bulbs are replaced.
- ◆ Ensure that electrical cords and phone cords do not cross walkways or otherwise pose a tripping hazard. If you cannot move a cord, have a new outlet installed or secure the cord to the floor with cord covering strips. Do not tape cords down or run them underneath carpet.
- ◆ Report or repair tripping hazards such as defective tiles, boards, or carpet immediately.
- ◆ Clean spills and pick up fallen debris immediately. Even a loose pencil could cause a serious falling injury.
- ◆ Keep office equipment, facilities, and machines in good condition.
- ◆ Store items in an approved storage space. Take care to not stack boxes too high. Ensure that boxes are clearly labeled with their contents.

### FILE CABINETS AND SHELVES

- ◆ Because file cabinets and shelves tend to support heavy loads, treat them with special care.
- ◆ Follow these safety guidelines for file cabinets:
  - ⇒ Secure file cabinets that are not weighted at the bottom. Have them either bolted to the floor or to the wall.
  - ⇒ Do not block ventilation grates with file cabinets.
  - ⇒ Ensure that file cabinet drawers cannot easily be pulled clear of the cabinet.
  - ⇒ Open only one drawer at a time to keep the cabinet from toppling.
  - ⇒ Close drawers when they are not in use.
  - ⇒ Do not place heavy objects on top of cabinets. Be aware that anything on top of a cabinet may fall off if a drawer is opened suddenly.
  - ⇒ Close drawers slowly using the handle to avoid pinched fingers.
  - ⇒ Keep the bottom drawer full. This will help stabilize the entire cabinet.

## CHECK YOUR LAMPS-DON'T EXCEED THE MAXIMUM WATTAGE!

It only takes on improperly installed lamp in your light fixture to cause a fire. All too often we disregard the manufacturer's instructions and install lamps in our fixtures that exceed the maximum rated wattage. While this practice might be convenient, it is most certainly a recipe for disaster. OFPC fire and life safety inspections have indicated that this is occurring quite frequently on campuses across the state in student residence halls and business offices.

When the maximum wattage is exceeded the excessive heat generated can easily melt the shade or degrade the wiring. If this condition goes undetected a fire can result. When replacing a lamp in your fixture it is important to locate the label or consult the instruction manual to prevent this from occurring. CFL's have become a popular choice for replacing the incandescent lamp but do have some limitations. Please check the rating of the CFL to be sure it is compatible with your light fixture.

# SMOKE ALARMS

If you have a fire, smoke alarms can cut nearly in half your risk of dying in a fire. Smoke alarms sense abnormal amounts of smoke or invisible combustion gases in the air. They can detect both smoldering and flaming fires.



**IN NEW HOMES:** The National Fire Alarm Code (NFPA 72) requires hard-wired, interconnected smoke alarms with battery back-up on every level of the home, outside each sleeping area, and inside each bedroom. Alarms must be wired together so that if one sounds, they all sound.

**IN EXISTING HOMES:** If smoke alarms are not already in place, at a minimum install them on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area. If a fire occurs inside a bedroom, dangerous gases can cause heavier sleep. For the best protection, install interconnected smoke alarms in each bedroom and throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.

To prevent nuisance alarms, vacuum cobwebs and dust from your smoke alarms monthly. Never disable a smoke alarm, even if you experience nuisance alarms while cooking or showering. Instead, use the alarm's "hush" button. If nuisance alarms are a persistent problem, look for a different type of smoke alarm and ensure they are installed in correct areas in the home.

Use the test button to test your smoke alarms at least monthly. The test feature tests all electronic functions and is safer than testing with a controlled fire (matches, lighters, cigarettes).

If the manufacturer's instructions permit the use of an aerosol smoke product for testing the smoke alarm, choose one that has been examined and tested by a third-party product testing laboratory, and use it in accordance with the product instructions.

If you have battery-powered smoke alarms, replace the batteries at least once a year. Some agencies recommend that you replace batteries when the time changes from standard to daylight savings each spring and then back again in the fall. "Change your clock, change your batteries." Replacing batteries this often will not hurt, but fresh batteries typically last at least a year, so more frequent replacement is not necessary unless the smoke alarm begins to chirp.

Replace the batteries in your carbon monoxide (CO) alarms at the same time you replace your smoke alarm batteries.

Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years. This is the recommendation of the National Fire Protection Association and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Smoke alarms become less sensitive over time.

Be sure to install smoke alarms in areas where pets are and in other buildings that house animals where humans can hear them.

## WHAT'S THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF FIRES ON CAMPUS???

### COOKING!

Cooking related fires are more frequent on campus than those caused by any other source. Yet they can be easily prevented. Several straightforward and easily implemented steps can be taken by individuals to prevent cooking-related fires and protect themselves from injury should a cooking fire occur. Care should be taken when cooking with oil, butter, or other greasy foods that are highly flammable and can easily splatter or spill from pots and pans. Do not attempt to extinguish grease based fires with water as it reacts violently when poured on hot grease or oil. Small grease fires can be extinguished by placing a cover on the pan or using a fire extinguisher.

Inattention is the leading cause of kitchen fires. Never leave your cooking unattended, whether it be to leave the room, answer the phone, or chat with others. In addition, always remember to turn your burner off when the food is done.



## TO SURVIVE A FIRE!!!

- Never ignore a fire alarm. Escape every time. This one may be the real thing! That sound and your quick action may save your life.
- Never tamper with fire alarms or detectors. The early notification they provide may literally mean the difference between your life and death.
- Never waste time looking for anything you want to take with you. You have no time to do anything but escape.
- Never go back in. After you have escaped, stay out! There is nothing inside worth dying for.

# JANUARY WORD SEARCH

For a chance to win a cool prize, complete the Word Search and send it via e-mail to [lisa.drake@oswego.edu](mailto:lisa.drake@oswego.edu) OR through Campus Mail: Lisa Drake, 110 Lee Hall. Make sure to put your name on it! The winner for December was Sue Witmer. Look for: OFPC Inspection, Fire Safety, Clutter, Debris, Extension Cords, Power Strips, Junction Boxes, Fire Doors, Combustible, Exit Signs, Ceiling Tiles, Extinguishers, Smoke, Flames, Escape, Housekeeping, Maximum Wattage, Lamp, Smoke Alarm, Batteries, Cooking, Inattention, Kitchen, Survive, Detector

O	K	L	H	O	U	S	E	K	E	E	P	I	N	G	J	I	O	P	E	W	C
F	G	O	F	F	G	H	I	P	E	C	T	Y	U	I	P	M	F	R	U	S	H
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MAKE SURE YOUR COMPANION ANIMAL HAS A WARM PLACE TO SLEEP, OFF THE FLOOR AND AWAY FROM ALL DRAFTS. A COZY DOG OR CAT BED WITH A WARM BLANKET OR PILLOW IS PERFECT.

## DUTCHISM FOR JANUARY

### Ocean

The wonder of a wave,  
 Ever rising and falling,  
 A moment of movement.  
 Going onward, onward  
 To rest upon a shore  
 And then recede to live no more.