Fire Risk Assessment for Students

Sadly, UCEAP suffered a fire tragedy involving a UCEAP student in Paris, Jasmine Jahanshahi. She died in April 2011 in a building fire in Paris. The fire, in the apartment she was visiting, also killed four other international students and injured 57, some of them severely. Jasmine was 20. Empower yourself and others by adopting fire-safety habits and education. Know about fire safety in your host country. Be fire safety aware. Fire safety is a shared responsibility between you and the landlord.

A fire risk assessment is an organized and careful look at your room, building, classroom, etc., the activities carried out there (sleeping, cooking, studying, etc.), and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to you and others. In some countries, you have rights as a tenant when it comes to fire prevention. Inform yourself. Your landlord should make you’re your accommodation meets fire safety standards. They also need to share emergency and evacuation plans. They must comply with required fire risk assessments and share it with you. Ask for it.

The goals of the fire risk assessment are to: 1) identify the hazards; 2) reduce the risks of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably possible; 3) decide what fire precautions are necessary to keep yourself, and others, safe if a fire does start.

4 Steps of a Fire Risk Assessment

**Step 1** Identify fire hazards
- Sources of ignition: candles, cigarettes, etc.
- Sources of fuel: anything that can burn
- Sources of oxygen: air; oxidizing substances

*What you should do:* Check your premises.
Have you found anything that could start a fire? What could burn? Keep sources of ignition and fuel apart. Think: Carelessly discarded cigarettes and other smoking materials are a major cause of fire.

**Step 2** Identify people at risk
- You and those around you

*What you should do:* Everyone is at risk if there is a fire. Who could be especially at risk? If you have a roommate, talk about fire safety. If your roommate has a disability, know how you can help.

**Step 3** Evaluate and act
- Remove, reduce and protect from risk
- Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring and the fire risk to you and others
- Remove or reduce fire hazards (e.g., overloaded electrical sockets, never use a space heater to dry clothes)

*What you should do:* Think: What are the risks of a fire starting? Are there two exits from your room? How can you avoid accidental fires? Are there smoke detector and alarms?

**Step 4** Record, plan, practice
- Do you have a workable smoke alarm? If there is not, do you have a portable smoke alarm, and do you know where to place it? A fire extinguisher (one size doesn’t fit all)? Do you know how to use it? A fire alarm that you test regularly? An escape ladder? Know your escape plan, with two ways to get out? Talk to roommates/landlords; visit http://www.firesafetyfoundation.org/education/make-a-plan.html

*What you should do:* How will you know there is a fire? Do you have a plan to warn others? Have you planned escape routes, making sure that you will be able to safely find your way out, even at night if necessary? Practice your plan.

Practice, practice, practice