

QuickSheet

Preventing False Alarms

Introduction

False alarms are disruptive to the teaching and research mission of the university and contribute to a dangerous complacency in occupants, who may be slower to evacuate in an actual emergency. There are a number of safeguards that can prevent or lessen the number of false alarms. This quick sheet helps with the prevention of false alarms in office, residential and teaching environments.

Cooking

Unattended and improper cooking is the number one cause of false alarms on campus. Here are some tips to remember:

- Keep an eye on your food while cooking, even in the microwave. A number of incidents have occurred when the timer was set incorrectly.
- Keep cooking equipment clean. Remove debris and clean up spills prior to reusing toasters, microwaves, stoves and ovens.
- Remember to turn on fans and hood ventilation systems when available.
- Look for smoke detectors before placing moveable cooking equipment such as toasters, popcorn machines, hot plates and waffle irons. Locate these appliances as far away from detectors as possible.
- **NEVER** pour water on a grease fire.

Smoke and Fog Machines

Machines used for special effects are likely to activate smoke detectors and require careful coordination. Contact EHS at 910.521.6792 if you plan to use such devices.

Negligent Activations

Manual fire alarm pull stations can be used in an emergency to activate the fire alarm system and evacuate a building. However, sometimes these pull stations are activated when there is no emergency as a prank or an honest mistake.

Per the [UNC Pembroke Miscellaneous Fee Schedule](#), there will be a \$250 fee for any negligent activity that leads to the activation of a fire alarm in any campus building.

Construction and Maintenance

Activities such as painting, power washing, and other tasks that produce dust can also cause false alarms. Contact EHS at 910.521.6792 for information on prevention of false alarms during construction and building maintenance.

