Fire Services

Summary/Purpose: To provide guidance to the University Community on Fire Services and information on building inspections, fire drills, Greek House closures for violations, and general fire safety issues.

GENERAL

Facilities Management manages University Fire Services. University Fire Inspectors work under the authority of the State Fire Marshal’s Office. University Fire Services will inspect all Academic Buildings, conduct fire drills at Residential Buildings and Greek houses. Auxiliary Services (Student Housing, Athletics) and Greek Organizations are responsible for maintenance and repair costs of their facilities’ fire and alarm systems. Facilities Management Fire Services will provide, as a service, periodic scheduled inspections and training with Auxiliary and Greek organizations. Fire Services will conduct training as requested, assist in determining fire organization and cause involving University owned property and advise on issues regarding fire safety.

Enforcement of any policies, standards or fire codes will be conducted by University Administration and/or the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

FIRE FIGHTING SERVICES

On the University of Mississippi campus, firefighting services are contracted with the City of Oxford.

RESPONSIBILITY OF BUILDING OCCUPANTS IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

All occupants are required to leave the building when a fire alarm sounds or during a fire drill. Occupants evacuating a building should not use elevators. Occupants should use the stairwells. No one should re-enter the building until authorized to do so by fire officials. Once out of the building, report the fire location by dialing 911 or by notifying University Police by dialing 662-915-7234 on a cell phone or by using a phone in another building. Malicious tampering with building fire alarms, fire protection systems or fire extinguishers is prohibited. Violators are subject to criminal prosecution.

FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

University Fire Inspectors will conduct fire safety inspections on Academic, Auxiliary and Athletic buildings once a year. Inspections at UM Housing Facilities and Greek houses are conducted once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester. Any violations of the University Policy on Fire Safety, International Fire Code or of the National Fire Protection Association Codes and Standards, found at the time of inspection, will be documented and reported to the appropriate individual(s) for correction.

Greek House Corporations are responsible for correcting deficiencies within their respective houses and maintaining current certification of fire alarm and sprinkler systems to meet existing state laws, university policies and fire codes.

If the Fire Inspectors find any violation that they believe represents a danger to life and limb, they may advise that the building be vacated and closed until the violation is corrected. In some cases, the Fire Inspectors may determine that posting a “Fire Watch” may be an acceptable alternative to closing a building.
FIRE DRILLS

Fire Drills will be conducted once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester for all residential buildings and Greek houses.

Fire Drills will be conducted at any other building upon written request by the respective deans/chairs/directors/building mayors.
CLOSING GREEK HOUSES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE FIRE CODE

Under state law, the Mississippi State Fire Marshal and his authorized deputies, including those deputized fire inspectors (“Fire Inspectors”) in the Physical Plant Department, are authorized to enforce the fire code in fraternity and sorority houses (“Houses”) located on state property. In an emergency situation, the Fire Inspectors may order the vacating and closing of Houses in order to protect the lives of students living in the House. The following procedures will be followed when closing Houses.

At the beginning of August every year, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Office of the Dean of Students shall supply the Physical Plant with the following information for each fraternity and sorority on campus:

- Name of fraternity
- Name and contact information for the president of the fraternity (including phone number, fax number, e-mail and address, if applicable)
- Name and contact information for the president of the house corporation of the fraternity (including phone number, fax number, e-mail and address)
- Name and contact information for the alumnus/faculty advisor for the fraternity

The Office of the Dean of Students will update this information with the Physical Plant any time this information changes.

Physical Plant Fire Inspectors may inspect the Houses at any time. These visits shall include both scheduled and unscheduled visits.

Recurring violations detected during subsequent inspections may be reported to the Dean of Students Office for further action. These violations will be dealt with pursuant to the policies and procedures of the Student Judicial Office, including, but not limited to, bringing charges against an organization or individual for disregard of university authority.

If the Fire Inspectors find any violation that they believe represents a danger to life and limb, they may order that the House be vacated and closed until the violation is corrected. If the House is to be closed, the following steps will be followed:

The Fire Inspectors shall inform the house director and any individuals present in the common living areas of the House that it is to be vacated by 6:00 p.m. the same day (or another reasonable time in accordance with the danger present). The Fire Inspectors shall post a sign on the door of the House stating:
WARNING: This House is Closed Until Further Notice by Order of the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Anyone Present Upon this Property After [TIME] on [DATE] May Be Arrested for Trespassing.

The Fire Inspectors shall immediately inform the following individuals or entities that (i) the House is closed, (ii) the reason the House is closed and what corrections must be made before the house is reoccupied, and (iii) that anyone found inside the House after the stated time will be subject to arrest for trespassing.

(i) The Office of the Dean of Students (who will inform the national office for the fraternity or sorority)
(ii) The president of the fraternity
(iii) The president of the house corporation
(iv) The alumnus/faculty advisor of the fraternity
(v) The University Police Department
(vi) The Office of the University Attorney
(vii) The Office of the State Fire Marshal (by phone or fax)

A copy of the written notice/administrative order provided to the fraternity and the house corporation (stating why the House is closed and that anyone inside the House may be arrested for trespassing) shall be forwarded to the University Police Department (UPD).

If the Fire Inspectors have reason to believe that the House is not being vacated according to their orders, then they may enter the House to determine if anyone is present on the property. Officers of the University Police Department may accompany the Fire Inspectors at their request. Should the Fire Inspectors find individuals on the property after the no trespassing order is in effect, they may request that officers of UPD arrest these individuals for trespassing.

During the time the House is closed, the Fire Inspectors have the authority to allow individuals to enter the house for the purposes of securing the House or remedying the fire code violation (such as security guards, contractors or alarm maintenance personnel). Once the violation has been corrected, the Fire Inspectors will remove the warning signs from the exits and will inform fraternity members that they may reenter the premises. The Fire Inspectors shall also notify the Office of the Dean of Students, the University Police Department, the Office of the University Attorney and the Office of the State Fire Marshal that the violation has been corrected and that the House is no longer closed.

A student who needs to enter the House while the House is closed should contact the alumnus/faculty advisor for the fraternity or the president of the house corporation. Should either of these individuals not be available, then the president of the fraternity should be contacted.
In some cases, the Fire Inspectors may determine that posting a “Fire Watch” may be an acceptable alternative to closing a House. This determination, and the provisions of any Fire Watch, shall be within the discretion of the Fire Inspectors. In deciding whether a Fire Watch is an acceptable alternative, the Fire Inspectors may consider all factors they believe to be relevant.

REPORTS

Inspection reports are forwarded to the Vice Chancellor(s) associated with buildings housing their respective academic deans/chairs/directors/building mayors. The discrepancies will be reinspected during the next annual inspection.

Academic Deans and Department Chairs are responsible for correcting Fire Code Deficiencies pointed out during the annual fire inspections, especially issues concerning blocked/restricted passageways and student occupancy levels in classrooms.

Greek House Corporations are responsible for correcting deficiencies within their respective houses and maintaining current certification of smoke and fire alarm systems to meet existing state laws and fire codes. (Link to Student Life Policy is under development).

FIRE DRILLS

Dormitory Drills: Fire drills are conducted once per semester for each dormitory in coordination with the Director of Student Housing or his representative.

Greek Houses: Each Greek House on campus will also have fire drills once per fall and spring semester. Greek Houses by nature are sensitive and extra inspections of Greek Houses and alarm systems will be conducted as time permits or as deemed appropriate.

ALARMS

When a fire alarm sounds, follow the procedures outlined under the “Responsibility of Building Occupants” in the above paragraph.

Tampering with building fire alarms, fire systems, or fire extinguishers is prohibited. Violators are subject to disciplinary action, monetary fine, or both. Only authorized personnel are allowed to work on these life safety systems.

FIRE ALARM MONITORING SERVICE

The Physical Plant Department has a 24 hour 7 day per week Dispatch Office that monitors automated fire alarms in academic buildings. Not all campus buildings have automated fire alarm systems. The monitoring system is computer based.

The Physical Plant Department does not monitor Greek fire alarm systems. Greek Houses are responsible for any maintenance, repairs, phone line expenses, and testing that is related to their systems.
Greek Houses assume full responsibility for any circumstances resulting from fire alarm systems’ failure to meet State Laws or fire codes as established.

University Fire Services and Physical Plant are unable to provide maintenance on Greek fire alarm systems. During semiannual fire drills, the Greek fire alarm systems will be tested for functionality. Discrepancies will be reported as indicated above.

Greeks are required to contact their alarm monitoring companies for periodic testing of systems. Greeks are encouraged to purchase maintenance contracts on fire alarm systems from certified service providers.

Inoperable fire and smoke alarm systems are reason for closure of Greek Houses. (Link to Student Life Policy is under development).

Requests for assistance from Physical Plant should be directed to the Physical Plant Production Control Desk, 662-915-7003.