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

The Physical Plant Department manages the University of Mississippi Fire Services with 3 part-time Fire Inspectors. University Fire Inspectors work under the authority of the State Fire Marshal’s Office. The fire inspectors manage fire, life safety issues, and alarms for University Academic Buildings. Auxiliary Services (Student Housing, Athletics) and Greek Organizations are responsible for maintenance and repair costs of their facilities’ fire and alarm systems.

As a service however, Physical Plant Fire Services conduct periodic scheduled inspections and training with Auxiliary and Greek organizations.

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. Sound the alarm as the building is vacated. Occupants evacuating a building should not use elevators. Use the stairwell exits only. 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 on a cell phone or notifying University Police by dialing 662-915-7234.

FIRE FIGHTING SERVICES

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

FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

University Fire Inspectors conduct fire safety inspections on University and Auxiliary buildings once each year. Emphasis is placed on building evacuation plans, emergency/exit lighting, and maintaining clear exit passageways. Other fire code and safety violations are noted and reported for correction as appropriate.

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

The State of Mississippi Fire Marshal is invited annually to inspect University buildings.

GREEK HOUSES

Courtesy fire safety inspections on Greek Houses located on campus are conducted once each semester. State law requires each Greek House on University property to have an NFPA 72 (operational and monitored smoke and) fire alarm system. It is the Greek organization’s
responsibility to be in compliance with the National Fire Code (NFPA) Standard 72 as published by the National Fire Protection Association. Greek organizations are required to have their smoke and fire alarm systems inspected and tested prior to each fall and spring semester to ensure the systems are operating properly.

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 re-inspected 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.