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Local, State Officials Promote College Fire Safety in Off-Campus Housing
Promote Best Roommates Evah! Campaign

Framingham, MA - On August 31, 2017, surrounded by college safety, fire and building officials, and fire safety advocates, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito declared September ***Campus Fire Safety Month***. "Massachusetts is the home away from home to thousands of college students, and many upper classmen live off-campus, where potential dangers are much more common," said Lieutenant Governor Polito. "Every student has the right to safe housing and that includes working smoke alarms and two exit points in the event of an emergency."

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said, "College is the start of a young adult's journey and death or injury from fire should not cut that journey short. "While most colleges work to make sure residence halls have fire alarm systems and fire sprinklers where required, officials are most concerned about the safety of off-campus housing where most college students live. Since 2005, 100% of all college-related fire deaths in the US have occurred in off-campus housing. Five college students aged 19-22 have died in off-campus housing fires in Massachusetts over the past decade.

Working Smoke and CO Alarms Required in MA

Fire Chief Joseph Hicks said, "Parents should make sure the place where their adult children live have both working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, as required by Massachusetts law. Don't let your child sleep one night unprotected when, for the price of a pizza, you can make sure they have a working alarm." In Massachusetts, landlords are required to provide working smoke alarms. In most instances, they are also required to provide working carbon monoxide alarms.

Take Responsibility for Fire Safety of Everyone in Your Building

Chief Hicks added, "We need the help of both students and parents to make sure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are still working and exits remain clear, now and throughout the winter. If you're old enough to live on your own, you're old enough to take responsibility for the fire safety of yourself and your roommates." Sometimes smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working on move-in day, but are later disabled, putting everyone at risk.

Michael Tusino, Building Commissioner, said, "Parents and young adults should feel free to contact the Town of Framingham's Inspectional Services Department for a home safety visit if they have any concerns about the safety of an apartment they have rented."

Best Roommates Evah!

A group of fire chiefs, building officials, college safety officials and campus fire safety advocates have been meeting over the summer to share strategies for enforcing fire and building codes in off-campus housing. They have launched a public awareness campaign about the importance of working smoke alarms and two ways out, called **Best Roommates Evah!** For more information and resources, to www.BestRoommatesEvah.org.



In student residence halls, fraternities, and sororities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts alone, 2,737 fires have occurred from 2011 to 2015 with five civilian injuries, two fire service injuries, and an estimated \$1 million in damages. All the college-related deaths have occurred in off-campus housing such as rented houses and apartments.

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