



CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY CODE TALK

As students attend school remotely this fall, NFPA urges added caution around using and charging laptops and other electrical devices at home and in college housing

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With many students returning to school remotely this fall, NFPA is urging added caution when using and charging laptops and other digital devices at home or in college dorms and in off-campus housing. Many people are using and charging electrical devices more on a daily basis than usual. This additional use of equipment means more opportunity for misuse and misapplication, which can contribute to an increased fire risk.

According to NFPA's most recent electrical fires report, an estimated average of 900 computer or computer equipment fires occurred in U.S. homes each year between 2014 and 2018, resulting in 50 civilian injuries and \$50 million in direct property damage.

When using and charging laptops, smartphones and other digital devices, these simple precautions can help minimize the risk of electrical fires:

- Only use the charging cord that came with the device; avoid cords with conductive jackets.
- Discontinue use if device or charger becomes excessively hot or emits a burning smell.



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- Make sure electrical cords and wires are in good condition. Discard frayed or damaged cords.
- Unplug devices when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock and fire.
- Ensure that the plug is fully inserted into the outlet and remains that way while in use.

Even during this time of social distancing, electricians are still working and considered essential businesses. Call the utility company or a qualified electrician immediately when experiencing any of the following in homes, dorms, or campus common spaces:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet
- A plug no longer stays plugged into an outlet on its own

Sharing important electrical fire and life safety information and tips is imperative in order to help protect families, students, faculty, and staff from potential threats.

NFPA offers many resources to help people use electrical equipment at home and on campus safely, along with a safety tip sheet that provide guidelines and recommendations for safely using devices that require lithium ion batteries. We also have guidelines and recommendations for other fire safety issues to consider as people spend more time at home, including cooking and heating.



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NOTE: This article first appeared as a post on NFPA's blog, NFPA Today, on September 28, 2020, and has been edited.

Link to blog:

<https://community.nfpa.org/community/nfpa-today/blog/2020/09/25/as-students-attend-school-remotely-this-fall-nfpa-urges-added-caution-around-using-and-charging-laptops-and-other-electrical-devices-at-home>



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