

Campus Fire Safety NEWS

**Off-campus fire claims the life of 21-year-old junior from Oklahoma State University.**

**Student is the eleventh person killed in the 2005-2006 academic year across the nation**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BELCHERTOWN, Mass., Aug. 1, 2006— Kenneth Ray Egan, a 21-year-old junior at Oklahoma State University, was killed Sunday in an early-morning, off-campus student housing fire in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The fire broke out on the covered porch of a two-story house and extended into the building. Two of the occupants were able to escape and alert the fire department.

Nationwide, 89 people have been killed in campus-related fires since January 2000, as identified by the Center for Campus Fire Safety, a non-profit organization that compiles information on these fires. Almost 80 percent of the fire fatalities have occurred in off-campus occupancies such as rented houses and apartments. Common factors in a number of these fires include:

- Lack of automatic fire sprinklers
- Disabled smoke alarms
- Careless disposal of smoking materials
- Alcohol consumption

"It is vital that students learn the steps they can take to protect themselves, their friends and roommates from fire," said Ed Comeau, Director of the Center. Some of these include:

- Choose fire-safe housing, either on- or off-campus, that includes automatic fire sprinklers
- Make sure there are interconnected smoke alarms on every level and ensure that they are working at all times. Always evacuate whenever the alarm is activated.
- Know two ways out, no matter where you are – a residence hall, your house or apartment, a restaurant or a movie theater.
- If a smoke alarm is being activated needlessly, such as by cooking or steam from a shower, relocate the smoke alarm instead of disabling it.
- Properly dispose of smoking material by using ashtrays.
- After parties, check the cushions on couches and chairs to make sure there aren't any lit cigarettes smoldering.
- Properly use extension cords and electrical appliances.

"Learning these fire safety behaviors will help people during their college years and throughout their lives," said Comeau. "These are 'life skills' that might become 'life-saving skills' someday."

According to the Center, April and May, followed by August and September, are two dangerous periods of time for student housing fire fatalities. Last year, September was designated as National Campus Fire Safety Month to help raise the national awareness of campus fire safety and, for the first time since January 2000, no student housing fire deaths occurred during August and September.

More information on campus fire safety can be found at the Center's Web site at [www.campusfire.org](http://www.campusfire.org), including a compilation of all of the fatal fires in student housing identified by the Center, a list of questions that parents and students can ask when looking at student housing and video clips of training programs the Center has been involved with.

*The Center for Campus Fire Safety, a leader in fire safety, is a non-profit organization that is devoted to reducing fires at campuses across the nation through education and advocacy.*