



SUNY Potsdam Fire Safety Plan

Prepared by: Office of Environmental Health, Safety & Emergency Management (EHS/EM)

Authority: Fire Code of the State of New York, International Fire Code (IFC) §404.2, NFPA Standards



Purpose and Scope

This Fire Safety Plan establishes procedures and responsibilities for preventing, reporting, and responding to fire emergencies on campus. It applies to all SUNY Potsdam facilities, including academic, residential, administrative, and auxiliary buildings.

Responsibilities

- President: Overall authority for compliance.
- EHS/EM: Maintains this plan, conducts training and inspections, coordinates with Potsdam Fire Department.
- Physical Plant: Maintains fire protection and detection systems.
- University Police: First response, emergency communications, scene control, liaison with responding fire units.
- Building Coordinators / Crowd Managers: Facilitate evacuations, ensure accountability, and assist those with disabilities.
- All Occupants: Follow evacuation procedures, maintain good housekeeping, and report hazards.

Fire Hazards

An alert and educated student and staff member is SUNY Potsdam's most valuable resource for fire protection. Fire hazards often arise from unsafe conditions and practices. Every person has a responsibility and vested interest in making a concerted effort to correct and improve their living and working conditions and practices.

Common fire hazards include, but are not limited to:

- Obstructions: Corridors, stairways, and aisles must remain free of clutter and storage.
- Fire Doors: Must remain closed or on approved self-closing devices; propping prohibited. Please see the [SUNY Potsdam Door Chock](#) policy for related information.
- Electrical & Equipment Safety:
 - Electrical cords should be placed away from aisles or other pedestrian walkways.
 - Never use electrical cords that are frayed or have exposed wiring.
 - Do not overload electrical outlets by using multiple extension cords, etc.
 - Perform regular maintenance on all equipment. Promptly remove/repair defective equipment.
 - Understand and use all pertinent safety precautions when using electrical appliances and equipment.
 - Never use portable electric space heaters in any building on campus.



- Only connect portable power taps and extension cords directly into wall receptacles.
 - The use of candles is prohibited in any Campus building.
 - Never install replacement bulbs in lamps that exceed the maximum rated wattage.
 - The use of Halogen lamps is prohibited in any Campus building.
- Heating Devices: Portable electric space heaters are prohibited in campus buildings.
- Open Flames: Candles, incense, sparklers, grills, and similar devices are not allowed without an approved exception.
- Storage: Maintain 18-inch clearance below sprinkler heads and 24-inch clearance in non-sprinklered buildings.
- Hazardous Materials: Must be stored, labeled, and handled per OSHA and NFPA 704 requirements.
- Smoking: SUNY Potsdam is a smoke-free campus. As such, smoking is not allowed on campus property. Additionally, smoking-related paraphernalia is prohibited in residence halls on campus.
- Loading Docks, Loading Ares: On campus, there may be instances where emergency exits are co-located or near a loading dock or area. The activities associated with loading and unloading from these areas mustn't block exits or exit pathways.

Fire Protection Systems

Falsely reporting a fire alarm is a Felony under the New York State Penal Law. An arrest may result when an individual initiates or circulates a false report or warning of an alleged occurrence or impending occurrence of a fire, explosion, or the release of a hazardous substance under circumstances in which it is not unlikely that public alarm or inconvenience will result. Tampering with fire protection equipment endangers the lives and safety of members of the campus community, and an arrest and/or discipline by the Student Conduct Office may result.

- Fire Alarm Systems: All systems inspected and tested per NFPA 72.
 - Sprinkler Systems: Inspected and tested per NFPA 25.
 - Extinguishers: Installed in all buildings, inspected monthly, and maintained annually per NFPA 10.
- Detection Systems: Smoke and heat detectors in all residence halls and academic facilities.
- Hydrants & Fire Department Connections: Maintained and accessible at all times.



Reporting a Fire

1. Activate the nearest fire alarm pull station. This immediately notifies University Police.
2. Call 911 or (315) 267-2222 from a safe location to confirm the alarm and report details.
3. Evacuate immediately using the nearest safe exit. Do not use elevators.
4. Use a fire extinguisher only if all three conditions apply:
 - a. You are trained.
 - b. The fire is small and contained.
 - c. You have a safe exit behind you.

Campus Alerting Systems

SUNY Potsdam has several means of disseminating information in the event of an emergency.

Rave Alert – This is the college's emergency alert system, capable of delivering messages to you, SUNY Potsdam, and personal email addresses, as well as your cell phone and landlines. This is the principal means of alerting stakeholders to alerts or impacts to campus operations. For more information on Rave Alert, please click [HERE](#).

Satterlee Hall Clock Tower Carillon – The carillon system in the clock tower is capable of broadcasting emergency alerts via a public address system in the event of an emergency.

Office of Environmental Health, Safety & Emergency Management – The campus Emergency Manager is also able to send out alerts through a system called iPAWS, which is managed by the St. Lawrence County Office of Emergency Services. This service allows us to push out important alerts to cell phone users in a geographic area, regardless of whether they have signed up for alerts or not.

Evacuation Procedures

For more details, please refer to SUNY Potsdam Evacuation Plan.

- When Alarm Sounds: Leave immediately by the nearest exit. Do not use elevators.
- Remember the acronym R-A-C-E:
 - Remain calm: Do not panic, and if able to do so without placing yourself in harm's way, assist others with evacuation.
 - Alarm – Activate the nearest manual pull station or call in the alarm by dialing 911 from any campus phone or cell or by calling University Police at (315) 267-2222 from a cell phone.
 - Contain: Help stop fire spread by closing doors and windows, if able.



- Evacuate: Using established procedures.
- Assembly: All occupants must remain at least 50 feet away from buildings. Certain emergencies may require a 150-foot perimeter for safety.
- Alternate Exits: Use secondary routes if the primary exit is blocked.
- Individuals Requiring Assistance: Move to the stairwell landing (area of refuge) and wait for trained assistance. Notify University Police of the location.
- Accountability: Coordinators conduct headcounts at assembly areas and report to Incident Command.
- Re-Entry: Only authorized by Potsdam Fire Department or University Police.

Shelter-in-Place

In the event you are unable to exit the building, or you are advised via the campus alerting system, you should "SHELTER IN PLACE".

- Stay in your room, remain calm; do not panic.
- Seal the bottom and sides of your door with a wet towel to prevent smoke from entering your room if needed.
- Communicate your situation to University Police or 911 by:
 - Dialing 911 from any campus phone.
 - Dialing University Police via cell phone at (315) 267-2222
 - Note: Dialing 911 from a campus phone will connect you to University Police. Dialing 911 from a cell phone will connect you with the St. Lawrence County 911 Center.

Crowd Managers

- Evacuation diagrams must be posted in all buildings showing routes, exits, pull stations, extinguishers, and assembly areas.
- Crowd managers are required by the Fire Code of the State of New York. It shall be SUNY Potsdam's policy to require Crowd Managers in the following situations:
 - For gatherings of 500 people or more, crowd managers shall be provided in accordance with FCNYS Section 403.
 - At least (2) Crowd Managers shall be provided and an additional Crowd Manager shall be added for every additional 250 occupants.
 - Exception:
 - Outdoor events of less than 1,000 people do not require Crowd Managers.
 - Training



- Training shall be provided for all employees filling these roles using a training program approved by the National Association of State Fire Marshals.
- Training shall be valid for (2) years with records maintained by the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management.

Fire Watch

In New York State, fire watch requirements are established to minimize the risk of fires when activities such as welding, cutting, grinding, and other operations that produce heat, sparks, or open flames are performed. Additionally, unplanned impairments of the fire alarm or protection system may necessitate the establishment of a Fire Watch. These requirements are based on New York State Fire Code, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standards, and other relevant regulations.

Situations Requiring the Establishment of Fire Watch:

- Planned impairments such as maintenance, repairs, or construction.
- Unplanned impairments where a failure of any portion of a fire protection system has occurred.
- Hot Work such as welding, cutting, or soldering.
- Other such instances as determined by the Fire Code Official.

Designation of a Fire Watch:

- A fire watch must be designated by the person in charge of any planned impairment (e.g. Hot Work). Additionally, Fire Watch will be established by a Physical Plant Supervisor in consultation with the Office of Environmental Health, Safety, & Emergency Management for any unplanned impairment.
- Fire Watch activities must be documented using the SUNY Potsdam Fire Watch Log.

For more detailed information, please visit [SUNY Potsdam Office of Environmental Health, Safety & Emergency Management's Website](#) for the campus Fire Watch Guidelines & Log.

Training and Drills

- Fire Drills:
 - Residence Halls: Minimum of (4) annually.
 - Academic/Administrative: At least (4) annually.
 - Childcare: Monthly.
 - Records of these drills shall be maintained electronically by University Police and the Office of Environmental Health, Safety & Emergency Management.



- Employee Training:
 - Annual fire safety training, including extinguisher use and evacuation procedures, is performed using online training modules provided through Biz Library.
 - Department-specific training may be requested by emailing safety@potsdam.edu.
- Student Training:
 - Fire extinguishers: Training shall be provided a minimum of (2) times annually at the start of each semester.
 - Fire Safety Training: Shall be conducted with Residence Life Staff a minimum of (2) times annually.
 - Additional training may be requested by emailing safety@potsdam.edu.

The Office of Environmental Health, Safety & Emergency Management is also able to offer on-demand training to campus stakeholders on general or specific topics. To schedule training, please email safety@potsdam.edu.

Fire Safety Violations

SUNY Potsdam employs multiple employees who are certified through the New York State Department of State as Code Enforcement Officials or Building Safety Inspectors. These individuals perform year-round fire and life safety inspections.

If your department receives a Notice of Violation related to the Uniform Code of the State of New York. You have a pre-determined abatement period to rectify the condition. If you are unable to abate the issue within the period given, you can submit a compliance plan with a proposed scope of work and reasonable timetable to safety@potsdam.edu for approval. If a department fails to meet the abatement deadline and does not submit a compliance plan, the violation will be forwarded to the New York State Office of Fire Control & Prevention as a complaint.

Additionally, the New York State Office of Fire Prevention & Control conducts periodic inspections of campus facilities throughout the year.

Some of the most commonly found fire safety violations include the following:

- Dormitories:
 - Smoke detectors must remain functional and unobstructed. No tampering with fire systems.
 - No candles, burnt or unburnt, are allowed in Residence Halls.
 - Heavy appliances such as refrigerators and microwaves must be plugged directly into outlets. Extension cords and power strips are not to be used.



- Rooms are to be kept in an orderly and clean manner so as not to cause emergency egress issues.
 - For more details, please consult your Resident Assistant.
- Offices:
 - Exit paths must be kept clear, and improper extension cords or multi-plugs are prohibited.
- General:
 - Blocking access to extinguishers, alarms, or exits constitutes a violation and may result in disciplinary or legal action.

Records and Documentation

- All drill logs, inspection reports, and training records are maintained by EHS/EM for a minimum of 3 years.
- Fire incident reports are submitted to SUNY System Administration and the U.S. Department of Education (per Clery Act requirements) as well as the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

Plan Review and Maintenance

- Plan reviewed annually by EHS/EM.
- Updates issued following significant changes in building use, occupancy, or fire protection systems.
- Copies available on the EHS/EM website and with University Police.



Record of Revisions

Date	Changes	Responsible Party
July 14, 2023	Plan Rewrite	P. OBrien
June 30, 2024	Added Fire Watch Section	P. O'Brien
July 9, 2025	Review & Update	P. O'Brien