

Fire Safety

At the RAU, your safety, and that of our staff and guests is taken extremely seriously.

Fire is a real and very serious hazard that can have life changing consequences. Hence, we have a zero tolerance approach to breaches of fire safety rules here at the RAU.

Fire prevention and fire safety is one of our highest priorities for those that study and live on campus.

To help maintain your safety, it is essential that fire safety procedures are followed and maintained at all times. This is vital to provide early warning in the event of a fire and to prevent the potential of smoke and fire spread that could seriously hinder or even prevent the safe evacuation of you and others. This is of particular importance in halls of residence and other sleeping accommodation, where you are potentially at a higher risk whilst sleeping.

It is critical that you treat fire safety seriously and act in a responsible manner to maintain the safety of yourself, as well as your friends and fellow students.

Any misuse or tampering with fire safety equipment, including smoke detectors, call points, fire doors, fire extinguishers or other measures, will not be tolerated and may result in repair charges and disciplinary action, including eviction for serious offences. Interfering with fire safety (lifesaving) equipment may also constitute a criminal offence should it places people in danger.

Please report any damage or interference to fire safety equipment in the **strictest confidence** to the Porters Lodge or to health.safety@rau.ac.uk

There are five key areas to address within fire safety and for which we rely on your cooperation, these are:

1. Fire prevention
2. Fire protection
3. Fire spread
4. Fire fighting
5. Action in the event of fire

1 Fire prevention

Fires can be prevented by minimising fire hazards and following simple rules to avoid key sources of ignition. These include:

Cooking - Do not leave cooking unattended. Keep the hob, oven, and grill clean and free from fat which may catch fire. Do not use chip pans or deep fat fryers or heat up large amounts of oil.

Smoking materials - Do not smoke within the buildings. Smoking, vaping and e-cigarettes are only permitted in external designated areas and not within 10 meters of buildings. Ensure safe disposal of cigarette ends etc. in designated bins.

Candles - Do not use candles, tea lights, joss sticks or other naked flames due to the high fire risk.

Electrical – Do not use portable electrical equipment which has not been PAT tested or which has clear signs of damage to cabling, plugs or sockets. Do not overload plug sockets. Do not daisy chain extension leads.

Heaters – Do not use portable heaters. Do not cover any heaters with items of clothing or any other items or materials.

Furnishings – All furnishings must be labelled as being fire resistant. No furniture is to be brought onto site without prior permission and confirmation of fire resistance. Report any soft furniture with worn or torn covers that exposes the foam.

Any unauthorised items, electrical appliances, heaters, or furnishings that do not comply with RAU rules will be removed and may be subject to a disposal charge. If you wish to bring items into your accommodation, please seek prior permission from the Accommodation Officer.

2 Fire protection

The RAU has various means of fire protection within accommodation blocks and other buildings to provide for early detection and warning of fire outbreak. This includes:

Smoke and heat detection – Do not obstruct or cover a smoke/heat detector head. This will prevent early detection in the event of a real fire or smoke spread.

Fire alarm all points (manual break glass call points) – Do not activate unless a real fire has been identified or is genuinely suspected. Repeated false alarm activations can deter occupants from taking the correct action in the event of a legitimate fire and could lead to serious injury and/or the loss of life.

Fire alarm sounders – Do not attempt to muffle or silence sounders. They are needed to provide warning in the event of a real fire situation. Always respond promptly to the sounders in your vicinity.

Emergency lighting – Do not obstruct or cover emergency lighting units. They assist in the evacuation of buildings where normal lighting and power supplies fail in the event of fire.

This equipment has a vital role to play in raising the alarm and allowing occupants to evacuate in a safe and timely manner. It is imperative that this equipment is not tampered with in any way.

3 Fire spread

It is the smoke from a fire that accounts for around 80% of fatalities in the event of fire. Smoke can also spread quickly and seriously hinder vision, making it difficult or impossible to locate and use escape routes and exits. There are various means of preventing the spread of smoke and fire within accommodation blocks and other buildings. This includes:

Fire compartmentation – all fire compartments have a minimum 30-minute fire resistance to contain the fire until the fire brigade arrives and to prevent further spread. No compartment must be breached for any purpose. Fire compartmentation is not readily identifiable; therefore, you should assume that all internal walls, floors, and ceilings provide a crucial element in fire compartmentation. Any breaches, therefore, should be reported.

Fire doors – these are a vital part of the fire compartment and must be kept shut at all times, unless they are on automatic hold open devices. The practice of wedging or propping open of fire doors is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Any damage to, or fire doors not closing fully, must be reported.

Self-closing devices – these are to ensure that fire doors close after being opened and must not be tampered with or held open.

4 Fire-fighting equipment

Firefighting is inherently dangerous, and should only be carried out by trained, competent people. If you discover a fire, you should raise the alarm, contain the fire by closing doors on your way out and evacuate the building immediately. The RAU provides two forms of fire-fighting equipment:

Fire blankets – these are provided in accommodation kitchens and should be used to smother any small developing fire. Do not attempt to do this if the fire is out of control or you are likely to put yourself or others in danger.

Fire extinguishers – these are not provided throughout accommodation blocks, but only in the vicinity of higher fire risk areas, i.e., mains electrical equipment, plant rooms etc. However, they are provided in other buildings and normally located within corridors and close to exit points. These should only be used by trained, competent personnel such as Fire Marshals.

Fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other firefighting equipment is provided as necessary life safety equipment. Tampering, removing or other interference will not be tolerated as it may put lives at risk.