

Fire Safety

We take your safety at the RAU extremely seriously. You will be aware of the tragic consequences of fires in accommodation blocks from recent high profile cases. Hence, we have a zero tolerance approach to breaches of fire safety rules here at the RAU.

The RAU does not have the same block construction as some of the recent high rise fires as we have only low rise accommodation and study blocks. Nevertheless, fire prevention and fire safety is our number one priority for those that study and live on campus. It is paramount that our fire precautionary measures are maintained to provide early warning and to avoid any potential for fire spread in sleeping accommodation. As such we have provided all occupants with this Fire Safety instruction detailing the strict precautions which must be adhered to. Any interference with fire safety precautions, including smoke detectors, call points, fire doors, extinguishers or other measures, will be taken seriously and may result in repair charges and disciplinary action, including eviction for serious offences.

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 and e-cigarettes are only permitted in external designated areas and not within 10 meters of buildings. Ensure safe disposal of cigarette ends in designated bins.

Candles - Do not use candles, joss sticks or other naked flames due to fire risks.

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 other combustible 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.

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 detection – Do not obstruct or cover a smoke detector head. This can prevent early detection in the event of a real fire or smoke spread.

Call points (break glass points) – Do not activate unless a real fire has been identified. Repeated false alarm activations can deter occupants from taking the correct action in the event of a legitimate fire and lead to loss of life.

Sounders – Do not attempt to muffle or quiet 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 smoke which is most likely to kill in the event of fire so 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 doors – these are an important part of the fire compartment and must be kept shut at all times, unless they are on automatic hold openers. Door wedges are not acceptable and will be removed if identified.

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

4 Fire-fighting equipment

Fire-fighting should only be attempted if the fire is small and controllable and you have received relevant training or instruction. Otherwise, you should contain the fire and leave it to the professional fire fighters. 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 in accommodation blocks as they require trained personnel. However, they are provided in other buildings and normally located on corridors and exit points. These should only be used to aid escape in the event of fire. Designated fire marshalls have received training in their use.

Fire-fighting equipment is provided to aid in occupants escape in the event of a fire. Tampering or interference will not be tolerated as it may put lives at risk.

5 Action in the event of fire

It is important that you familiarise yourself with all fire escape routes and local instructions when you move into your accommodation. Whether you are in a study building or accommodation block you should always follow the same rules:

On discovering fire

1. Raise the alarm by operating the nearest call point
2. Do not attempt to fight the fire
3. Contain the fire by closing the door

On hearing the alarm

4. Evacuate immediately to a designated assembly point
5. Call the fire brigade on 999 or 112
6. Do not re-enter the building unless told it is safe to do so

Escape routes - The hallway, corridors and stairs are your escape route and must be kept clear at all times. Do not obstruct or restrict with items such as bikes, refuse or furnishings.

Fire signage – always follow the green directional signage to a place of safety at the designated assembly points. The blue Fire Action notices will be posted at various points in the building, familiarise yourself with these local instructions. Do not tamper with any fire safety signage.

Fire exit doors – these should be easily openable. They provide for an alternative means of escape should the regular exit route be compromised by fire or smoke. They must not be obstructed.

Assembly points – there are 4 designated assembly points around campus marked on yellow signage as A, B, C and D. Familiarise yourself with your nearest one. On hearing the alarm sounders you must evacuate within 3 minutes to your designated assembly point.

Fire drills – These are carried out within the first term of the new academic year to ensure everyone is familiar with the fire procedures. These must be treated as a real fire situation. You are required to evacuate to your nearest assembly point within 3 minutes of hearing the sounder.

False alarms – From time to time there may be defects or unintended activations of the detector heads. These should be treated in the same way as real fire activations. You must evacuate to your nearest assembly point within 3 minutes of hearing the sounder.

These protective measures and rules have been put in place for your safety. Failure to follow them or misuse any equipment could result in fire spread and loss of life. Look after them and they will look after you!