



2024

SOUTHWEST COLLEGE FOR THE DEAF ANNUAL FIRE SAFETY REPORT

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SOUTHWEST COLLEGE FOR THE DEAF OF HOWARD COLLEGE

ANNUAL FIRE SAFETY REPORT 2024

(Data for Years 2021, 2022, 2023)

Published October 2024

The Annual Fire Safety Report is required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) for any Title IV institution that maintains an on-campus student housing facility. Per HEOA, an institution that maintains an on-campus student housing facility must collect fire statistics, publish an Annual Fire Safety Report, and keep a fire log. The Clery Act was amended by HEOA in 2008, requiring future reports to include campus housing fire safety statistics. The information contained in this document relates to fire safety for on-campus student residential housing only.

Each year, an e-mail notification is sent to all current students, faculty, and staff providing the web site to access this report. Upon request, prospective students and employees and others may obtain a written paper copy of the report from the safety officer.

Fire Prevention and Protection

The following procedures must be followed to reduce the risk of a fire:

1. Sufficient waste receptacles should be provided and emptied daily.
2. All oily cloths are to be kept in a covered metal can.
3. Accumulations of paper and flammable materials are to be kept at a minimum.
4. Combustible materials should be stored in a proper cabinet or container and away from heating or electrical devices.
5. Finely divided material produced in shops or laboratories (e.g., sawdust or fabric) should be frequently removed to prevent accumulation.
6. Candles should not be operated with an open flame; candle warmers should be used instead.

Exits

No obstructions may be placed in front of or upon any exit door. No aisle, exit access, or stairway may be obstructed with furniture or other obstructions to reduce the required width of the exits during hours the facility is open to students or employees.

Doors, Hallways, Stairways, and Landings

Fire doors separating stairwells from hallway or smoke partition doors must be maintained in working order. They are never to be blocked, wedged, or tied open. The storage of any kind or the use of office or laboratory equipment in the hallways or the stairway is strictly forbidden.

Railings, Steps, Walks

The area immediately outside of building exits will always be maintained free of material. Bicycles and vehicles are not permitted on sidewalks immediately adjacent to exit.

Fire Extinguisher

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the campus in sizes and types appropriate for normal activities in each area. These extinguishers are inspected annually by a qualified contractor to assure proper operation if needed. The theft of or tampering with an extinguisher should be reported immediately to the Safety Officer.

Fire Alarms

The dorms on both Howard College Big Spring and SWCD campuses are equipped with automatic fire alarm systems that are certified each year. No person, other than those directed by the Safety Officer, is authorized to adjust, reset, or otherwise manipulate the automatic alarm systems. These systems, when activated, enable a loud, busy noise audible throughout an individual building. Flashing lights are connected to the SWCD system. In the event of a fire, any employee is responsible for sounding the fire alarm by pulling an alarm station. Once the alarm has been engaged, the switchboard should be called and the location, type, and nature of the fire should be noted. The switchboard operator should call for verification of a true alarm. Upon a report of a true alarm, the switchboard operator should call 911 and request assistance from the fire department.

Faculty should direct students to the appropriate exit route (see “Building Evacuation Maps” on Web) and remain some 50 yards away from the building until notified by a College official that the building may be reentered, and normal activities resumed.

Fire Drills

The Safety and Security Coordinator is authorized to conduct periodic tests of fire evacuation procedures. Such tests may include the evacuation of the buildings after purposely initiating the building alarms. To assure all personnel and students are aware of the proper procedures to follow when a fire alarm is activated, the College will have not less than two (2) fire drills each year. At least one drill will be announced, and the following drills will not be announced or scheduled at any time so that the evacuation procedures can be evaluated objectively to determine if there are any deficiencies that need to be addressed or corrected.

Compliance with the published procedures will be rated on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (good) using the following criterion:

1. Correct exits used, (i.e., stairs not elevators orderly exiting with no panic, running, pushing, etc.)
2. Total evacuation completed in reasonable time.
3. Disabled students assisted in exiting building.
4. Responses to directions by person in charge.
5. All persons exited to at least 50 yards away from buildings.

6. Crowd control by faculty.
7. Reaction of maintenance staff.
8. Reaction of administrators on campus.
9. Confusion among faculty/staff/administrators.

Fire Evacuation Procedures (all buildings)

As soon as the fire alarm is activated, all faculty and staff will immediately exit the building by the nearest exit. All faculty teaching classes should supervise an orderly exodus from the classrooms and buildings. All classroom doors should be closed after everyone has exited. The faculty member will stay with the class until the all-clear announcement has been made by the administrator in charge and normal activities can be resumed. Under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to reenter the building until the reason for the alarm has been determined and corrected. The facility coordinator and the Safety Officer or their designee will determine when it is safe to resume normal activities.

All faculty and staff members must know where all exits are in the buildings that they occupy. The Safety Officer will conduct a workshop annually to ascertain that everyone has a working knowledge of the evacuation procedures via regularly scheduled safety trainings. All new employees should familiarize themselves with the *Safety Manual* which contains all policies and procedures dealing with safety issues.

Fire evacuation routes should be posted in all buildings on all floors. All employees should know all the fire evacuation routes from their workstations and be prepared to assist students or visitors to find proper exits. It is the responsibility of all employees to make certain that their areas are evacuated promptly and properly.

The purpose of these procedures is to reduce the likelihood of injury or death in the event of a fire or any other major catastrophe that would necessitate the evacuation of any of the buildings on the College's campus. Knowledge of the evacuation routes will reduce the possibility of panic or unsafe action in the event of an emergency.

Fire Drill and Evacuation Procedures for Residence Halls

Fire drills will be conducted twice per semester in each residence hall (one announced and one unannounced). Failure to participate in these fire drills when in the residence hall could result in the residents being subject to fines and/or disciplinary action.

In the event of fire, the most important thing is for you to evacuate the building safely. Familiarize yourself with the emergency fire evacuation floor plan posted in the residence halls. Whenever the fire alarm sounds, you are required to evacuate the building immediately. Failure to evacuate is a violation of city ordinance and subject to fine and/or disciplinary action.

In the corridors of each residence hall are fire extinguishers, manual fire alarm pull stations, and automatic smoke detectors. All residence halls are equipped with either battery operated or

direct wired AC powered smoke detectors in bedrooms. Routine inspections are done by the hall staff and maintenance service to ensure the unit and its battery are functional. All smoke detectors are wired into the building electrical source. If the smoke alarm should falsely sound, or if there appears to be a problem with it, please contact the Coordinator of Residence Education immediately. Do not remove alarm or the cover.

If a bedroom smoke detector alarms due to smoke from a fire, close the door, immediately go to the fire alarm pull station in the hallway and activate the building fire alarm, dial 911, and evacuate the building. If the smoke detector sounds an alarm other than your own, you should follow the same procedure.

The smoke detector's alarm may falsely sound when there is a high concentration of cooking smoke or dust in the air. Should this happen, open the doors, and fan the detector to clear the sensor of smoke or dust. The detector will stop sounding its alarm when the smoke or dust has dissipated. If the problem persists, contact the Coordinator of Residence Education immediately.

Fire Safety Systems in On-Campus Student Housing

Facility	Fire Alarm Monitoring by Residence Hall Staff	Fire Alarm Monitoring by Outside Company (contract)	Full Sprinkler System	Smoke Detection	Fire Extinguisher Devices	Evacuation Plans	Number of Evacuation (Fire) Drills Each Calendar Year
Women's Dorm	X	X	X	X	X	X	4
Men's Dorm	X	X	X	X	X	X	4
Apartments	X	X	X	X	X	X	4
SWCD Village	X			X	X		4

Statistics and Related Information Regarding Fires in Residential Facilities for 2023

Residential Facilities	Total Fires in Each Building	Fire Number	Cause of Fire	Number of Injuries That Required Treatment at a Medical Facility	Number of Deaths Related to Fire	Value of Property Damage Caused by Fire
Women's Dorm	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Men's Dorm	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apartments	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SWCD Village	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(END OF REPORT)