Fire safety is critical

Robert Overmann

During the past two years, Kirksville has been the scene of two major house fires in Kirksville. Fortunately, initiation fires can often be avoided. A few minutes spent taking simple precautions could prevent you from accidentally burning your living quarters to the ground.

Kirksville has been extraordinarily dry lately. Since my arrival Aug. 6, I have observed zero rainfall — we are living in a tinderbox. During such fire-prone conditions, it is critical to deal with fire or potential sources of fire. Here's a few tips tailored especially to college students:

1. Don't have your own car or room on when not in use. This is a big one, and I can tell you it's far too easy to have a fire when you're happy and just finished cooking a big pot of macaroni and cheese.
2. Only use a fire extinguisher. If you don't have one, buy one. To do this, making sure it is easily located in an accessible kitchen area. If one isn't available, your best bet is to purchase one on the flames.
3. If you smoke, make sure your cigarettes are entirely out before discarding it. It should be cool to the touch. Cigarettes, in the context of home fires, are more common sources of fire than anything else. Since 1990, cigarettes have caused over 900 people per year, according to the Coalition for Fire Safe Communities.
4. Have the Kirksville Fire Department's phone number in an easily accessible location: 660-675-3374. Add that to your phone contacts or pin it to the fridge.
5. Don't burn objects indoors, even if you're bored. I know I shouldn't have to say this, but I'm guilty of this myself. You can burn, but you can only burn things that are safe to burn. Seldom/never: 11

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