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The Home
Safety Guru

On- & Off-Campus College Student Safety

By Louie Delaware

With college-bound students heading off to their campus, parents should help them by giving them a list of things to be understood about their safety. Many times, these students are living by themselves for the first time and are not aware of some of the risks that are present in their on- or off-campus residence.

To help parents advise their kids, I have established the below areas of concern:

Fire Safety

- ◆ Are there smoke detectors present in all of the bedrooms and in the common areas like a hallway? Are they 10 years old or less? Are the batteries changed and is the unit cleaned of dust and debris annually?
- ◆ Is there at least one carbon monoxide detector present? Is it 7 years old or less? Is the battery changed and is the cleaned of dust and debris annually?
- ◆ Is there at least one Type A-B-C fire extinguisher present (preferably in the kitchen)? Is it 12 years old or less? Is it fully charged?
- ◆ Is there a second way out of the residence in case of a fire? (If not, you should invest in a fire escape ladder)?

Environmental Safety

- ◆ Is there an indication of mold growth on walls in bathrooms or in the kitchen, or is there a musty or mildew smell in the residence?
- ◆ If someone will be living in the lowest level of the building and if there is known high levels of radon in the area, has the residence been tested for radon?
- ◆ If the home is older, is there a risk of exposure to asbestos insulation or lead paint?

Residence Security

- ◆ Before moving in, have all of the exterior locks rekeyed as the previous people may still have keys that will operate the door locks. Never give out your keys and have the doors rekeyed if a key is lost or stolen.
- ◆ Make certain that all door and windows can be easily and securely locked. This includes ensuring that all exterior doors have deadbolts or other secure interior locks.
- ◆ Ensure that all doors are locked at night, along with lower level windows. And never leave a door unlocked for a roommate.
- ◆ Ensure that dormitories have some sort of a central entrance/exit lobby where nighttime access is limited and monitored. There should be an outside telephone which visitors must use to their friends.
- ◆ Never allow doors to be propped open, regardless of the time of day.
- ◆ Do not leave your identification, wallets, checkbooks, jewelry, cameras, cell phone and other valuables in open view.
- ◆ Program your cell phone with emergency numbers including campus police / security.
- ◆ Know your neighbors and don't be reluctant to report on suspicious activities.



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Campus Safety

- ◆ Avoid allowing any photo or personal information that is available to the general campus, especially as an incoming Freshman. This information can make you a target.
- ◆ Study the campus and neighborhood with respect to routes between your residence and class/activities schedule during the day. And always keep your cell phone handy.
- ◆ Let your friends know of you class and activity schedules so they can keep an eye on you.
- ◆ Always travel in groups on adequately lit pathways. Also, many campuses have an after-dark escort or shuttle service that you can call. But never walk alone at night. And always avoid any shortcuts.
- ◆ Take a self-defense class. Many colleges and universities offer free classes during the school year.
- ◆ Always carry mace or pepper spray (as allowed by local laws), and carry a small LED flashlight in your purse.
- ◆ When approaching your vehicle, have your keys ready so you can open it quickly. But check inside the vehicle before opening to ensure that no one is inside.
- ◆ Always lock your vehicle, even if you going to be away momentarily.
- ◆ Never let anyone get you a drink in a bar or a party, especially for a female due to the risk of the drink being spike with a date-rape drug. And never put the drink down, even momentarily. If in doubt, ask for a new drink that you can watch being poured or opened for you.
- ◆ Trust your instincts. If a place or situation doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Leave.
- ◆ When traveling in your vehicle, keep windows and doors locked.
- ◆ Always wear shoes and loose clothes that will allow you to walk fast or run.
- ◆ If you are not comfortable getting into an elevator, wait for the next one to come.
- ◆ Don't leave vital information in your car. Carry your vehicle registration and insurance information with you.

A student being away from home puts them in a new realm of concern. Following these safety tips will help make the college life much better for you or your son or daughter.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru**[™], president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation, along with fire, carbon monoxide, and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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