

**Campus-Related Incidents
January 2000 to February 13, 2012
Porch or Deck Fires**

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CAMPUS
Firewatch

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Campus Incidents January 2000 to February 13, 2012

Information about these incidents was obtained primarily from media sources and, unless otherwise indicated, has not been independently verified. A number of different sources are used to obtain as comprehensive a report as is possible.

Since January 2000, over 80% of the people have died in off-campus student housing. Because the media does not necessarily report all fires as involving students, it is reasonable to assume that there are significantly more incidents involving students than are compiled in this document.

Fatal fires are in red.

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Date	School	City	State	Fatalities	Occupancy	Keywords	Synopsis
10/27/00	University of Massachusetts	Amherst	MA		Off-campus	porch	<p>An off-campus house where five students lived was severely damaged by a fire that occurred at approximately 10:00 p.m.</p> <p>The building where the fire occurred was a two-story, wood frame structure. Either four or five students from the University of Massachusetts occupied it.</p> <p>There were conflicting accounts of how the fire started. According to one report, the fire was caused when a student was attempting to use kerosene to refuel a Halloween decoration on the front porch. Another account was that the pumpkin ignited from the flame inside of it, and the fire spread to the porch.</p> <p>It was reported that the occupants attempted to extinguish the fire, but were unsuccessful. They then left the front door of the house open, which allowed the fire to spread rapidly to the interior and up the stairway, which was immediately adjacent to the front door.</p> <p>The building was a total loss and was subsequently demolished.</p>
3/11/01	Pennsylvania State	State College	PA		Off-campus	porch	<p>The following information was provided by official sources.</p> <p>On Sunday March 11 at approx 5:30 PM, a fire occurred in an off-campus student housing duplex. One occupant was at home sleeping at the time of the fire. Fire was contained to one half of the duplex, causing extensive damage on all floors. No injuries were reported. All six occupants were displaced. Following an inspection today, three of the six were permitted to move back in to the unburned side.</p>

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							<p>The building was a two story, two family dwelling. There were smoke detectors on all levels, but some had been removed or disconnected.</p> <p>The fire was believed to have been caused by improper disposal of smoking materials on the back porch.</p>
12/7/01	Jacksonville State University	Jacksonville	AL		Greek – fraternity	porch, couch	A fire was started in a couch that was on the porch of a fraternity. The early morning fire is being treated as arson, and is the second fire within a week. The fraternity was unoccupied at the time of the fire.
3/20/02	West Virginia University	Morgantown	WV		Off-campus	Porch, couch	A fire destroyed a house occupied by eight students. It is believed the fire started in a couch on the front porch at approximately 4:00 a.m.
4/28/03	Wesleyan University	Middleton	CT		Residence hall	porch	An early morning fire caused extensive damage to a three-story Victorian home used for faculty housing. The fire occurred on the rear porch of the building at approximately 4:00 a.m. All of the occupants of the house were able to escape without injury. The fire was considered suspicious.
9/20/03	University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	Minneapolis	MN	3	Off-campus	Fatal, porch	A fire that started on the porch of a two-story, wood frame duplex claimed the lives of three students. The fire was reported at 4:51 a.m. The three students died of smoke inhalation. At press time, the investigation had not been completed and the fire department would not release any additional information. The three students that died were Amanda Speckien, Brian Heiden and Elizabeth Wencil.
6/16/04	University of Michigan	Ann Arbor	MI		Off-campus	Porch, couch	A fire at 4:00 a.m. destroyed a three-story house, injuring several university football players, a female basketball player, and two firefighters. At least 12 people were in the house when the fire started. The fire might have started on a couch located on the porch before spreading to the rest

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							of the house. The house value was estimated at \$300,000, with contents estimated at \$100,000. Cause of the fire remains under investigation.
9/3/04	Tufts University	Brookline	MA	1	Off-Campus fatal (faculty)	porch	<p>Fire started around 4:30 am in a condominium complex that housed a number of Boston University students. Heavy fire from three floors claimed the life of one woman, Virginia Brereton who was a professor at Tufts University in Medford. Her husband was critically injured in the fire.</p> <p>The fire was reportedly started by a candle on a porch on the first floor. According to press reports the woman, who was sleeping on the porch at the time of the fire, first attempted to extinguish the fire with a blanket and then ran into the kitchen to get some water. The fire then spread up the exterior of the three-story building and into the units on each level. When fire fighters arrived on the scene the building was heavily involved in fire. It was reported that the woman was found on a landing and the male was found in the bedroom by fire fighters. The occupants from the second-story unit were not home at the time of the fire.</p>
9/24/04	Michigan State University	East Lansing	MI		Off-campus	Porch, couch	<p>Up to 12 people were left homeless after fire swept through an off-campus apartment complex, which destroyed two units. At 5:40 a.m., fire blazed through an apartment building near Michigan State University. One student resident of the duplex tried to jump from the second story balcony on the backside of the building. He hurt his back and was taken to the hospital. The fire started in a couch on a porch, but investigators still are trying to determine exactly how. The duplex affected by the fire has been totally destroyed. The 8-10 people living inside lost all of their possessions. Officials also are investigating whether the individual units housed more</p>

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							than the four occupants they were licensed for, since six of the eight units had evidence of five people in each unit.
3/3/05	Bloomsburg University	Bloomsburg	PA		Off-campus	porch	Fire broke out at 10:10 a.m. in an off-campus duplex which housed a total of nine students. The building was completely destroyed, but no one was injured. The university will assist students with temporary housing. The fire started on the back porch of one unit, and while the cause of the blaze has not yet been determined, the grill had been used that morning, and a table and cardboard boxes were stored on that same porch. Siding melted on a neighboring home, adding to the damage. An estimate is not yet available.
4/30/05	University of Maryland	College Park	MD	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch, arson	<p>A fire at 4:30 claimed the life of one University of Maryland student and critically injured another.</p> <p>According to officials, the fire started on the exterior porch of a house located one block from the University campus. It extended up the exterior and then into the interior of the building. There were six occupants at the time of the fire and four were able to escape safely. One individual on the second floor was forced to jump and was transported to an area burn center due to burn injuries, smoke inhalation and injuries sustained by the fall. He is currently listed in critical condition.</p> <p>Fire fighters arrived on the scene and located another individual on the second floor. He was removed from the building in respiratory arrest and transported to a nearby hospital where he died.</p> <p>The cause of the fire is under investigation at this time.</p>

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							The building had been inspected several months prior to the fire and there were working smoke alarms. It is unknown if there were working smoke alarms at the time of the fire, and according to a fire official since the fire appeared to have started on the exterior, extended vertically and then into the building, the presence of smoke alarms may not have had a factor on the fire detection.
9/22/05	University of Michigan	Ann Arbor	MI		Off-campus	Porch, couch	<p>A University of Michigan student was serious injured in a fire that is believed to have started in a couch on the front porch of a three-story house. A propane tank exploded during the fire, causing it to spread into the interior of the building.</p> <p>There were five occupants in the building at the time of the fire and were able to escape out of the back door. The fifth occupant received burns while trying to escape the fire and was forced to jump out of a second-story window.</p>
9/30/05	East Stroudsburg University	East Stroudsburg	PA		Off-campus	porch	A fire that broke out at 5:45 a.m. displaced nine people, including four East Stroudsburg University students. The fire in the 2-1/2-story building reportedly started on the front porch and caused significant damage to the building.
10/3/05	Virginia Tech	Blacksburg	VA		Greek - fraternity	porch	A fire that broke out at approximately 1:45 am in the Zeta Psi fraternity did significant damage to the building. According to press reports, the fire appeared to have started on the porch. The cause of the fire is considered suspicious at this time.
10/25/05	Oklahoma State University	Stillwater	OK		Off-campus	porch	A house occupied by students from Oklahoma State University was destroyed in an early-morning fire. The fire, which started on the porch, spread to the interior of the house through the windows. After alerting his roommates, one of the occupants attempted to extinguish

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							the fire using a fire extinguisher. When he was not able to get it to operate, he attempted to use a second one. By this time, the fire had grown too large and he evacuated and then called 911 to report the fire. When the fire department arrived on the scene they were able to extinguish the fire within fifteen minutes.
12/1/05	University of Oregon	Eugene	OR		Off-campus	couch	A student was critically injured in an off-campus fire and transported in critical condition by helicopter to Legacy Emmanuel Hospital in Portland. According to published reports, the fire department reported that the fire was started by the careless disposal of smoking materials in a couch outside of the apartment. The fire then spread to the inside of the building. Six other students also fled the fire which broke out at approximately 4:00 am.
12/1/05	Ball State University	Muncie	IN		Off-campus	Porch, couch	A fire that started in a couch located outside of the house broke out at approximately 8:40 am. Two students that live in the house were awakened by someone yelling that their house was on fire. It was reported that the porch was on fire when the fire department arrived and that damage was limited to the porch area.
1/23/06	University of Redlands	Redlands	CA		Residence hall	Couch, balcony	A fire broke out in a couch on a balcony at approximately 5:30 a.m. that was caused by careless disposal of smoking materials. The fire was detected by a resident assistant who saw the flames outside of her window.
2/20/06	University of Minnesota	Minneapolis	MN		Off-campus	porch	Seven students have been displaced by a fire that seriously damaged their off-campus house. At approximately 1:15 a.m. the only occupant of the house was alerted by neighbors yelling that the house was on fire. The fire originated in the three-season porch and spread to the interior of the house. The smoke alarms in the house were disabled at the time of the fire.
4/2/06	Penn State	State College	PA		Off-campus	porch	A fire in a duplex started on the exterior porch. A passerby saw the fire at approximately 4:00 a.m. and

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							alerted all of the occupants to the fire who were able to escape. The building was completely destroyed by the fire, according to fire officials.
5/13/06	Cornell University	Ithaca	NY	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch	<p>A fire at approximately 3:15 a.m. in an off-campus, 2-1/2 story wood frame duplex killed a 22-year-old senior. The fire started in a bucket on the front porch and spread to the interior of the building. The occupant on the first floor of one side of the duplex became aware of the fire and started yelling, which woke the occupant on the top floor. The occupants in the adjacent duplex were awakened by the activation of their smoke alarms.</p> <p>The two male occupants then attempted unsuccessfully to extinguish the fire by using a blanket and trying to cover it with sand.</p> <p>When fire fighters arrived on the scene, the front of the building was fully involved. They were able to knock down the bulk of the fire and make entry into the building. The victim was found on the floor in his second-story bedroom.</p> <p>The cause of the fire was determined to be accidental and is most probably careless disposal of smoking materials.</p> <p>The fire occurred after a party which had broken up at approximately 2:00 a.m.</p> <p>Victim Ian Alberta, 22 Senior Hometown: Ithaca, New York</p>

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7/30/06	Oklahoma State University	Stillwater	OK	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch	Kenneth Ray Egan, a 21-year-old junior at Oklahoma State University, was killed Sunday in an early-morning, off-campus student housing fire in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The fire broke out on the covered porch of a two-story house and extended into the building. Two of the occupants were able to escape and alert the fire department.
9/15/06	University of Nebraska	Lincoln	NE		Off-campus	Porch, couch	An early morning fire caused \$40,000 in damage in an off-campus duplex. The fire, which started on the porch which had a grill and a couch on it, forced the occupants to flee into the attic and then cross over to the other side of the house to escape the fire.
2/8/07	University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh	Oshkosh	WI		Off-campus	Porch, couch	An off-campus house fire has displaced three students from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. The fire was caused when one of the occupants carelessly disposed of a cigarette that landed on a couch on the porch. The couch was ignited and the fire spread to the house, causing extensive damage.
3/16/07	Boston University	Brookline	MA	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch	<p>An early-morning fire in an off-campus apartment rented by students from Boston University claimed the life of one man.</p> <p>In an interview with Campus Firewatch, Brookline Fire Department Deputy Chief Stephen Sweeney reported that the fire started on the third floor rear porch. It is believed that the cause of the fire was related to the use of a charcoal grill that had been used at approximately 1:30 a.m., the morning of the fire.</p> <p>The fire was reported to the BFD at approximately 5:45 a.m., and fire department units were on the scene within four minutes and reported heavy fire coming</p>

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							<p>from the rear of the third floor. Boston University police were on the scene prior to the arrival of the fire department, and occupants reported that there was one person unaccounted for. This information was relayed by BU police to the first arriving units.</p> <p>Fire fighters advanced a handline to the third floor where they encountered heavy smoke and fire. They extinguished the fire and found the victim in a bedroom.</p> <p>Two of the occupants reported that they were alerted to the fire by the activation of the apartment's interconnected smoke alarms. As they exited, they alerted several of the other occupants in the apartment, including the victim. It was thought that the victim was following them out of the building, but as they were exiting it was realized that he was not following them. The occupants attempted to re-enter the building but were driven back by the heat and smoke.</p> <p>When fire fighters found the victim he was in the bedroom by the door of a closet. It is believed that he became disoriented and believed that the closet was the door out of the bedroom.</p> <p>Sweeney estimates that the fire caused over \$500,000 damage to the building and contents. There was extensive fire damage to the third floor apartment with smoke and water damage throughout the building.</p> <p>The apartment was occupied by students from Boston</p>

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							<p>University. The victim was a student at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Derek Crowl, 19 Elysburg, Pennsylvania</p>
3/31/07	South Dakota State University		SD		Greek - fraternity	Porch, couch	The Sigma Phi Delta house was destroyed by a fire that started in a couch on the porch and then spread into the structure. Seven students were displaced by the fire.
10/2/07	Cowley College	Arkansas City	KS	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch	<p>A fire in an off-campus house claimed the life of one student, Eli Hildebrand. According to Arkansas City Fire Chief Randy Leach, the fire started on the front screened-in porch. When fire crews arrived on the scene the entire front of the house was fully involved. The victim was found inside the front door. Smoke alarms in the building had activated, alerting the occupants to the fire. The cause of the fire was determined to be careless disposal of smoking materials on the front porch.</p>
10/28/07	University of South Carolina and Clemson University	Ocean Isle Beach	NC	7	Off-campus vacation home	porch	<p>Six students from the University of South Carolina and one from Clemson University were killed in a fire at a vacation beach home in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina. The cause of the fire is believed to be careless disposal of smoking materials on an exterior porch.</p> <p>Six people were able to escape, some by jumping from upper story windows to the canal below.</p> <p>Six of the seven victims had elevated blood alcohol levels ranging from 0.16 to 0.29. Lauren Mahon did not have any trace of alcohol.</p> <p>Justin Anders, 19</p>

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							<p>Travis Calen, 19 Lauren Mahon, 18 Cassidy Pendley, 18 William Rhea, 18 Allison Walden, 19 Emily Yelton, 18</p>
11/18/07	University of Wisconsin – Madison	Madison	WI	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch, couch	<p>One person was killed in an off-campus house fire. According to fire officials, the fire was caused by the careless disposal of smoking materials in a couch on the front porch. There were no working smoke alarms in the building at the time of the fire. Five other students were displaced by the fire.</p> <p>The victim, who had been a student at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse but was taking a semester off, was visiting his brother, who was a student at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.</p> <p>Peter Talen, 23.</p>
4/15/08	University of Michigan	Ann Arbor	MI		Off-campus	Porch, couch	A fire in an off-campus house at approximately 7:00 p.m. was caused by embers from a hookah pipe igniting a couch on the porch. The fire caused extensive damage to the first floor and there was heavy smoke damage to the second and third stories. Five students were displaced by the fire.
4/22/08	College of Saint Rose	Albany	NY		Off-campus	porch	A fire in an off-campus house displaced five students. The fire started on the porch and spread to adjacent buildings.
5/5/08	Colorado State University	Greely	CO		Greek housing – fraternity	porch	Improper disposal of smoking materials caused \$45,000 to a fraternity. The fire broke out on the back porch of the building and spread to the building and contents.
3/14/09	Washington and Lee	Lexington	VA		Greek-fraternity	Porch, sprinkler	The cause of the fire at the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity at Washington and Lee University is still under investigation.

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	University					save	Fraternity members were quickly evacuated from the house which started on an exterior porch before spreading into the building. The blaze was brought under control by the sprinkler system.
6/27/09	Niagara University	Niagara Falls	NY		Off-campus	porch	An early-morning fire in an off-campus house displaced three students. The fire started in a second-story porch and caused \$45,000 in damage.
9/14/09	Duke University	Durham	NC		Off-campus	porch	An early morning fire in an off-campus apartment complex destroyed two townhouses. The fire started on the back porch and extended to an adjacent unit. It is believed the cause of the fire may have been a charcoal grill.
10/19/09	Westfield State College	Westfield	MA		Off-campus	porch	A fire caused by careless disposal of smoking materials broke out on the porch of a hotel that was occupied by students from Westfield State College. The students had been placed in the hotel because of overcrowding in the residence halls.
12/13/09	College of William and Mary	Williamsburg	VA		Off-campus	porch	Three College of William and Mary students were displaced from their off-campus rental home over the weekend after their back porch caught fire. The fire was quickly extinguished and was isolated to the porch. No one was injured in the fire.
1/25/10	Ithaca College	Ithaca	NY		Off-campus	porch	Seven people were displaced by a fire in a 30-unit apartment building. The fire broke out on the second floor porch and damaged several units. (1200)
1/26/10	Ithaca College	Ithaca	NY		Off-campus	porch	There was a fire at Hudson Heights Apartments, 117-119 Coddington Road which displaced seven people from the apartment building. The fire broke out on a second floor porch and extended into the building. No one was hurt in the incident which is under investigation. Some of the residents were Ithaca College students and have been offered substitute housing.
1/30/10	Western State College	Gunnison	CO	2	Off-campus	Fatal, porch,	January 30, 2010

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						couch	<p>Gunnison, CO</p> <p>A fire broke out in a two-story, wood-frame, single-family home that was occupied by students from Western State College. There were five people renting the house, but according to Gunnison Fire Marshal Dennis Spritzer, there were, at times, up to nine people in the building. At the time of the fire there were six occupants in the house.</p> <p>The fire started in a couch on an outside porch on the front of the house and extended into the first floor. It was seen by a passerby who called the fire department and, when they arrived, the porch was fully involved and there was fire in the living room. Crews knocked down the fire on the porch and made entry and knocked down the fire in the living room. They then made two attempts to get up the stairs but were driven back by conditions when a smoke explosion occurred, forcing crews out of the building, according to Spritzer. An exterior attack was mounted until conditions allowed crews to enter and they then found two victims in a second-floor bedroom. The other four occupants, including two on the second floor, were able to self-rescue prior to the arrival of the fire department.</p> <p>The building was not equipped with a residential sprinkler system and had two smoke alarms, one on the first floor and one on the second floor. One was missing a battery and Spritzer reported that they were not able to determine if the other one was functional.</p>

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							The two victims were Lucy Causley, 18, from Harbor Springs Michigan and Adam Lockard, 21, of Bethesda, Maryland.
3/23/10	Eastern Illinois University	Charleston	IL		Off-campus	porch	A fire started in a covered porch on the rear of an off-campus student house broke out at 5:20 p.m. The fire spread to the interior of the building and caused \$30,000 in damage to the contents and \$50,000 in damage to the building. The cause of the fire is unknown. There were two occupants at home at the time of the fire.
4/3/10	Eastern Michigan University	Ann Arbor	MI	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch, couch	<p>April 3, 2010 Ann Arbor, Michigan</p> <p>A student from Eastern Michigan University was killed in an off-campus fire in Ann Arbor, Michigan. According to the university, 22-year-old Renden LeMasters was killed in the fire. LeMasters was a senior in the College of Technology.</p> <p>In an interview with Campus Firewatch, Ann Arbor Fire Marshal Kathleen Chamberlain reported that the fire was reported at approximately 5:30 a.m. and started in the area of the front porch which contained upholstered furniture, trash and other combustibles. The fire, which was detected by a passerby, then spread into the interior of the building through a front dormer window and two doors which were left open when the occupants escaped from the fire. The victim was found in front of the building by the first arriving fire department personnel. The cause of the fire is under investigation and has not been determined at this time.</p> <p>The building is a two-story, wood-frame, building that</p>

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							had been divided into three units located in the basement, first floor and second floor. There were interconnected smoke alarms in the building but no residential fire sprinklers.
5/6/10	Eastern Connecticut State College	Willimantic	CT		Off-campus	porch	A fire in an off-campus house broke out at 10:44 pm and displaced a number of students. The fire started on a third floor porch and extended to the structure.
6/7/10	University of Dayton	Dayton	OH		Residence hall	porch	A house owned by the University of Dayton was damaged in a fire that started on the exterior porch. The fire also caused damage to two adjacent buildings. It is estimated that the fire caused over \$13,000 in damage. The building was unoccupied at the time of the fire.
6/25/10	Mass College of Art	Boston	MA		Off-campus	porch	A fire broke out at approximately 5:00 a.m. in an off-campus house occupied by three students. The fire started when a student fell asleep on the front porch while smoking a cigarette. The building and all of the student's work was destroyed in the fire.
9/20/10	SUNY Potsdam and Clarkson University	Potsdam	NY		Off-campus	Porch, couch	A fire in an off-campus house broke out in the evening and was started by a carelessly disposed of cigarette in a couch on the front porch. There were six people living in the house, five of which were students. All were able to escape but the house was destroyed by the fire.
11/6/10	St. Cloud University	St. Cloud	MN		Off-campus	Porch, couch	A fire in an off-campus house was started by carelessly discarded smoking materials in a porch couch. The house was completely destroyed. Several of the students had to jump from second story windows to escape from the fire.
12/11/10	University of St. Thomas	St. Paul	MN	1	Off-campus	Fatal, porch	Michael Larson, 20, a student at the University of St. Thomas, was killed in an early-morning fire in an off-campus house. The fire originated on the front porch and then extended into the house at approximately 3:00 a.m. Larson had been sleeping on a couch on the first floor and was found on the floor by fire fighters. Three other occupants in the building were

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							alerted by the activation of the building's smoke alarms and were forced to jump from second-story windows to escape from the fire. The cause of the fire has not been reported at this time.
4/17/11	Texas A&M	College Station	TX		Off-campus – deck fire	Deck	Five Texas A&M students and a student from another college, along with four other occupants, were displaced by a fire in an apartment complex that was started by an improperly discarded cigarette on a deck.
8/20/11	University of Missouri	Columbia	MO		Off-campus	Couch	A fire started in an couch on a front porch and caused \$50,000 in damage. Columbia has an ordinance banning the use of couches and upholstered furniture on exterior porches. There were working smoke alarms in the basement, where two residents were living, but none on the first floor.
9/11/11	University of Kansas	Lawrence	KS		Off-campus	Couch	A fire in an off campus house started when a sofa on the front porch caught fire at 6:00 a.m. The fire destroyed the house and contents which was estimated to be \$234,000. All of the occupants were able to escape unharmed.
9/23/11	Unknown School	St. Paul	MN		Off-campus	Couch	A fire broke out in a front-porch couch in a house occupied by 8 college students. The cause of the fire was a carelessly discarded cigarette. This fire occurred 9 months after a similar fire, one block away, that claimed the life of a University of St. Thomas student.
1/14/12	Unknown school	Duluth	MN		Off-campus	Deck	A deck fire damaged a house occupied by four college students. The fire spread quickly into the house and caused significant damage.

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