



Safety Matters

Environmental Health & Safety

No. 21

Before you use a door stop...Stop!

Do you know that doors are an important part of a building's fire protection system? A fire needs air to keep burning, and the more air that's available, the bigger a fire can become. Open doors in hallways and stairwells throughout a building provide the perfect path for more air (causing bigger fires).



Many of the doors in OSU's buildings are linked to the fire alarm system and will close automatically when the alarm goes off. But if they are held open by a doorstop, they will stay open and possibly turn a small smoldering fire into a bigger, more dangerous one. Even more importantly, failure of doors to close could permit fire and smoke to spread to exit hallways and corridors rendering them unusable. As a result, occupants may well become trapped and perish needlessly.

If the closer on your office door will not hold your door open, instead of using a doorstop, report it to the Physical Plant Action Desk (4-7154) for repair. (Some doors are not meant to be held open unless special automatic releasing devices are in place. EHS Inspectors will remove doorstops they find during regular building inspections if that is the case.)

Some things to keep in mind when the fire alarm sounds:

- Evacuate the building—it's campus policy, state law, and the right thing to do.
- As you leave, (if it hasn't closed already) close your office door behind you—don't rely on someone else to do it for you.
- Use the stairs—not the elevator
- If you can't use the stairs, stay on the landing and tell someone to let the fire department know you're there (or call 911 on your cell phone).
- Don't go back in the building until EHS or the fire department says it's OK (even if the alarm has been turned off).

Change your bookmarks! The EHS website has moved! The new address is <http://ehs.okstate.edu>. If you'd like to see a list of all EHS articles that have appeared in Fiscally Fit, you'll find them at <http://ehs.okstate.edu/news/safetymatters>.