Issue 16 / Fall 2026

EHS & Facilities Services News



Fire Safety Month

October is Fire Safety Month and a good time to review ways to prevent fires and how to prepare for a fire emergency. Each year there are around 3,000 structural fires associated with college student housing. Knowing ways to prevent fires from starting and how to reduce their impact can not only save your possessions, but it can save your life. More details are available in our Residential Fire Safety Guide, some highlights of fire protective measures are provided below.

Be careful while cooking
The majority of college residential fires start in kitchens. Never leave a stove unattended. Do not put water on an oil fire, smother with a lid or use a fire extinguisher instead.

Take Care When Charging
Battery powered devices can pose a siginificant fire risk, especially while charging. Don't use damaged cords, place electronics on a hard surface while charging so heat isn't trapped by blankets or fabric, and if your device is hot stop using it.

Prevent fire spread
Fire-rated walls and doors can contain a fire to one room, giving time for people to evacuate and firefighters to extinguish the flames. Do not prop open fire doors with bricks or wedges.

Maintain egress corridors
A clear path helps with timely evacuation and is necessary for individuals using mobility devices. Please do not store your bikes or other large objects in hallways or stairwells where they can create a pinch point.

Open flames are prohibited
Candles, incense burning, and other sources of flames are not allowed in Reed residence halls or apartment buildings.



Damaged charging cords are a fire risk.

Evacuate immediately
If you hear a fire alarm, smell smoke, or see flames, evacuate immediately. Never assume it's a false alarm or simply a drill. Be aware of at least two evacuation routes for any space you frequently visit and your designated assembly meeting point. You can find more information about building evacuation procedures on Community Safety's Building Evacuations webpage.

Stay Safe in Any Weather

Rain, snow, and shorter days can make the fall and winter particularly hazardous. Recognizing the hazards these conditions create can help you prepare and stay safe and healthy all season long.

Slippery When Wet
Walkways are often slick in wet conditions. Outdoors, this can be exacerbated by leaves, mud, or ice. Inside, polished floors can be particularly slippery. Be sure to wear appropriate shoes, stick to paved/finished walkways outside, and wipe your feet on entry mats when coming indoors.



Slips, trips, and falls are the most common mechanism of injury at Reed.

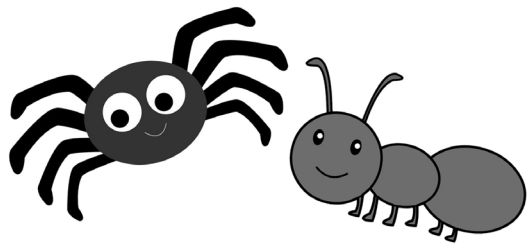
Who's afraid of the Dark?
Low light makes it difficult to perceive hazards. This can be extremely consequential for cars. Drivers, please slowly and scan the periphery for pedestrians, bikers, or wildlife. Walkers and cyclists, never assume a vehicle sees you. Make yourself more visible by wearing a light, reflective clothing, or bright colors. If possible make eye contact with drivers and don't be afraid to use your hands to signal your intentions.

Up a Creek Without a Paddle
Having emergency supplies is always important, but especially in winter when storms make power outages more likely and driving conditions much treacherous. Have a kit in both your home and your car containing shelf-stable food, water, a blanket, flashlight, and a powerbank.

Pest Season is Here

Just in time for spooky season, the creepy crawlies are heading back indoors where it's nice and warm. If you want to avoid having extra roommates there are a few simple things you can do. First, clean up crumbs and food waste so bugs are less drawn to your space. If you have pets, their food can attract ants as well, especially if it is wet. Second, examine your space for entry routes. Doors and windows are obvious, but make sure plants or tree limbs are not creating a bridge to your space.

If you do see an increase in pest activity please put in a Facilities Request. Action may be taken to control the pests, including setting traps or bait. You may see an increase in ants temporarily after bait has been deployed, but please give time for the treatment to work. Natural, herb-based repellents may be effective as well, but be sure to read all applicable safety information before using treatment without guidance from a professional.



Sustainability and Environmental Justice Collective Newsletter

Want to learn more about what SEJ is up to? They have their own newsletter! Go take a look! You can sign up to receive the newsletter directly in your inbox by completing this sign-up form. You'll be the first to hear about upcoming events, including EcoCinema and Garden Work Parties, and get updates about the amazing cross-disciplinary work happening near and far from campus.

Contact Us

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Physical Plant, 3rd Floor
Mon-Fri 8am-12pm, 1pm-5pm

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Be Ready for Break

Fall and Winter Breaks are a great chance to recharge, relax, and spend some time away from campus. If you're planning on leaving your residence, here are some ways you can prepare your space to deter break-ins, prevent fires, and reduce your energy consumption.

Secure Your Space
Bring any valuable items inside where they are secure. Make sure your windows are closed and locked. If installed, lock both the deadbolt and door handle for additional security.

Unplug and Power-Off
Unplug appliances and other electronics to reduce energy consumption and the possibility of an electrical short. Be sure to properly power down devices rather than simply pulling the plug.

Leave the Heat On
Lowering the heat is a good way to reduce energy consumption, but don't turn the thermostat all the way off. Keeping the heat at least above 55 degrees Fahrenheit can help protect against freezing pipes if there is severely cold weather.

Toss Food and Take Out the Trash
Dispose of any perishable food that may expire while you're away. Any food items left open may attract pests. Take out the trash as well, as this can be a source of unpleasant odors and attract pests, too.

Prepare Your Plants
If you have houseplants, make sure they are thoroughly watered before you depart. Move your plants away from any heat or ignition sources that could start a fire if they dry out. If you have a Christmas Tree, you may consider removing it if you are going to be away for an extended period, and be sure to unplug any lights/decorations.

Inform a Friend or Neighbor
If you live off campus, inform a friend or neighbor of your travel plans. They may be able to help keep an eye on things while you are gone.

Contracting Info from Risk Management

All requests to engage an independent contractor must continue to follow the established procedures outlined on the Independent Contractor website. Adhering to these requirements helps ensure timely review, proper classification, and compliance with college policies and applicable regulations.
Requests should be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the anticipated start date. Requests submitted with less notice may experience delays.

Please review the available resources before initiating a request:

- Contract Overview Website
- Independent Contractor Engagement

Rental cars may be booked by faculty and staff for a discounted price through our preferred provider program at Enterprise and National Car Rental. Details on the process can be found on the Risk Management Travel Webpage.

Campus Heating Control Guide

Crisp mornings and warm afternoons are a beautiful part of fall, but can create a challenge for indoor climate control. You may need to adjust your heating as the season changes to keep your space comfortable. Heating systems vary around campus, so you may be unfamiliar with your controls. Fear not! You can find out how to adjust your heat in the Campus Heating Control Guide.

Congrats, Steve!

After 20 incredible years of service at Reed College, Steve Yeadon, our Executive Director of Facilities Operations, will be retiring this coming spring. Under Steve's leadership the campus experienced significant growth and development, including the addition of the Trillium Residence Hall and extensive remodels to the Physical Plant, Sports Center, the Library, and Gray Campus Center Commons & Kitchen.

Steve has been a wonderful captain at the helm of our department, and while we are excited for him to enjoy some well-deserved free-time he will surely be missed. His mentorship, determination, and loyal support are just a few of the innumerable qualities that allowed Facilities to be so successful during his tenure and have made Steve an incredible director.

We'll miss hearing Jimmy Buffet coming from your office on sunny afternoons, and we hope you never have to respond to a boiler alarm or roof emergency ever again!

Enjoy your retirement!

(P.S. Keep an eye out for an upcoming retirement party announcment!)





