

# Forwarned is forearmed

## LESSONS FROM A CAMPUS DORM COOKING FIRE

The National Fire Protection Association has identified stovetop cooking as the number one cause of household fire and fire injuries across North America. They estimate that cooking is responsible for almost 50 percent of all reported household fires in the United States. They also estimate that there are more than 450 cooking fires in the US every day. More chilling is that the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that for every single reported fire there are another 30-50 fires that go unreported.



**In the time it takes to read this, two cooking fires will have been reported somewhere in America.**



(Source:potsdamfire.org)

### Think it can't happen to you or your property? Think again.

Located in Potsdam, New York, Clarkson University has, according to their website, been "bridging discovery, and engineering innovation with enterprise since 1986." So, after experiencing a cooking fire in one of their on-campus apartments, it's not surprising that Clarkson University choose SmartBurner. Of course, a university that places so much emphasis on engineering innovation would come to select a product from North America's leader in cooking fire technology.

### What happened?

On Tuesday, March 28, 2017, just before 7:00 p.m. some students at

Clarkson University had their evening routine disrupted by a sudden and potentially devastating cooking fire. In less than three minutes a grease fire in an on-campus apartment turned into a major building fire. Fortunately, all students evacuated their apartment dorm quickly and there were no reports of injuries. As for the building itself? That's another story. Early reports were the apartment was so badly damaged by the fire it would need to be torn down and rebuilt.

One student living in an adjacent building witnessed the fire and described it this way, "I was looking right at the window and could see the kitchen when the fire started. My guess is that someone tried to put water on it. One minute it was small and I could see

**“ Within two and a half minutes, the whole apartment was up in flames. ”**

*it through the window and then it just exploded.”*

Another student who lived in the building and was forced to evacuate commented on the speed at which the fire spread, "Within two and a half minutes, the whole apartment was up in flames."



(Source: wwrytv.com)



(Source: hehillnews.org/lp/kwilson/fire-damages-clarkson)

Numerous reports confirm that the fire started in one of the apartment's kitchens as a cooking grease fire. What it left behind in a matter of minutes was scorched walls, holes in the roof and extensive fire and smoke damage to personal belongings. The University secured temporary accommodation for all 13 students at a nearby Inn and then made provisions to move them into permanent campus housing.

Clarkson University President Tony Collins confirmed that the **fire started in the kitchen**. *"One of the students was cooking and there was an accidental cooking fire. Oil in the pan she was using caught on fire, and all of a sudden, there was a blaze that took off,"*

### An A+ Response

Sometimes, we don't immediately recognize problems or priorities until the evidence is before us. To their great credit, after the events of March 28, Clarkson University recognized the very real and very serious risk of cooking fires in their campus dormitories. After assessing the products and solutions available to them to address that risk properly, Clarkson made the smart choice and purchased **SmartBurner™**. By August 2017, Clarkson University had purchased 86 sets of **SmartBurner™** for their campus dormitories. In November, they ordered an additional 95 sets for a total of 181.

### A Word to the Wise: Cooking Fires are the Leading Cause of Home and Residence Fires

At Pioneering Technology, we are all too familiar with stories like the one from Clarkson University. In the United States, a home fire is reported every 85 seconds. Almost half of them are cooking fires. Whether the cooking fire happens on a school campus, a public housing complex, a senior's residence or even a long-term stay hotel, the effects of a cooking fire are astonishingly fast and devastatingly destructive. In the best circumstances, it's only property that is damaged. As Clarkson's President put it on the evening of the fire: "At this point we're just grateful. Buildings can be replaced, people can't." Sadly, too many cooking fires across North America also cause serious injuries, sometimes even fatalities.

We proudly manufacture and distribute products that help protect lives and property by tackling the serious problem of cooking fires. Our technology also saves energy and money. For example, our **SmartBurner™** technology has been installed in more than 250,000 units across North America and **not one fire has been reported**. Our products are not just the smart choice, they are the right choice and the right thing to do.

Together, we can help save lives, property and money from the ever-present risk of cooking fires!

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Cooking fires happen. Too often.

The risk is unexpected and usually under-estimated. When cooking fires happen, the consequences can be swift, serious and expensive.

Following their single on-campus apartment cooking fire in March, Clarkson University chose a cooking fire prevention model and purchased 181 sets of **SmartBurner™**.