

Where there's smoke, there's...

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE SIGNIFICANT MONEY ON FALSE ALARM ACTIVATIONS

It's snack time on campus somewhere! And somewhere across America in a campus residence, a student has just popped open their microwave oven to feed a craving. They have also just rolled the dice again on having an on campus false alarm activation or worse, a cooking fire. According to the National Protection Fire Association (NFPA) microwave ovens are, on average, involved in more than 7,000 home structure fires every year, that's more than 19 fires every day. Perhaps surprisingly, microwaves are also responsible for more emergency room injury visits than any other cooking device. More surprising however, is the magnitude of nuisance alarms from microwave ovens.



(Source:Ohio Univeristy Facebook page)

An Ohio University/Athens Fire Department joint study estimates the direct cost of a single nuisance alarm is more than \$2,000. Not to mention the response hazards, study time or class interruptions, lost time, or personnel required for evacuations and investigations.



(Source:Ohio Univeristy Facebook page)

Make no mistake: Nuisance alarms are expensive.

False alarms, or nuisance alarms as they are referred to in the fire service, are a massively expensive problem for many facilities – especially our nation's colleges and universities. Apart from wasting thousands of dollars, nuisance alarms can also create very unfortunate behaviour risks. When people hear a false alarm too often, and consistently find there is no actual fire risk, they become conditioned to down-play future alarms or worse ignore them altogether. As a result, the one time a fire alarm is real, residents may fail to act or act fast enough to avoid serious injury.

With that in mind, the Athens Ohio Fire Department (AFD) partnered with Ohio

University's Environmental Health and Safety Department (EHS) to study the number of nuisance alarms on campus and what was causing them. Here's what they found: The fire department was responding to more than 100 on-campus nuisance alarms annually; and most of them were caused by burnt or overcooked food in microwave ovens! Since each nuisance run made by the AFD resulted in a direct cost of more than \$2,000, Ohio University found they were spending more than \$200,000 every year on false alarm activations from microwave ovens. That is literally like watching hundreds of thousands of dollars go up in smoke each and every year!

Yes, Safe-T-Sensor makes cents!
What was the University's chosen

“ When I hear the alarm go off, I tend to shrug it off or sigh because it's almost never real. ” Ohio University Student

solution? Safe-T-sensor. A cooking fire safety product from Pioneering Technology designed to help prevent microwave fires and false alarm activations. Safe-T-sensor attaches to the outside of a microwave and at the first sign of smoke from inside the microwave, it shuts the appliance off



(Source:Ohio Univeristy Facebook page)



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before a fire can occur or the fire alarm is triggered.

Over the school's winter break, Ohio University installed more than 3,500 Safe-T-sensors. In the following 14 weeks, the school saw a 92 percent drop in the number of false alarm activations from microwave ovens versus the corresponding 14-week period from the year before. By combining their Safe-T-sensor roll out with targeted cooking fire safety presentations and materials, Ohio University was able to dramatically save money through fewer nuisance alarms. They were also able to create significant awareness for on-campus fire safety generally. That initial installation was followed up with the installation of another 1,000 sensors. In total, Ohio University purchased 4,630 Safe-T-sensors. An investment that literally paid for itself in a very short period of time.

As Brent Auker, a Fire Protection Engineer at the University explained it: "The investment in these sensors has reduced fire runs, response hazards, late night residence evacuations, interruption in study time and the cost of fire equipment operation, campus police and personnel required to investigate."

A Word to the Wise

At Pioneering Technology, we are all too familiar with stories like the one from Ohio University.

Whether the cooking fire happens on a school campus, in a public housing complex, a senior's residence or even an extended 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. 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. 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

- Microwave ovens cause fires and false alarm activations. Often.
- A joint study between Ohio University and the Athens Ohio Fire Department estimated the direct cost of a single nuisance alarm was \$2,000.
- It was also estimated that microwave oven false alarms cost the school about \$200,000 annually.
- After 14 weeks, Ohio University found that Safe-T-sensor delivered a 92 percent drop in nuisance alarm activations from their on campus microwave ovens.