

Fire prevention in student residences: a contradictio in terminis?

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Students, behavior and fire risk

 Are these fine young cannibals interested in how to prevent fire?

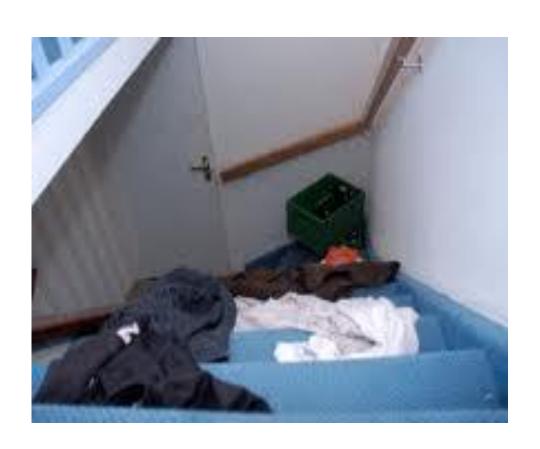


What do you think?

They have far more serious problems



So who cares about escape routes in case of fire



In case of fire: first make sure the beer is safe



No problem, still working



So (how) can this behavior be changed?

- Don't even <u>try</u> to convince students to change this behavior with strong arguments
- This kind behavior is: <u>doing without deliberation</u>: it is unconscious behavior
- In that case arguments have no effect at all
- A different way of influencing is needed
- Namely: influencing without attention required

Influencing unconscious behavior

- We used techniques from the field of social influence in social psychology
- Techniques that affect unconscious behavior while the target group does not have the faintest idea that they are influenced
- For example: we referred to what most students do
- This intervention is named social validation: we mostly act like our peers are acting, especially when we are doing without deliberation

One of the intervention techniques: social validation

- Simple wall sticker
- Image: smoke detector is sounding
- Text:

Most students look after good working smoke detectors.

That is safer both for you and your house mates



Effect size

- Escape routes free from obstacles: from 73% to 90%
- Kitchen equipment less dangerous: from 48% to 92%
- Hygiene related to fire risk improved: 33% of the residences moved from 'bad and moderate' to 'good'

Required

- A simple sticker
- And a evidence based intervention technique