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Use of safe lights urged

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By **BRYAN ROY**

WEST SPRINGFIELD - A safe new technology manufactured in Western Massachusetts is aimed at helping college students across the country prevent fires during power outages.

Cyalume Technologies is marketing its SnapLight, a source of safe light without a flame, spark, battery or bulb, as a means of keeping college students safer in their dorm rooms.

"Safe emergency light is critically important to all people," said Staasi Heropoulos, director of communications and media relations at Cyalume. "We're focusing on back to school because students can make especially bad choices when they use emergency light in a power outage."

During the past academic year, fires caused 20 deaths on U.S. college and university campuses, Heropoulos said. Since 2000, dorm and college apartment fires have killed 109 people.

"We're working with college administrators to educate them on the risk of candles and flames," Heropoulos said. "It's an awareness campaign (that) we're trying to get the message out to students."

SnapLight safely mixes two chemicals in a plastic casing to create instant light cool to touch equivalent to a 40-watt lightbulb. The technology was first introduced in the military before the Cold War.

"Candles are increasingly dangerous and being banned from university campuses due to a risk of fire," Heropoulos said. "The concept is similar to that of a firefly."

The chemi-luminescent technology is still used today by the American Red Cross, the federal Emergency Management Agency and firefighters. Cyalume has been developing its military-grade technology for consumers for 40 years.

"Students need safe light not only when the power goes out, but also when they have to evacuate their apartments or dorms during fires or for any reason," said Sandy Weisz, Cyalume Technologies vice president of product development. "SnapLights prevent fire and give total illumination for rooms, hallways, exits, or evacuation routes."

Heropoulos has been working directly with university administrations and publications to promote the product in the academic community.

"It's a critically serious issue," he added. "We're trying to educate the student body and the public, because it's important for the parents as well."

Visit SnapLights online at www.cyalume.com or call 1 (888) 858-7881 for more information.

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