School Fire Safety Guide

This guide is designed to reduce the number of potential fire related incidents and injuries in schools.

- Apart from arson, major causes of school fires include improper handling and storage of flammable liquids, overloaded electrical outlets and excessive accumulation of combustibles. Many fires are a result of changing original designs, where classrooms are turned into repair shops, spray painting rooms, or other industrial arts instruction areas. Wiring, ventilation and construction are often unsuitable for a new use, having not been considered during the original design and construction of the school.
- Young children must rely on you to handle any school fire emergency, and, as a school employee, your responsibility is to establish an environment which can reduce, control and eliminate conditions that may contribute to fire.

IN CASE OF FIRE:
- Establish a fire safety plan and post in every room
- Evacuate students in immediate danger.
- **Sound the alarm.** Always sound the alarm at the first sign of smoke or fire.
- Perform any fire drill duties assigned to you.
- Fight the fire with the proper equipment only if you are not putting yourself or anyone else in danger. **DO NOT FIGHT** the fire if it is spreading rapidly or blocking your exit. If you do not know how to use the fire equipment, leave the building immediately.
- Learn how to operate fire extinguishers and fire blankets. Your fire department is available to provide instructions and demonstrations.
- Close room doors and hallway doors to prevent air movement and spread of smoke.
- **DO NOT PANIC.** Advise students that the fire plan is in operation and remain calm. Your confidence and judgment is extremely important and will prevent panic.

FIRE DRILLS:
- Always take school fire drills seriously, and evacuate the school when the alarm sounds.
- Hold fire drills on a regular basis. The first emergency evacuation drill of each school year shall be conducted within 10 days of the beginning of classes. See chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>How Often</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>K thru 6th</td>
<td>Every Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>7th thru 8th</td>
<td>Four times a year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>9th thru 12th</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
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</table>
• Ensure that school employees know how to evacuate their work areas and perform their fire drill duties in an emergency.
• Be familiar with the location of the nearest fire alarm box and extinguisher

EMERGENCY EXITS:
• Clearly mark evacuation routes on the school floor plan, and place it adjacent to room exit doors.
• Keep all doorways clear, including secondary exits.
• Identify exits with approved exit signs and keep them unobstructed.
• Inspect and test emergency lighting and exit signs monthly by activating test switch. Annually test by disconnecting the power supply. If light fades before 30 minutes repair the unit.
• Avoid wedging open hallway doors. Hallways must be protected from smoke and fire.
• Test fire doors regularly to make certain that the doors do not jam and that the hardware is not detached.
• In corridors and hallways; Restrict paper to bulletin boards and fasten at all corners. DO NOT exceed 20% of wall area.

FLAMMABLE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:
• Store flammable liquids properly and dispense them from an approved safety container.
• Avoid storing incompatible chemicals next to each other as interaction may occur and cause a fire or explosion.
• Survey chemicals annually and properly discard any which are obsolete or show signs of decomposition.
• Order and store the minimum supply necessary.
• Clean up spills immediately.
• Dispose of rubbish regularly and in a proper manner.
• Keep MSDS readily available.

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS:
• Repair all electrical hazards and avoid overloading outlets.
• Electrical outlets and frayed cords can cause burns and shock. Avoid overloading outlets and use approved extension cords only on a temporary basis.
• Check electrical appliances and cords regularly, and disconnect appliances when practical.
• Protect all unused outlets in kindergarten and pre-school nurseries with safety plugs.
• Avoid overloading electrical outlets and keep wiring away from doorways, windows or under carpeting.
• If re-locatable power taps are used they must be U.L. listed and equipped with a 15 amp circuit breaker. Follow the manufacturer’s directions for proper use.
COMMON FIRE HAZARDS:
• Keep combustible material away from heaters and other ignition sources.
• Avoid portable heaters.
• Dispose of rubbish daily and reduce accumulation of combustible materials.

CLASSROOMS:
• Restrict papers and other non-fire retardant materials to 50% of wall space.

KITCHENS AND HOME ECONOMICS:
• Keep all cooking equipment, hoods, filters and ducts free of grease accumulation.
• Clean up spills immediately.
• Regularly clean lint traps on dryers and filters on vents, fans and air conditioners.
• Never leave hand irons plugged in.

INDUSTRIAL ARTS:
• Secure compressed gas cylinders in an upright position. Avoid dropping, rolling or knocking them together.
• Never weld or use open flame in areas where flammable or combustible material is stored.
• Keep work area clean and check daily for fire hazards.
• Provide suitable waste cans for disposal of oil soaked and paint rags.
• Use safety cans for storing and dispensing small amounts of flammable liquids.
• Ensure good ventilation for painting operations and a regular routine for cleaning up overspray residues.
• Supply suitable and easily accessible fire extinguishers.

STORAGE AREAS:
• Carefully store and handle cleaning compounds, polishes and other flammable items, they often give off flammable vapors.
• Practice good housekeeping and keep combustible storage to a minimum.

UTILITY AND MAINTENANCE ROOMS:
• DO NOT store combustibles in boiler rooms or furnace rooms.
• Service heating equipment annually and check units regularly to make sure they are in proper working condition.
• DO NOT store combustible materials in electrical rooms.

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