

Office of the Fire Marshal Kern County Fire Department

Fire Prevention

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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:

Level	Grade	How Often
Elementary	K thru 6 th	Every Month
Intermediate	7 th thru 8 th	Four times a year
Secondary	9 th thru 12 th	Twice a year

- Ensure that school employees know to how 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 where 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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