

FIRE DRILLS

Background

The *Fire Services Act* requires that a system of fire drills approved by the Fire Marshal be adopted and practised by all persons in every school.

At least three fire drills are required in every school in each fall and spring term. The Principal or person in charge in each building shall instruct all employees in fire drill procedures, subject to the particular conditions in that building. They shall also see that each teacher or employee has in their possession a copy of the fire exit drill and that the plans are discussed and practised. Lives may someday depend on how confidently, quickly, and calmly the staff can carry out these plans; no effort must be spared to ensure that they are clearly understood by everyone.

Each teacher, under the direction of the Principal, shall instruct the students of their class in the approved fire drill procedure and shall make special provisions for the care of any student who may be physically or mentally incapable of proceeding safely to the exits. If a teacher must leave a class unattended for any length of time, a teacher in a neighbouring classroom must be notified so that, in case of fire, that teacher will take charge of the unattended class in addition to their own. If a teacher appoints one or more competent students in their class to act as fire monitors, these monitors may be used only to check the immediate area of their own classroom and must leave the school with their class.

The Principal or person in charge of each building shall have access to exits checked daily to ensure that no obstructions exist and doors open freely.

The Principal shall notify the Fire Department immediately of any fire that occurs in a school, no matter how small it may appear to be. The telephone number of the Fire Department shall be displayed prominently near all school telephones.

Procedures

1. Staff discussions of fire drills must precede the first fire drill of the year.
2. Except for the first fire drill of the year, the person in charge is to advise no one that a fire drill is to take place (an exception is to be made in regard to the person who has been delegated to telephone the Fire Department in case of fire).
3. In schools that are connected to the city alarm system, the Principal must disconnect the school alarm system from the city alarm system before holding a fire drill.
 - 3.1. Care is to be taken to make certain that the city alarm system is reconnected after the fire drill. The city alarm system must be connected to the school alarm system at all times other than at fire drills.

4. In arranging a fire drill, one member of the staff must be informed by note, or by word of mouth, to give the alarm. This will demonstrate that:
 - 4.1. The person selected seeks the nearest alarm station in the school and activates it immediately;
 - 4.2. The alarm system is in working order.
5. Each drill is to involve a different staff member and a different alarm station.
6. The alarm is to be allowed to ring until the school is evacuated before having someone shut it off. The method of shutting off the alarm and replacing the broken alarm glass is to be arranged beforehand.
7. All areas in the school, including classrooms, washrooms, health rooms, council rooms, etc., must be checked by adults.
8. A student monitor may not be used to check other than the immediate area of their classroom and must leave the building with their class. The monitor or last child out of the room is to close the door.
9. All classes must remain "in formation" and outside the building until the pre-arranged intermittent signal is given by the Principal to return. The signal must be distinct from any other so that classes will not return on an automatic period bell or accidental ringing of bells.
10. Variations in fire drills are suggested to allow for unusual conditions that may actually occur; for example:
 - 10.1. Blocked exits or stairways;
 - 10.2. Drills using the alternate alarm system in case the fire bells fail (any alternate system is to be known by staff and students and, when used, is to be continued until the last student is out of the school).
 - 10.2.1. In small schools, a hand bell is suitable. In large schools, intermittent signals with the program bell or P.A. system are satisfactory if repeated until every student is out.
11. The system of drills must be organized so that it will function adequately in the absence of any staff.
12. Provision must be made for the prompt calling of the Fire Department, except in the case of practice drills.
13. Students are to be instructed that, in case of fire, they are to ring the fire alarm if a teacher is not immediately available.
14. In order to ensure accurate attendance records at all times, it is essential to have teachers check attendance at the beginning of each period.
15. Fireproofing of Stage Settings and Scenery

Clauses in the *Fire Services Act* deal with the use of stages, requiring that all stage settings and scenery must be incombustible or treated to render them flameproof.

- 15.1. Cloth material (drapes, backdrops, etc.), rattan, or similar materials, must be flameproofed. Any existing cloth material must be destroyed or flameproofed. Flameproofing may be obtained through a supplies requisition.
 - 15.2. Plywood or hardboard (such as Masonite) may be used untreated.
 - 15.3. Paper or cardboard must be flameproof stock. Existing paper or cardboard scenery must be destroyed, as it is more expensive to flameproof than to make new scenery. New stock may be obtained through a supplies requisition.
 - 15.4. Paint used on stage settings or scenery must be water-based or fire retardant so that the scenery is not highly combustible.
 - 15.5. Stock to replace scenery or procedures to flameproof existing cloth materials will be provided at District expense. Stock and procedures of flameproofing for new scenery to be constructed in the future may be done on a repayable basis through a supplies requisition.
16. The Director of Facilities will be responsible for co-ordinating the restoration procedures to be undertaken in the event of a fire in a school.
- When a fire is reported, the following events will take place:
- 16.1. The Fire Department and Police Department have been given a list of persons to contact, beginning with the engineer-custodian and the assistant engineer-custodian, followed by a number of other names in case the first two persons cannot be reached;
 - 16.2. The engineer-custodian will contact one of their supervisors, and report the fire;
 - 16.3. The Supervisor will immediately contact the Principal and the Director of Facilities if the fire has a significant effect on occupancy (more than one classroom damaged) or, if the damage is minor (one classroom or less involved), the Supervisor will contact the Principal and the Director of Facilities at a convenient time (assuming the fire occurred after school hours);
 - 16.4. The Principal will contact the area Associate Superintendent for the school, Director of Facilities, and Office of the Superintendent, as necessary (depending on the extent of the fire);
 - 16.5. The area Associate Superintendent and the Principal will be responsible for relocation of students, as necessary, and the Office of the Superintendent will be responsible for informing the media;
 - 16.6. The Director of Facilities, will be responsible for co-ordinating the repair and restoration function that, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, will include:
 - 16.6.1. Advising a representative of the Facilities department of the fire (this person will then be responsible for providing clean-up staff),
 - 16.6.2. Assigning staff to provide protection to the building and equipment, and carrying out necessary initial repairs,
 - 16.6.3. Advising the Manager of Purchasing and Material Services, who will then be responsible for compiling the equipment component of the fire loss claim,

- 16.6.4. Advising the insurance adjuster at the time of the fire, taking all necessary steps to establish the amount of the building loss and having the repair of the damaged premises proceed as quickly as possible;
- 16.7. The compilation of the fire loss claim will be the responsibility of the Assistant Secretary Treasurer;
- 16.8. The Secretary-Treasurer will notify the insurers of the fire, as required by the contract of insurance, and submit the fire loss claim when it is completed;
- 16.9. The Principal will be responsible for forwarding a report of the fire to the office of the Secretary-Treasurer and informing the Fire Department (all fires must be reported, including those that do not result in damage to the buildings and/or equipment).

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
B.C. Fire Code
Fire Services Act
School Regulation 265/89

Adopted: October 18, 1982

Revised: November 1984; August 1, 1990; September 1994; January 1999; September 24, 2018