

FIRE SAFETY

POLICY

- 1.0 The Halifax Regional School Board recognizes the need for a planned program of fire safety to ensure a safe environment for all personnel and pupils.
- 2.0 Under national, provincial and municipal fire regulations, the Board will ensure compliance with:
 - 2.0.1 Fire Safety Planning
 - 2.0.1.1 Fire Prevention
 - 2.0.1.2 Emergency Preparedness
 - 2.0.1.3 Fire Emergency Procedures
 - 2.0.2 Fire Safety Systems Maintenance
- 3.0 Responsibility for monitoring and implementation of this policy will be shared among the Operations, School Administration and Board Services Departments.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. *Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (1999) National Fire Code of Canada, 2005*
2. *Nova Scotia Department of Education (2004) Principal's Guide for Fire Safety Planning in Schools*
3. *Nova Scotia Department of Education (2004), Fire Safety Maintenance Information*
Nova Scotia Department of Education (2004), Fire Safety Systems Maintenance Log

FIRE SAFETY

PROCEDURES

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1.0 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERINTENDENT

- 1.1 The Superintendent shall ensure that all schools comply with the requirements of national, provincial and municipal fire safety regulations.

2.0 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD DEPARTMENTS

- 2.1 It is the joint responsibility of the Operations, School Administration and Board Services Departments to provide information and training, as required, to principals regarding the most up-to-date national, provincial and municipal fire safety regulations for schools.

3.0 FIRE SAFETY PLANNING – THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the principal in each school to ensure compliance with all **Fire Prevention** regulations including mandated limitations on combustible wall materials (student art work & teacher aids/paint), safe storage of flammable and combustible liquids, safe storage of compressed flammable gases, maximum occupant loads for regular and special circumstances, exit capacity calculations, and the use of electrical equipment.
- 3.2 Principals are required to implement steps required for **Emergency Preparedness** including:
 - identification of a School Fire Emergency Team,
 - identification of shelter for students in an emergency,
 - maintenance of a fire emergency box,
 - posting information on exit routes from all rooms in the school,

- ensuring that no entrance or emergency exit doors are blocked, barred or locked,
- implementation of mandated requirements for fire drills (see **Appendix A**),
- implementation of special procedures for schools with cafeterias, (e.g. kitchen fuel supplies, kitchen hood suppression system),
- development of special provisions for persons requiring assistance,
- training in the operation of fire alarm systems.

3.2.1 Principals and their designate(s) are also responsible for ongoing communication with the fire department regarding any changes to the Fire Safety Plan (Prevention, Preparedness and Fire Emergency Procedures)

3.3 It is the responsibility of the principal in each school to establish **Fire Emergency Procedures** (see **Appendix A**) that include details on:

- a. Evacuation in the event of a fire
- b. Communications with Emergency Services (911)
- c. Use of Fire Extinguishers
- d. Portable Classrooms
- e. Discovery of Smoke or Fire in the Cafeteria
- f. Discovery of Smoke or Fire in Portable Classrooms

3.4 Principals are responsible for providing information and training, as required, to all staff regarding their roles and responsibilities for implementation of fire prevention, emergency preparedness and fire emergency procedures.

3.5 Principals are responsible for ensuring that all documents related to fire safety planning are stored in the school's main office and that all documents are kept up-to-date according to timelines prescribed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. These documents include: the Principal's Guide for Fire Safety Planning in Schools, the Fire Safety Maintenance Information Binder, and the Fire Safety Systems Maintenance Log.

4.0 FIRE SAFETY PLANNING – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MAINTENANCE AND CUSTODIAL STAFF

4.1 Caretakers are responsible to complete daily, weekly and monthly maintenance tasks to fire safety systems in the school buildings as listed in the Fire Safety Plan Maintenance Log

APPENDIX A EVACUATION PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE EMERGENCY OR FIRE DRILL

FIRE DRILLS

The National Fire Code of Canada, 1995, requires that full evacuation fire drills are to be completed successfully six times per year (at least three times during each of the fall and spring school terms).

The first fire drill shall be held within the first week of the fall term, followed by two more drills evenly distributed between this time and the end of the fall term. The same sequence shall occur following the start of the winter (spring) term.

If problems occur in any drill, a subsequent drill should be conducted shortly after. It is important that there are six successful fire drills.

Signs must be posted adjacent to fire alarm manual pull stations and must list the procedures to follow once a fire alarm has been activated. A fire escape plan shall be posted in conspicuous locations, in all classrooms, and corridors. These plans shall identify escape routes out of the facility, the locations of refuge areas within a facility, as well as the locations of safe areas to assemble.

1. PROCEDURES

1. Before initiating fire drill, the principal or designate must contact the fire alarm monitoring company and the Fire Department Central Dispatch at 490-5020 to advise each of the fire drill schedule and avoid Fire Department dispatch.
2. The principal or their designate is required to conduct full evacuation drills by initiating a fire alarm. This is accomplished by **using manual fire alarm pull stations** and not the fire drill button on the fire alarm panel. A different pull station should be used for each drill.
3. The principal or their designate will proceed to the emergency fire box to collect a vest and any information required in the state of a fire emergency.
4. School personnel will instruct all students and people (with the exception of students or staff described below under #5) in the area to exit the building. A sweep of the area must be conducted.

5. All teachers will take the register or class list with them to assist with accounting for all students.
6. All persons evacuated must proceed to a predetermined point of safety and remain there until a check is made to account for everyone in the building.
7. No person will return to the school until directed to do so by a verbal command from the principal or principal's designate.
8. During all fire drills, principal or their designate shall carry the information that would be necessary in a fire emergency situation. This would include:
 - Contact information for contingency plans for moving students to an alternate location.
 - A means of communicating to the school board or other agencies, once outside of the school without the need for re-entry, i.e. a cell phone that is available to the principal or their designate.
 - Vest and all materials in emergency firebox.
9. Persons with disabilities that impact their evacuation will be moved to pre-assigned safe refuge areas (see procedure 3.2.1 below).
10. A record is to be kept for each drill, indicating:
 - a. Time
 - b. Time to evacuate.
 - c. Type of fire drill shall be indicated in the fire drill record indicating if the drill as for the school (and daycare if applicable) or for the daycare.
11. All fire drills are also to be recorded in the maintenance log. Fire drill records shall be made available for review by the Fire Department and/or Deputy Fire Marshall.
12. An assessment of each drill shall be made to determine the success of the drill and possible improvement.
13. Once the drill is complete, the fire alarm manual pull station shall be reset and the fire alarm control panel acknowledged and reset.
14. Upon completion of the drill, the principal or designate will contact the alarm monitoring company and the Fire Department Central Dispatch at 490-5020 to advise each that the fire drill has been completed.

NOTE - SOUNDING OF THE ALARM AFTER THE DRILL HAS BEEN COMPLETED IS NOT PERMITTED TO BE USED AS A MEANS FOR NOTIFYING OCCUPANTS THAT THEY CAN RE-ENTER THE FACILITY.

2. PROCEDURES FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Procedures for ensuring the safety of persons with special need during a fire drill or emergency situation is something that is required to be planned and in place for every facility.

Sub-Clause 2.8.2.1.(1)(a)(iv) of the National Fire Code of Canada, 1995 requires that emergency procedures for a facility shall include special provisions for persons requiring assistance. Some occupants of a building may require special assistance during evacuation of a building because of cognitive or physical limitations which make them unable to proceed independently to a place of safety. Fire safety for these persons will depend on pre-planning and on their awareness of the fire protection measures incorporated into the building.

The principal shall clearly identify the persons requiring assistance and the information that will impact their movement. This will define the method for moving such individuals and the resources that are needed.

A person with a special need is not to be left unattended during a fire drill or emergency situation.

3. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOLS WITH PORTABLES

Schools with portables **not** attached to the main building will;

1. Develop procedures for notifying staff in portables about a. Fire Drills and b. Fire Emergencies
2. Have fire drills for portables that are separate from the fire drill in the main building,
3. Not evacuate the portables during fire drills in the main building.

4. FOR DAY CARE CENTRES IN SCHOOLS

Fire drills in day care centres shall be conducted during every month of operation. Six fire drills can be part of the school fire drill; the additional four fire drills can be “silent” drills and must demonstrate readiness. Silent drills are fire drills that are carried out as per the normal procedures, except than an alarm is not sounded throughout the facility. The options for “silent” drills shall be determined in discussions with the Office of the Fire Marshall. Daycare fire drills are to be recorded in the fire safety systems maintenance log located in the administration office.