

**State of New Hampshire Department of Safety
Richard M. Flynn, Commissioner
Division of Fire Safety
Office of the State Fire Marshall
Donald P. Bliss, State Fire Marshall
10 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03305 (603) 271-3294, Fax (603) 271-1091**

Information Bulletin 99-2

August, 1999

FIRE EXIT DRILLS IN EDUCATIONAL OCCUPANCIES

The 1997 edition of the NFPA 101 *Life Safety Code* has been adopted as part of the New Hampshire State Fire Code (Section Saf-C 8008.03), effective July 2, 1999.

Section 11-7 of the *Life Safety Code* establishes the requirements for the fire exit drills in educational occupancies. Section 11-7,1.2.1 has been amended in New Hampshire to encourage schools and communities to plan and practice for events such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes.

Two of the required monthly fire drills may be replaced with two “natural hazard drills”, provided that:

- ◆ An emergency response plan has been placed on file with the fire chief and the NH Office of Emergency Management; and
- ◆ The fire chief has approved the elimination of the two fire drills.

The following is the amended text of the fire drill requirement for educational occupancies (the NH amendment is italicized in bold print):

11-7,1,2.1 At least one fire drill shall be conducted every month the facility is in session.

Exception No. 1:

In climates where the weather is severe, the monthly fire exit drills shall be permitted to be deferred provided that the required number of fire exit drills is achieved and at least four (4) are conducted before the drills are deferred.

Exception No. 2:

With the approval of the local fire official, no more than two (2) of the required fire drills may be eliminated and replaced by drills that test emergency response to natural hazards such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods. No required fire drills shall be replaced by natural hazard drills unless an emergency response plan is submitted to the local fire office and the New Hampshire Office of Emergency Management.

11-7,1,2.2 One additional fire exit drill shall be required within thirty (30) days of operation.

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(Continued)**

11-7,1.3 Drills shall be executed at different hours of the day or evening, during the changing of classes, when the school is at assembly, during the recess or gymnastic periods, or during other times to avoid distinction between drills and actual fires. If a drill is called while pupils are going up and down the stairways, such as during the time classes are changing, the pupils shall be instructed to form in file and immediately proceed to the nearest available exit in an orderly manner.

11-7,1.4 Every fire exit drill shall be an exercise in school management for Principal and teachers with the chief purpose of every drill being the complete control of the class so that the teacher can form it's ranks quickly and silently, and can halt, turn, or direct the class as desired. Great emphasis shall be put upon the execution of each drill in a brisk, quietly, and orderly manner. Running shall be prohibited. If there are pupils incapable of holding their places in a line moving at a reasonable speed, provisions shall be made to have them taken care of by the more capable pupils, who will keep them from moving independently of the regular line of march.

11-7,1.5 Monitors shall be appointed from among the more mature pupils to assist in the proper execution of all drills. They shall be instructed to hold doors open in line of march or to close doors where necessary to prevent spread of fire or smoke in accordance with 5-2.1.8. There shall be at least two (2) substitutes for each appointment as to provide for proper performance in case of the absence of the regular monitors. The searching of toilet or other rooms shall be the duty of the teachers or other members of the staff. If the teachers are to search, this should be done after they have joined their classes to the preceding lines.

11-7,1.6 As all drills simulate an actual fire condition, pupils shall not be allowed to obtain clothing after the alarm is sounded, even when in homerooms, due to the confusion that would result in forming the lines and the danger of tripping over dragging apparel.

11-7,1.7 Each class or group shall proceed to the predetermined point outside the building and remain there while a check is made to see that all are accounted for, leaving only when a recall signal is given to return to the building or when dismissed. Such points shall be sufficiently far away from the building and from each other as to avoid danger from any fire in the building, interference with the fire department operations, or confusion among different classes or groups.

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(Continued)**

11-7,1.8 Fire exit drills in schools shall not include any fire extinguishing operations.

For assistance in developing a natural hazard response plan for the schools in your community, please contact Mr. Gregg Chaplin at the NH Office of Emergency Management, 107 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301, (603) 271-2231.

For further information concerning fire exit drills in schools and other occupancies, please feel free to contact this office at (603) 271-2394. Helpful information can also be found in the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code ® Handbook, 1999 edition.

TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964
ARSON HOT LINE: 1-800-400-3526

Proposed: 08/07/02
Adopted: 09/12/02
PRC Review: 11/20/19

NHSBA Review: 01/23/14