

FIRE SAFETY IS A STATE OF MIND!!

Parents, teachers, administration, everyone wants their schools to be safe as possible for their children. However, unless they are in the Fire Safety business, people do not know many of the ways to keep their facilities fire safe.

The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office has developed these informational brochures so our clients may learn some of the tips for fire safety. These tips are based on the most common Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code infractions we find in schools throughout the Commonwealth.

10 HOT FIRE SAFETY TIPS!!

1. ***Exits & Exit Access:*** Exit doors, stairways and corridors are provided so that people using the facility have ready access to exit the building in the event of an emergency. Most often, but not always, these exit ways are marked with exit signs. Often, but not always, these doors are operated by panic type hardware, so that a person merely has to push to open the door. Panic hardware must work properly.

Furniture, athletic equipment, or anything that could keep people from getting to an exit in normal lighting, darkness, or smoky conditions must never obstruct exit access, even temporarily. Also exit doors must never be locked to prevent exiting from the inside when the building is occupied. This also includes after school hours if the building is occupied.

2. ***Emergency Lighting:*** Many school facilities have emergency lighting that will provide *temporary* lighting in the event of power

Revised 09/19/16

failure. This lighting is not designed to allow normal operations during a power failure but only minimal lighting for up to 90 minutes to allow safe evacuation of the building.

At least yearly, emergency light batteries must be tested for 60 or 90 minutes, depending on when the building was built.

3. ***Illuminated Exit Signs:*** Most schools have illuminated exit signs at each required exit door. The lights in these fixtures must be operating at all times. If these fixtures have battery back up they must be tested as required for emergency lighting above.

4. ***Extension Cords:*** Extension cords are for temporary use of a portable appliance *only*. Temporary use includes holiday lighting and using an audiovisual device somewhere other than where it is normally kept. Extension cords are never to be run through doors, windows, under rugs, carpeting or through ceilings or walls. Homemade extension cords are not allowed in schools. If the cord from an appliance does not reach an outlet, a permanent outlet should be added to supply that appliance.

5. ***Multi-Plug Adapters:*** Multi-plug adapters are designed to allow more than one cord to be plugged into a single outlet. Only **approved** multi-plug adapters with over-current or relocatable power taps directly connected to permanently installed outlets are allowed. If additional outlets are needed, permanent outlets should be provided. This type of work should only be done by certified electricians.

6. ***Decorations:*** Decorations, curtains and drapes must be either noncombustible or flame resistant. Decorations cannot be excessive in the classroom or corridor. Burlap, fish netting,

parachutes and similar materials cannot be suspended from the ceiling unless approved. Artwork and teaching materials are limited to 20% of total wall area in corridors. Contact your nearest State Fire Marshal's office prior to decorating for events.

7. ***Fire Drills:*** Public schools are required by the Code of Virginia to “conduct fire drills at least once each week during the first twenty days of school and at least once each month for the remainder of the school term.” Students should know **and practice** their primary and alternate fire escape routes.

8. ***Material Storage:*** Storage cannot be closer than 24” to a ceiling or within 18” of the horizontal plane of the sprinkler deflectors in sprinkled areas. Storage shall not be in a means of egress corridor, exit or exit stair. Boiler, mechanical, and electrical equipment rooms are not to be used for storage

9. ***Fire Extinguishers:*** Fire extinguishers are to be located in readily accessible locations where they are immediately available for use. Maintenance inspections are required annually on fire extinguishers by trained inspectors. Monthly visual inspections and proper documentation is required of every fire extinguisher. Report any broken, missing or discharged fire extinguishers for repair or replacement.

10. ***Fire Rated doors:*** Rated, self-closing and latching fire doors in hallways, stairways, classrooms, and bathrooms must work properly. These doors cannot be wedged open, tied open, or made inoperable in any way.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
CONTACT THE REGIONAL STATE
FIRE MARSHAL'S NEAREST TO YOU.**

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WEB ADDRESS

http://www.vafire.com/state_fire_marshall/

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TIPS

**FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SCHOOLS**

Based on the
Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code



Presented by

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