

## Dormitory Fire Drills

**Lines of Business:** General Liability, Property

**Risk Control Strategy/Key Issues:** Implementation of a dormitory fire drill policy to promote dorm fire safety, efficient evacuation, and fire prevention strategies.

### Suggested Program Elements:

#### 1. Policy Statement:

- School management should formalize a dormitory fire drill policy. The goal of fire drills is to educate the residents about the fire alarm systems in place in the dormitory; how to activate them, where the exits are located, how to use them, areas of refuge, and how to evacuate the building in an efficient manner and lastly what to do when outside the building.
- School management should assign responsibility and accountability to one individual to conduct fire evacuation training school wide. This person should work closely with the local fire department personnel or the local authority have jurisdiction. Responsibility will include conducting training, alerting the local fire department before a drill, conducting drills, and evaluating the drills and making adjustments or changes to improve efficiency when exiting, recording the drills, and complying with NFPA 101 Chapter 4, and Chapters 28 existing dormitories and or Chapter 29 for new dormitories.

#### 2. Purpose:

Fire Drill Education Process should include the following:

Compliance with NFPA Life Safety Code 101 Chapter 4.7 Fire Drills

- 4.7.1 Where Required. Emergency egress and relocation drills conforming to the provisions of this Code shall be conducted as specified by the provisions of Chapters 11 through 42, or by appropriate action of the authority have jurisdiction. Drill shall be designed in cooperation with the local authorities.
- 4.7.2 Drill Frequency. Emergency egress and relocation drills, where required by Chapters 11 through 42 or the authority having jurisdiction shall be held with sufficient frequency to familiarize occupants with the drill procedure and to establish conduct of the drill as a matter of routine. Drills shall include suitable procedures to ensure that all persons subject to the drill participate.
- 4.7.3 Competency. Responsibility for the planning and conduct of drills shall be assigned only to competent persons qualified to exercise leadership.
- 4.7.4 Orderly Evacuation. In the conduct of drills, emphasis shall be placed on orderly evacuation rather than on speed.
- 4.7.5 Simulated Condition. Drills shall be held at expected and unexpected times and under varying conditions to simulate the unusual conditions that can occur in an actual emergency.
- 4.7.6. Relocation Area. Drill participants shall relocated to a predetermined location and remain at such locations until a recall or dismissal signal is given.

**Dorm Fire Drill Program Activities:**

- First night students are in the dorm a class should be given on the location of the exits, location of the fire alarms and the location of the areas or refuge inside the building if any, and outside the building.
- A “Dry Drill,” should be conducted walking the students through the dormitory to the exits and to the area of refuge. After this drill a live drill with the alarm sounding should be conducted.
- Additional drills should be held in the weeks after and then monthly. Again the goal is to educate and develop orderly evacuation.
- Weekly egress inspections should be conducted to ensure exit sign lights work and that emergency lighting works.
- Inspections should be made daily to ensure exits are free and clear of obstructions and that exit doors open.
- A record of each drill should be kept. Time of day, night, number of students, what problems were encountered, what can be done to resolve them, how long it took to evacuate, and when the problems will be resolved.
- Attendance should be taken at the refuge location to ensure all students, faculty or staff is accounted for. In the event a person is missing the fire department should be notified immediately.
- Room inspections should be conducted to ensure fire hazards are reduced or eliminated. Paper covering the ceiling, or tapestries on the ceilings should not be allowed. Candles should not be permitted.
- Each fire drill should have a theme. The theme can be a certain exit is not available because of smoke or fire and thus the students have to use the next available exit. Signs can be placed in the hall signaling the hazard, as well as a faculty person to reduce the potential for panic. Again the goal is education and proficiency.
- Exit maps should be posted in each dorm common areas indicating where the exits are located.

**Web Site Links:**

- National Fire Protection Association  
[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

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