

A MESSAGE FROM THE RISK MANAGER

- This pamphlet is designed to reduce the number of potential fire incidents in schools.
- Apart from arson, major causes of school fires include improper handling and storage of flammable liquids, overloaded electrical outlets and excessive accumulation of rubbish. As well, many fires are a result of changing original designs, where classrooms are turned into motor repair shops, spray painting rooms, or other industrial arts instruction areas. Wiring, ventilation and construction are often unsuitable for a new use, having not been considered during the original design and construction of the school.
- Young children must rely on you to handle any school fire emergency, and, as a school employee, your responsibility is to establish an environment which can reduce, control and eliminate conditions that may contribute to fire.

Learn now what you can do to prevent school fires.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF FIRE

- Establish a fire safety plan.
- Evacuate students in immediate danger.
- Sound the alarm.
- Perform any fire drill duties assigned to you.
- Fight the fire with the proper equipment only if you are not putting yourself or anyone else in danger. **DO NOT FIGHT** the fire if it is spreading rapidly or blocking your exit. If you do not know how to use the fire equipment, leave the building immediately.
- Close room doors and hallway doors to prevent air movement and spread of smoke.
- **DO NOT PANIC.** Advise students that the fire plan is in operation and remain calm. Your confidence and judgment is extremely important and will prevent panic.

FIRE DRILLS

- Always take school fire drills seriously, and evacuate the school when the alarm sounds.
- Hold fire drills on a regular basis. Have the initial fire drill for the school year in early September.
- Ensure that school employees know how to evacuate their work areas and perform their fire drill duties in an emergency.

- Always sound the alarm at the first sign of smoke or fire.
- Be familiar with the location of the nearest fire alarm and extinguisher.
- Learn how to operate fire extinguishers, fire blankets and fire hoses. Your fire department is available to provide instructions and demonstrations.

LABORATORIES

- Store flammable liquids properly and dispense them from an approved safety container.
- Avoid storing incompatible chemicals next to each other as interaction may occur and cause a fire or explosion.
- Survey chemicals annually and discard any which are obsolete or show signs of decomposition.
- Order and store the minimum supply necessary.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Repair all electrical hazards and avoid overloading outlets.
- Dispose of rubbish regularly and in a proper manner.
- Keep MSDS's readily available.

CLASSROOM

- Keep combustible material away from heaters.
- Avoid portable heaters.
- Clearly mark the evacuation route on the school floor plan, and place it adjacent to the classroom door.
- Check electrical appliances and cords regularly, and disconnect appliances where practical.
- Keep all doorways clear.
- Dispose of rubbish daily.
- Protect all unused outlets in kindergarten and pre-school nurseries with safety plugs.

GYMNASIUM

- Check emergency lighting monthly.
- Keep all doorways clear and exit lights in working order.

KITCHEN AND HOME ECONOMICS

- Keep all cooking equipment, hoods, filters and ducts free of grease accumulation.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Do not allow garbage to accumulate.
- Regularly clean lint traps on dryers and filters on vents, fans and air conditioners.

- Never leave hand irons plugged in. Any electrical outlets used for plugging in irons should be equipped with a pilot light.

INDUSTRIAL ARTS

- Electrical outlets and frayed cords can cause burns and shock. Avoid overloading outlets and use approved extension cords only on a temporary basis.
- Secure compressed gas cylinders in an upright position. Avoid dropping, rolling or knocking them together.
- Never weld in areas where combustible material is stored.
- Keep work area clean and check daily for fire hazards.
- Provide suitable waste cans for disposal of oil soaked and paint rags.
- Use safety cans for storing and dispensing small amounts of flammable liquids.
- Ensure good ventilation for painting operations and a regular routine for cleaning up overspray residues.
- Supply suitable and easily accessible fire extinguishers.

OFFICE AND STORAGE AREAS

- Avoid overloading electrical outlets and keep wiring away from doorways, windows or under carpeting.
- Carefully store and handle cleaning compounds and polishes, for they often give off flammable vapors.
- Ensure general order and cleanliness in storage rooms.

HALLS AND DOORWAYS

- Identify exits with lighted exit signs and keep them unobstructed.
- Avoid wedging open hallway doors.
- Check emergency lighting every month to ensure it is in proper working order.
- Test fire doors regularly to make certain that the doors do not jam and that the hardware is not detached.
- Restrict paper to bulletin boards and fasten at all corners. **DO NOT** exceed 5% of wall area.

BOILERS AND MAINTENANCE ROOMS

- DO NOT store combustibles in boiler rooms or furnace rooms.
- Service heating equipment annually and check units regularly to make sure they are in proper working condition.
- DO NOT store combustible materials in electrical rooms.

PURPOSE

Prevention is the key in eliminating conditions which may contribute to the cause of any fire. The purpose of this pamphlet is to assist school board employees in establishing a fire-safe environment in the schools for the children of this province.

Another service of the Manitoba Schools Insurance Program, this brochure suggests a number of fire safety procedures for schools.

**For more information, contact Keith Thomas,
Risk Manager of the Manitoba Association
of School Trustees.**

***YOUR FIRE SAFETY PLAN MUST CONSIDER
SPECIAL EVENTS SUCH AS GRADUATION,
CONCERTS AND SCHOOL SLEEP OVERS.
EVACUATION PROCEDURES MUST BE
INCLUDED IN YOUR PLAN.***

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Fire Safety in Schools

