

## 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**

