



Emergency Drill Guidance for the 2020 – 2021 School Year

As schools prepare to return to their buildings for the upcoming school year, it is important to recognize routine hazards will still need to be planned for alongside of COVID-19. Conducting emergency drills are a vital element of emergency preparedness. Below you will find options for consideration as you seek to conduct drills with public health in mind. If drills are modified, it will be important to place an emphasis on educating students and staff on policies and proper procedures for various drills. The upcoming school year may look different for each school corporation. Therefore, the following considerations are for schools to utilize when considering how to conduct drills in the upcoming year.

Remember, in an emergency situation it is important to seek safety immediately.

Fire Drills:

- Schools may choose to “slow down” their drills. This may include sounding the alarm for all occupants to be familiar with the sound, silencing, and then beginning a slow and orderly evacuation. This will help occupants know what the fire alarm sounds like, practice their evacuation, and maintain social distancing.
 - Building and school safety leaders will need to be diligent and anticipate log-jams or other problems. If drills are slowed, problem spots may not be easily identifiable.
 - Drills should be clearly announced so students and staff are aware of the drill.
 - Consider implementing one-way hallways for evacuation to lessen the instances of “crossing paths.”
 - Rally points may need to be reconsidered to accommodate social distancing. Building leaders should evaluate these locations. Be sure to consider when fire departments and law enforcement will park in the event of an actual alarm.
- Exercise caution with any drill that involves dividing grade levels or hallways. Having a subset of students and staff ignoring an alarm for a drill may cause confusion in the event of an actual alarm.



Tornado Drills:

- Consider announcing the drill and having students move to their shelter location one classroom at a time, or slowly in waves. Building leaders and teachers should emphasize social distancing while ensuring occupants are able to locate their shelter in the event of severe weather or a tornado.
 - Drills should be clearly announced so students and staff are aware of the drill.
 - Consider implementing one-way hallways for evacuation to lessen the instances of “crossing paths.”
- Exercise caution with any drill that involves dividing grade levels or hallways. Having a subset of students and staff ignoring an alarm for a drill may cause confusion in the event of an actual alarm.

Active Shooter / Lockdown Drill:

- The most common form of an active shooter drill remains the lockdown drill.
- Schools should continue to emphasize procedures and protocols while practicing their active shooter drill actions. Consider moving students to the general shelter location, maintaining social distance, while teachers and staff emphasize where students should go in the event of an active shooter.

Bus Evacuation Drill

- Consider smaller groups of students in several waves for the evacuation drills in order to promote social distancing.
 - Please ensure that proper records are being kept to show that all applicable students have participated in the drill.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Joel M. Thacker
Indiana State Fire Marshal

