

Teacher's Guide

October:

Structural Fires



Fire Safety All Year Long

Here's a shocking statistic: each year about 4,500 schools nationwide experience a fire of some type. About half of these fires were intentionally set, with about a quarter started in trash cans and other rubbish containers; any of them could quickly turn into life-threatening situations.

Students often take fire drills lightly, but it's critical that everyone knows what to do in a true emergency. New York City Public Schools are required to hold 12 fire drills each year, with eight of those occurring between September and December. Your role includes taking the evacuation folder, which includes the attendance sheet and assembly cards; leading students to the evacuation location as identified on fire drill posters; taking attendance and accounting for students; and reporting injuries, problems, or missing students.

Beyond the drill itself, it's also important for students to know what to do once they're out of the school. Orderly behavior speeds up the process of taking attendance and listening for further instructions. Plus it makes the firefighters' job easier.

Let's get ready and be safe during fire drills and real fire events!



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Department of Education
Office of Emergency Management

Did you know?

- A fire's flames can be different colors, depending on the substance that is burning.
- The first practical fire engine was tested in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1853.
- The first sprinkler system was patented in 1872.
- Fire Prevention Week is observed every year from Sunday through Saturday on the week that includes October 9, the anniversary of the great Chicago fire, which occurred in 1871.



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Reinforce the message of fire safety and build skills across the curriculum with these simple activities:



Language Arts

Why are fire drills important? Pose this question to your students and brainstorm answers. Then have students develop an acronym or slogan for your class or school to help students remember how to act during a drill. Create posters, design ads for your school or class newsletter or website, and spread the message of preparedness and safety!



Math

Oftentimes fire drills are timed to ensure speedy evacuation. Investigate whether your school times fire drills. If so, request the data for the last three years, if available. Look for trends. Do evacuation times tend to speed up as the year goes on? Slow down? What other trends do you see? If data isn't available, time your next several drills and chart the data.



Social Studies

Fire drills and evacuation plans are required in schools. Encourage your students and their families to make escape plans and to practice these plans at home too. Supply a sheet of graph paper for them to draw the floor plan of their house or apartment, and have them determine two escape routes for each room. Tell students that floor plans should show the stairways, and ask them to count how many stairs are in each stairway. Tell students to use arrows to label two ways out of each room. Once the plan is complete, ask each student to practice the plan with his or her family.



Science

Review the actions to take in a fire, including checking a door to see if there's smoke coming in the cracks before opening it, checking a door to see if it's warm before opening it, staying low to the ground, and so forth. These lessons bear repeating each year!

To Learn More:

Fire information page,

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/fire.shtml>

NYC Office of Emergency Management, www.NYC.gov/oem

OEM on Facebook, www.facebook.com/NYCEmergencymanagement

OEM on Twitter, [@nycoem](https://twitter.com/nycoem)

Notify NYC: Register for emergency notifications by visiting NYC.gov/notifynyc, calling 311, or following [@NotifyNYC](https://twitter.com/NotifyNYC) on Twitter