



# EVACUATION DRILLS RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Evacuation drills are an essential part of assuring student and staff safety during an emergency. Although COVID-19 has temporarily changed our building occupancy loads, it has not diminished the importance of continued practice. In fact, with alterations to indoor environments to accommodate social distancing requirements and the storage of additional personal protective equipment, such as bulk hand-sanitizer and cleaning supplies, evaluating and practicing evacuation procedures is more vital than ever.

## Are drills still required if there are no students in the building?

If there are no students in the building, traditional drills may be substituted with a virtual tabletop exercise, ideally to include participation by all staff who would typically occupy the building, to familiarize educators and administrative staff with changes to evacuation procedures. Virtual drills will be accepted, provided:

1. The virtual drill is specific to the building;
2. Occupants of the building conduct a "safety walk" that visits locations of fire extinguishers on their evacuation floor, all exit stairs on their floor, and their assigned assembly points.
3. The Building Engineer, or other qualified personnel, must place the building into alarm off hours and verify that all safety features are working.

Additionally, ***we strongly encourage the promotion of home fire drills to students***, to coincide with virtual drills. Your Fire Department is available to assist with educational training.

## How do we navigate drills when students return to the buildings part-time?

Once students begin to reenter the building, traditional fire drills must resume. If students are returning on a hybrid or alternate schedule that split physical classroom attendance between days, drills must be conducted multiple times within the week to accommodate all students. Social distancing measures, such as coordinated, individual classroom evacuations, are an acceptable practice, as long as all building occupants are aware that in a true emergency, the most important factor is evacuation as quickly and safely as possible.