

Fire Drills and All Hazard Response Drills/ Exercises in Schools



As of July 2022, NH educational facilities (K-12th grade) are required to follow the amended NH Law, RSA 189:64 and NFPA 101, Life Safety Code 2018 Edition, related to emergency response drills.

Emergency response drills are conducted to simulate how participants would respond to a specified type of event; this does not always include evacuating the building. Emergency evacuation drills are conducted to simulate how participants would respond to a specified type of event where they would evacuate the building.

The law requires that **six** fire evacuation drills and **four** all-hazard drills are conducted during the school year. One of these drills shall test the emergency response to an armed assailant; this may be discussion based.

NH Sample Drill Schedule (schools should customize locally)

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| • September (2 drills) Evacuation | • February (1 drill) All-hazards |
| • October (1 drill) Evacuation | • March (1 drill) All-hazards |
| • November (1 drill) Evacuation | • April (1 drill) All-hazards |
| • December (1 drill) All-hazards | • May (1 drill) Evacuation |
| • January (Optional skip month) | • June (1 drill) Evacuation |

Please note it is critical that all drills are conducted at an age-appropriate level, see your school guidance counselor, local police, and fire department for more information on this.

RSA 189:64 and NFPA 101 Emergency Response Drill Requirements:

- In any building that is not open year-round, two fire evacuation drills (emergency egress and relocation) must be performed within the first 30 days of school starting.
- The type and timing of the all-hazard drills and exercises shall be made in collaboration between the school, the local police department, local fire department, emergency management, and public health officials.
- At least one emergency drill shall be conducted every month that school is in session, typically ten during the school year. (There is an exception to this law in NH where the weather is severe. If four of these drills are conducted before the weather is severe the remaining six can be postponed until the weather improves.) We encourage practicing the emergency response drills not requiring evacuation during the winter months.
- Everyone in the building is required to participate in all the drills, including visitors, and all participants must leave the building.
- All emergency drill alarms shall be sounded on the fire alarm system.



August 2022



For more information about this recommendation, please contact:

NH State Fire Marshal's Office | fmo@dos.nh.gov | 603-223-4289

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All-Hazard Situation Examples

- Act of violence
- Biological Incident
- Bomb threat
- Civil Unrest
- Cyber Incident
- Drought Incident
- Earthquake
- Extreme Temperatures
- Flooding
- Hazardous Materials Incident
- Hurricane
- Medical Emergency
- Radiological Response (*only required if in Seabrook EPZ*)
- Structural Fire
- Threat (*general*)
- Tornado
- Wildfire
- Wind storms
- Any other hazard identified by school officials and local emergency response authorities

School Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)

RSA 189:64 was repealed and reenacted in June of 2022 with HB1125 making some changes to the previous legislation. It is important for those involved to understand some key points regarding school EOPs:

- Every public, chartered public, and nonpublic school shall have a site-specific EOP which addresses specific hazards.
- The plan shall conform to the Incident Command System and National Incident Management System.
- The plan shall be submitted to Homeland Security & Emergency Management by October 15 of each year using the online portal found on the NH School Safety Resource Center.
- The law also provides information about the necessary number of drills and addresses building schematic floor plans.
- The most current version of RSA 189:64 can be found online. <https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/rsa-18964-emergency-response-plans/>

Training & Exercises

- School safety workshops, trainings, or exercises available by request.
- EOP development and technical assistance available by request.
- The New Hampshire Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM), School Readiness Program, is available to develop and conduct active threat discussion and/or operations based exercises. They can be contacted at 603-271-2231, by email at schoolreadiness@dos.nh.gov, or by completing a request online. https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=14139

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