

School Occupancy Fire Inspection

Guidelines: Public and private kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools, and First Nations schools.

Important Notice

It is the duty of the principals, teachers, or staff to inspect all exit facilities daily to ensure all stairways, doors, and other exits are in proper condition. It is essential that hallways, corridors, and stairwells are not blocked by furniture, appliances, desks, tables, chairs, storage cases or combustible materials. To ensure a quick and orderly evacuation, no blockages (including partial blockages) are permitted (no storage). All exits must be cleared of snow and have a clear path to an area of safety or refuge away from the school. Ensure classroom layouts allow for quick, orderly safe exits from classrooms.

Common Fire Service Requirements

- Address must be visible from the road and lane, free from foliage, trees, etc. and in a contrasting colour.
- Chemical storage: all chemicals must be separated by class and stored in an approved manner and must not be stored in furnace, mechanical or electrical rooms.
- Combustible artwork: shall not exceed 20% of the wall or ceiling area.
- Draperies, curtains, and other similar loosely hanging furnishings and decorations have to meet specific performance criteria from NFPA 701.
- Emergency lighting must be operational, with no visible damage, aimed in the proper direction, and serviced and tagged annually by a certified technician.
- Exit doors must not be locked or blocked from either the inside or outside. Must be unlocked from the inside when the building is occupied. Must have latching hardware that releases when a force of 20 pounds or less is applied.
- Exit signage must be visible and always remain illuminated while the building is occupied.
- Exit passageways must not be blocked.
- Electrical panels must be kept clear of storage.
- Fire alarm systems must have a working A/C power-on bulb and be in good working condition with no audible or visual damage. Must have a current service tag (within the last 12 months) and an up-to-date logbook.
- Fire Safety Plan must be reviewed and updated yearly.
- Fire hydrants must be accessible, free of damage and serviced within the specified date.
- Fire lanes must have an adequate clear width of six unobstructed metres.
- Fire doors must not be blocked or wedged open, including stairwell doors. Fire doors must self-close and latch properly to maintain fire separation.
- Fire separations must have no holes or openings that compromise their purpose.
- Flammable liquids must be stored in ULC-approved containers and stored in flammable liquids cabinets to securely contain the substance. No more than 25L of gasoline.
- Garbage disposal containers must have tight-fitting lids and be kept in a fire-separated room.



WEST VANCOUVER FIRE & RESCUE

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- Garbage rooms, combustible materials should not be allowed to accumulate, and the room should be empty, except for the garbage itself.
- Portable fire extinguishers must be located in corridors and service rooms so that the maximum travel distance to access a fire extinguisher is no more than 75 feet, mounted in a visible location, that is accessible. Serviced and tagged at least once every 12 months by a certified technician and must have a minimum rating of 2A-10BC.
- Propane may not be stored inside school buildings and must be secured in a proper caged storage location, with a minimum distance of 6 meters from the school.
- Sprinkler and standpipe connections must be capped, free of debris and accessible.
- Sprinkler systems must be inspected and tested by qualified personnel at least once per year and must have a current service tag (within the last 12 months) and an up-to-date logbook.
- Storage areas must be kept free of excessive clutter, with aisle widths of at least 36 in larger rooms. Shipping containers are not permitted except in accordance with Fire Bylaw 5163, 2021
- Stairwells: Space under stairs and landings must not be used for storage unless separated by a 2-hour fire-rated wall equipped with a heat sensor/sprinkler head.
- Storage maintained 2' below ceiling un-sprinklered, 18" sprinklered.
- The permanent use of extension cords is not permitted.
- A school with a kitchen, please refer to the *Retail / Commercial / Restaurant Occupancy Fire Inspection Guidelines*.



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