



FIRE DRILLS DURING COVID-19

Purpose:

This document clarifies the expectations of Calgary Fire Department (CFD) regarding the ability to perform Fire Drills during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communication:

During the COVID-19 Pandemic there have been questions raised about Fire Drills, their frequency and the expectations from the local Authority Having Jurisdiction. The following information is in relation to the National Fire Code – Alberta Edition, Subsection 2.8.3 – Fire Drills.

Code References:

2.8.3.1. Fire Drill Procedures

1) The procedure for conducting fire drills shall be determined by the person in responsible charge of the building, taking into consideration

- a. the building occupancy and its fire hazards,
- b. the safety features provided in the building,
- c. the desirable degree of participation of occupants other than *supervisory staff*,
- d. the number and degree of experience of participating *supervisory staff*,
- e. the features of fire emergency systems installed in buildings within the scope of subsection 3.2.6. of Division B of the NBC(AE)
- f. the requirements of the fire department.

A-2.8.3.1.(1).

A-2.8.3.1.(1) A fire safety plan is of little value if it is not reviewed periodically so that all supervisory staff remain familiar with their responsibilities. A fire drill, then, is at least a review of the fire safety plan by supervisory staff. The extent to which non-supervisory staff participate in a fire drill should be worked out in cooperation with the fire department. The decision as to whether all occupants should leave the building during a fire drill should be based on the nature of the occupancy.

It may be necessary to hold additional fire drills outside normal working hours for the benefit of employees on afternoon or night shifts, who should be as familiar with fire drill procedures as those who work during the day. If full scale fire drills are not possible during non-regular working hours, arrangements should be made so that night-shift supervisory staff can participate in fire drills conducted during the daytime.

2.8.3.2. Fire Drill Frequency

(See Article 2.2.1.2. of Division C.)

- 1) Except as provided in Sentence (2), fire drills as described in Sentence 2.8.3.1.(1) shall be held at intervals not greater than 12 months for the *supervisory staff*, except that
 - a) in day-care centers and in Group B *major occupancies*, such drills shall be held at intervals not greater than one month,
 - b) in schools attended by children, total evacuation fire drills shall be held at least 3 times in each of the fall and spring school terms, and
 - c) in *buildings* within the scope of Subsection 3.2.6. of Division B of the NBC(AE), such drills shall be held at intervals not greater than 2 months.
- 2) Fire drills in a laboratory shall be held at intervals not greater than 3 months.

What is the expectation during COVID-19 for fire drill activity?

During the pandemic it would be acceptable for fire drills to be conducted with supervisory personnel present, taking into consideration social distancing to complete any Fire Warden training which may include an evacuation table top exercise. If the company or organization cannot ensure social distancing an additional option would be to complete online training as developed by the company or organization and to ensure that records are kept regarding details of training and personnel involved.

Any fire drills or warden training that fall under any other portion of the NFC (AE) edition can be conducted in the same manner as long as personnel are following the guidelines as set out by [Alberta Health – COVID relaunch strategy](#).

Defined terms:

Building means any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or *occupancy*.

Supervisory staff means those occupants of a *building* who have some delegated responsibility for the fire safety of other occupants under the fire safety plan.

Any questions should be forwarded to FireLegal@calgary.ca.

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