

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

These General Recommendations should be complied with as part of a Safe Schools Program. They are critical to preventing avoidable losses, insuring positive underwriting decisions, and subsequently keeping your property insurance cost as low as possible. Please provide each school with a copy.

- 1.** Artwork and teaching materials shall be limited on the walls of corridors to not more than 20% of the wall area. Artwork and teaching materials shall be limited on walls of classrooms to not more than 50% of the specific wall area to which they are attached.
- 2.** Remove **all** material/items attached to the ceiling or ceiling tiles: the hanging and displaying of decorative material, whether combustible or not, shall be prohibited from acoustical ceiling systems that are part of a fire-resistant floor/ceiling or roof/ceiling assembly, per NC Fire Code 703.3. This includes banners hung in hallways that are attached to the fire rated acoustical ceiling grid system.
 - “Cozy Shades”: It is the opinion of the NCDOI School Insurance Fund that these items are in violation of the prohibition of attachment of items to fire rated ceilings and are not suitable for use in the educational environment. We recommend that they be removed, and their use discontinued.
 - Applying paint to ceiling tiles is prohibited because the paint deteriorates the fire protection components and capabilities of each ceiling tile.
- 3.** All curtains must be constructed of a fire-retardant material or treated with a fire-resistant process.
- 4.** Windows and blinds must remain free of all material to allow for emergency rescue and egress. This also permits proper cleaning thus improving air quality, reduces fire spread risk, and allows for proper use of light controlling design of blinds.
- 5.** Maintain fire doors to permit proper operation. Kickstands and other means to chock open fire doors are prohibited.
- 6.** Remove all combustible material from all fire rated classroom doors: the attachment of combustible decorations to fire resistant rated doors, including but not limited to classroom doors, which modifies said doors conformity to ASTM E119 relating to its ability to withstand fire exposure is prohibited.
- 7.** All classroom doors with glass panels must have line of sight into and out of these classrooms. Line of sight into all classrooms shall not be limited or minimized, during normal operating hours and conditions.



- 8. Housekeeping and storage:**
- Maintain proper housekeeping in all boiler, mechanical, and electrical rooms. This requires the removal of all combustible material. Storage of noncombustible material may not restrict access to mechanical or electrical equipment in any manner.
 - 36" clearance shall be maintained around electrical panel boxes. Specifically, a working space of not less than 30" in width, 36" in depth, and 78" in height shall be provided in front of electrical service equipment. Where electrical service equipment is wider than 30", the working space shall not be less than the width of the equipment. No storage of any materials shall be permitted within the designated working space.
 - Storage or placement of combustible material within twenty-four inches (24") of any ceiling (18" if sprinkler protected) is expressly prohibited.
 - Combustible materials shall not be stored in exits or enclosures for stairways and ramps.
- 9. Extension cords and power strips are for temporary use only and should not be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords, power strips, and surge protectors must be plugged directly into permanent wiring. The practice of plugging one such device into another, or into an extension cord is prohibited. Extension cords, power strips, and surge suppressors shall not be affixed to structures, extended through walls, ceilings or floors, or under doors or floor covering, nor should such cords be subject to environmental damage or physical impact. Extension cords shall be used only with portable appliances.**
- 10. All upholstered furnishings (couches, chairs, bean bags, floor pillows, etc.) shall bear a label confirming compliance with California Technical Bulletin 117 (CA TB 117). All noncompliant items are not permitted.**
- 11. Portable electric, kerosene, etc., heaters are not approved for educational occupancies. If auxiliary heat source is required, then contact the school's Facilities Services for assistance.**
- 12. Lamps, like all appliances, if permitted with the classroom environment must be commercial quality. It should be noted that manufacturers warranties shall be voided if items labeled "household use only" are subjected to improper use. This simply means the manufacturers are stating that they will not warranty the use outside of the residential setting; for example, the classroom. Therefore, such appliances should not be utilized in unauthorized locations. It is the opinion of the Public School Property Insurance Fund that appliances, furnishings, ***lamps***, etc. designed, manufactured or in any way marked for "for residential use" are inappropriate for use in the classroom. Such items should be prohibited and should be removed if present. Therefore, it is our position that utilization of lamps in the classroom should meet three criteria:**
1. Be of commercial quality (i.e. grounded)
 2. Be used for a required, alternative light source purpose and a specific time
 3. Be turned off when room is vacant