



Livingstone Range
SCHOOL DIVISION

October Safety Topic FIRE PREVENTION



IMPORTANCE OF FIRE PREVENTION

In a fire, mere seconds can mean the difference between a safe escape and a tragedy. Fire safety education isn't just for school children. Teenagers, adults, and the elderly are also at risk in fires, making it important for every member of the community to take some time every October during Fire Prevention Week to make sure they understand how to stay safe in case of a fire.



FIRE MOVES FAST. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY MAY HAVE LESS THAN TWO MINUTES TO GET OUT SAFELY ONCE THE SMOKE ALARM SOUNDS.

Your ability to get out of a home during a fire depends on early warning from smoke alarms and advance planning. It's important for everyone to plan and practice a home fire escape. Everyone needs to be prepared in advance, so that they know what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Given that every home is different, every home fire escape plan will also be different. Have a plan for everyone in the home. Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Make sure that someone will help them.

- Have a working smoke alarms. Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of home.
 - A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
 - Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarm should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound.
 - A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- Develop a home fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year. Everyone in the home should know the fire department's emergency number and how to call once they are safely outside.
 - Make sure your plan meets the needs of all your family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- Make sure everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do when it sounds.
GET OUT AND STAY OUT.



NATIONAL
FIRE PREVENTION
-WEEK-

OCTOBER 6 - 12



TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO MANAGE SCHOOL DRILLS FOR SENSITIVE STUDENTS

For many students with anxiety and sound sensitivity, fire drills in a school setting can be anxiety producing and can cause stress. Auditory sensitivity occurs when individuals experience sensitivity to certain sounds or frequencies



Meagan David, registered and licensed occupational therapist and Masters of Science in Education, provides some suggestions and resources on how to support students that have difficult time with fire drills.

- Desensitizing students to the sound of a fire alarm can help reduce anxiety by making them more familiar with the sound, where the sound is coming from, and what the expectation is when they hear the fire alarm. A few times a month, discuss with students why we have fire drills and the procedures for drills. Talk about the loud sound that the fire alarm makes. Play a video or audio of the sound on low volume and gradually increase the sound as the students become more comfortable.
- **Visual timers** are a great way to show students the length of time the sound will be loud. This can decrease the anxiety surrounding the unknown of the fire drill.

Introduce the idea of the fire drill using a social story as a reminder of the appropriate behavior during the drill. A social story is a tool that describes important parts and appropriate behavior of a social activity or event using sentences that describe or direct behavior. Social stories can help students visually process and understand how to work through feeling overwhelmed by the sound of the alarm and the anxiety that it produces.



Teach students to **cover their ears** with their hands or the hands of a support to muffle the sound of the alarm.

Noise-cancelling headphones and earplugs can help reduce overstimulation and auditory sensory overload. Having these available can reduce the anxiety surrounding fire drills.

Weighted vests or backpacks can give deep pressure (proprioceptive input) to the students. The weight can help support the body to be calm and can reduce physical anxiety symptoms. Teachers, staff, and parents can add something relatively heavy (2-5 pound weight or a ream/pack of paper) to the backpack. Students can also keep fidget toys, ear plugs/noise canceling headphones, and a comfort item in the backpack for easy access.



Access to **comfort items** is an easy way to support students and reduce anxiety. The student can bring comfort items into school like fidget toys, a small stuffed animal to squeeze, weighted blanket/lap or shoulder pad, or stress balls.

Have a **calming area** in the classroom or someplace that is quiet for students to go to feel safe when the fire drill is done. This will help them to self-regulate faster so they can return to learning.



GIVE STUDENTS THAT HAVE AUDITORY SENSITIVITIES MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE THE ROUTINE AND EXPECTATION OF A FIRE DRILL. TEACHERS, PLAY THE VIDEO "FIREFIGHTERS ON THEIR WAY" AND INVITE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO COME IN. HAVE FIREFIGHTERS EXPLAIN TO THE STUDENTS THEIR ROLE AND WHAT THEY WILL LOOK LIKE WHEN THEY ARRIVE AT AN EMERGENCY. THIS WILL HELP TO DESENSITIZE STUDENTS AND SUPPORT THEM TO BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS AND PROCESS.