



**HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
LIFE SAFETY BUREAU (LSB)**



**LIFE SAFETY BUREAU (LSB) STANDARD 08, REV. 03
FIRE DRILLS**

SUPERCEDES: LSB Standard 08, approved by the Fire Chief on 5.23.03

Effective Date: January 1, 2009



Approved: *Richard W. Galvan*
Richard W. Galvan, Assistant Fire Marshal

Approved: *Tyrone G. Freeman*
Tyrone G. Freeman, Fire Marshal

LIFE SAFETY BUREAU (LSB) STANDARDS ARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON FIRE CODE. THEY ARE SUBJECT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECTIONS COVERING – ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS AND METHODS, MODIFICATIONS, AND BOARD OF APPEALS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 8.1 --- GENERAL 3
 8.1.1 Scope..... 3
 8.1.2 Purpose..... 3
SECTION 8.2 --- DEFINITIONS 3
 8.2.1 High Rise Buildings..... 3
 8.2.2 Mid-Rise Atrium Buildings..... 3
 8.2.3 Obstructed Drills..... 3
 8.2.4 Unobstructed Drills..... 3
SECTION 8.3 --- FIRE DRILLS IN SCHOOLS (EDUCATIONAL OCCUPANCIES)..... 3
 8.3.1 Evacuation Plan Required..... 3
 8.3.2 Posting of Floor Plans..... 3
 8.3.3 Evacuation Signal..... 4
 8.3.4 Staff Training..... 4
 8.3.5 Fire Department Notification..... 4
 8.3.6 Number of Required Drills..... 4
 8.3.7 General Guidelines for Fire Drills..... 4
 8.3.8 Written Records Required..... 4
 8.3.9 Drill Participation..... 4
 8.3.10 Classroom Doors..... 4
 8.3.11 Outside Staging Area..... 5
 8.3.12 Roll Call..... 5
 8.3.13 Building Search..... 5
 8.3.14 Mobility Impaired..... 5
SECTION 8.4 --- FIRE DRILLS IN HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS 5
 8.4.1 Number of Required Drills..... 5
 8.4.2 Drill Participation..... 5
 8.4.3 Written Records Required..... 5
SECTION 8.5 --- FIRE DRILLS IN HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES 5
 8.5.1 Number of Required Drills..... 5
 8.5.2 Frequency of Drills..... 6
 8.5.3 Alarm Signaling..... 6
 8.5.4 Drill Participation..... 6
 8.5.5 Written Records Required..... 6
SECTION 8.6 --- DAY CARE FACILITIES..... 6
 8.6.1 Number of Fire Drills..... 6
 8.6.2 Drill Participation..... 6
 8.6.3 Written Records Required..... 6
 8.6.4 Drills Conducted Without Warning..... 6
 8.6.5 Prompt Evacuation..... 6
 8.6.6 Occupants In the Building..... 6
 8.6.7 Roll-Call and Building Check..... 6
 8.6.8 Doors to Class Rooms..... 7
 8.6.9 Exit Routes Used..... 7
 8.6.10 Fire Department Notification..... 7
SECTION 8.7 --- FOSTER HOMES 7
 8.7.1 Emergency Fire Exit Plan..... 7

SECTION 8.8 --- PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES 7
8.8.1 Drills in Large Personal Care Facilities..... 7
8.8.2 Personal Care Homes 7
SECTION 8.9 --- ADULT DAY CARE 7
8.9.1 Drills in Adult Day Care Facilities 7
SECTION 8.10 --- FIRE DRILLS IN MID-RISE ATRIUM BUILDINGS..... 7
8.10.1 Number of Required Drills 7
8.10.2 Drill Participation 8
8.10.3 Written Records Required 8
REFERENCES..... 9

**LSB STANDARD 08, rev. 03
FIRE DRILLS**

SECTION 8.1 --- GENERAL

8.1.1 Scope.

The code official (Fire Marshal) is authorized to require fire drills to be conducted in buildings of any occupancy type. Required fire drills shall be conducted in accordance with this standard and the City of Houston *Fire Code*.

8.1.2 Purpose.

This standard shall provide the guidance for the preparation and implementation of fire drills in schools, high-rise buildings, hospitals, nursing homes, day care and foster homes.

SECTION 8.2 --- DEFINITIONS

8.2.1 High Rise Buildings.

All buildings having floors used for human occupancy located more than 75 feet above the lowest level of grade or fire department vehicle access.

8.2.2 Mid-Rise Atrium Buildings.

Buildings with space that extends vertically and connects three or more stories and where the highest floor used for human occupancy is less than 75 feet above grade.

8.2.3 Obstructed Drills.

An obstructed fire drill assumes that one, or more, exits or evacuation routes have been blocked by fire and cannot be used. In this type of drill, the primary evacuation route for certain rooms is considered "obstructed" and persons exiting from these areas would utilize the alternate evacuation route outlined in the buildings evacuation plan.

8.2.4 Unobstructed Drills.

An unobstructed fire drill assumes that all exits and evacuation routes from the building are open and available for use. In this drill, persons exiting the building would utilize the primary evacuation route from the room or area they occupied at the time the drill was initiated.

SECTION 8.3 --- FIRE DRILLS IN SCHOOLS (EDUCATIONAL OCCUPANCIES)

8.3.1 Evacuation Plan Required

The person in charge of any building classified as an Educational (Group E) Occupancy in accordance with the *Construction Codes*, shall prepare an approved emergency evacuation plan for the building. The evacuation plan shall be submitted to the Fire Code Official for review. The person in charge shall also ensure that all students and staff members are properly trained in the evacuation procedures.

8.3.2 Posting of Floor Plans

A Floor Plan showing the proper evacuation routes shall be posted in each classroom and in other areas of the building normally occupied by students. This Floor Plan shall include the primary evacuation route from each room and an alternate route that can be used if the primary route becomes obstructed.

8.3.3 Evacuation Signal

An approved fire alarm system shall be utilized to conduct all fire drills in educational buildings.

NOTE: '3-2-1 Bell' systems are no longer approved for use in conducting fire drills.

8.3.4 Staff Training

All staff members include temporary office staff, assigned to the school office shall be trained in the procedure for sounding a general alarm should a fire or other emergency make an evacuation necessary.

8.3.5 Fire Department Notification

All drills shall include provisions for notifying the Fire Department. If the fire alarm system is monitored off-site, the monitoring service shall be notified that a drill is in progress so that Fire Department apparatus will not be dispatched.

8.3.6 Number of Required Drills

It shall be the duty of the person in charge of each Educational Occupancy to conduct at least one (1) fire drill per month. At least one-half of all drills shall be "obstructed" drills, as per Section 8.2.2 of this Standard.

8.3.7 General Guidelines for Fire Drills

Fire drills are an exercise in discipline, not speed, though the building should be evacuated within a reasonable time period. Drills should be conducted during different times of the day, with some drills being performed during times students occupy areas such as the cafeteria, auditorium, gym, and library. Drills are not required during periods of inclement weather or when State required testing is being conducted.

8.3.8 Written Records Required

A written record shall be kept on file for each fire drill performed. Fire drill records shall be made available to the Code Official upon request and shall include the following information:

- A. Date and time of each drill
- B. Whether the drill was "obstructed" or "unobstructed"
- C. If "obstructed", which exits or routes were obstructed
- D. Name of person(s) conducting the drill
- E. Amount of time required to evacuate the building

8.3.9 Drill Participation

All students, staff members and other occupants of the building shall participate in fire drills and shall immediately exit the building when the evacuation alarm is sounded. No one is permitted to remain in the building while a fire drill is being conducted.

8.3.10 Classroom Doors

Doors to classrooms shall be closed after the room has been evacuated.

8.3.11 Outside Staging Area

As part of the evacuation plan, a predetermined "Staging Area" shall be established outside the building. When the evacuation signal is activated, all staff members and students shall report to the designated staging area and await further instructions.

8.3.12 Roll Call

Once the building has been evacuated, each teacher shall conduct a roll call of their class to ensure all students are accounted for. Provisions must be made for communicating this information to the person conducting the drill.

8.3.13 Building Search

After the building has been evacuated, the entire school shall be checked to ensure no students have been left behind. The building search shall be conducted by adult staff members; ***students are never to be utilized for this purpose.*** The results of the building search shall be communicated to the person conducting the drill.

8.3.14 Mobility Impaired

If mobility-impaired students and / or staff members occupy the building, provisions shall be made for ensuring these persons can safely exit the building during an emergency. These provisions might include assigning staff members to physically assist them or might involve identifying certain areas of the building that can serve as an area of refuge until the Fire Department arrives.

SECTION 8.4 --- FIRE DRILLS IN HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

8.4.1 Number of Required Drills

The Fire Safety Director shall conduct a fire exit drill, in accordance with the approved Fire Safety Plan for their high-rise building, at least every six (6) months. The Code Official, upon survey of conditions, may require drills until the occupants can fulfill the requirements of the plan in a safe and efficient manner.

8.4.2 Drill Participation

All occupants of the building shall participate in the fire drills as required by the Code Official and the *Fire Code*.

8.4.3 Written Records Required

A written record of fire drills shall be kept on the premises and shall be readily available for fire department inspection.

SECTION 8.5 --- FIRE DRILLS IN HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES

8.5.1 Number of Required Drills

Each shift shall participate in at least one (1) fire drill every third (3) month.

8.5.2 Frequency of Drills

The Code Official may order the owner, operator, administrator, manager or person in charge of any hospital or nursing home to hold fire drills as often as may be deemed necessary by the code official.

8.5.3 Alarm Signaling

The alert signal for a fire drill shall be by a predetermined code approved by the code official. In the interest of public safety, the words "Fire" or "Fire Drill" shall not be used in a hospital or nursing home.

8.5.4 Drill Participation

During fire drills or fires in any hospital or nursing home, all on-duty staff personnel shall be activated.

8.5.5 Written Records Required

A complete and accurate record shall be kept of all fires and fire drills and shall be readily available for Fire Department inspection upon request.

SECTION 8.6 --- DAY CARE FACILITIES

8.6.1 Number of Fire Drills

Fire drills in Day Care facilities shall be conducted once monthly.

8.6.2 Drill Participation

All occupants of the building shall participate in the fire drills as required by the Code Official.

8.6.3 Written Records Required

A written record of fire drills shall be kept on the premises and shall be readily available for fire department inspection upon request.

8.6.4 Drills Conducted Without Warning

Fire drills shall be conducted without advance warning and should simulate fire conditions.

8.6.5 Prompt Evacuation

Fire exit drills are an exercise in discipline, not speed, though reasonably prompt emptying of the building is required.

8.6.6 Occupants In the Building

No one shall be permitted to remain in the building during a fire drill.

8.6.7 Roll-Call and Building Check

The drill shall include a roll-call by each day care counselor of their class, taken outside the building, to make sure that no one is left behind. There shall be a routine complete check of the entire building, including the toilet rooms, to make sure that no one is left behind.

8.6.8 Doors to Class Rooms

All doors to classrooms shall be closed after leaving the room.

8.6.9 Exit Routes Used

All exits shall be used in drills, but routes should be varied from drill to drill. Occasional drills should be held simulating conditions when one exit door or exit route cannot be used because it is blocked or “obstructed” by fire or smoke. Day Care counselors and other personnel shall be instructed as to the use of different exits, and the drills should be conducted at different times of the day.

8.6.10 Fire Department Notification

All drills shall include provisions to simulate the calling of “9-1-1” to notify the Fire Department.

SECTION 8.7 --- FOSTER HOMES

8.7.1 Emergency Fire Exit Plan

Every Foster Home shall have a diagrammed “Fire Emergency Exit Plan” indicating the exits of the residence. Discussions of what to do in case of fire and review of the fire emergency exit plan shall be gone over with each child and each member of the family, including a meeting place outside of the house to provide accountability of everyone, and the notification of the Fire Department by calling “9-1-1” from a safe location. This discussion and review shall take place monthly.

SECTION 8.8 --- PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES

8.8.1 Drills in Large Personal Care Facilities

Fire drills in large personal care facilities shall be conducted in the same manner as nursing homes. See Section 8.5 of this standard.

8.8.2 Personal Care Homes

‘Family home’ type personal care facilities shall provide emergency evacuation exit plans in the same manner as Foster Homes. (See Section 8.7 of this standard.) All staff and responsible residents shall be trained in how to activate the home’s fire system, and the notification of the Fire Department by calling “9-1-1” from a safe location.

SECTION 8.9 --- ADULT DAY CARE

8.9.1 Drills in Adult Day Care Facilities

Fire drills in Adult Day Care facilities shall be conducted in the accordance with Section 8.6 of this standard.

SECTION 8.10 --- FIRE DRILLS IN MID-RISE ATRIUM BUILDINGS

8.10.1 Number of Required Drills

The Fire Safety Coordinator shall conduct a fire drill in accordance with the approved Fire Safety Plan, at least every six (six) months. The Code Official, upon survey of

conditions, may require additional drills until the occupants can fulfill the requirements of the plan in a safe and efficient manner.

8.10.2 Drill Participation

All occupants of the building shall participate in the fire drills, as required by the code official and the Fire Code.

8.10.3 Written Records Required

A written record of fire drills shall be kept on the premises and shall be readily available for fire department inspection.

REFERENCES

1. City of Houston *Fire Code*, International Fire Code, 2000 edition, as amended.
2. City of Houston *Building Code*, all editions.

Conversion factors: 1 inch = 25mm; 1 foot = 305 mm