MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
FROM: Tim Hay, Executive Director
DATE: April 28, 2023

SUBJECT: Amendments to School Safety Requirements and Monitoring


The amended rule includes definitions for terms related to emergency drills and provides updated emergency drill requirements that will begin August 1, 2023. The rule reads, in part:

(15) Emergency and fire drills.

(15)(b) The provisions of paragraph (15)(b) apply beginning August 1, 2023.

1. Policies. Districts must develop policies and procedures for emergency drills and fire drills in consultation with the appropriate public safety agencies to include, at a minimum, law enforcement, fire service, and emergency management.

2. After-action report. An after-action report must be completed following each emergency drill and fire drill. After-action reports must identify the type of drill, location and date of the drill, participants, and involvement of law enforcement or other public safety agencies. In addition, the after-action report must describe actions taken by participants, must analyze areas of success and areas where improvement is needed, and include input from public safety agencies and a plan for corrective action. After-action reports must be submitted to the district school safety specialist for review 15 calendar days following drill completion.

3. Requirements for all emergency drills and fire drills.
   a. All occupants of a building or any other location where an emergency or fire drill is held must participate in the drill.
   b. During emergency drills, fire drills and during actual emergencies, schools must use plain language to communicate the nature of the emergency and instructions to students and staff. Plain language means communication that can be understood by the intended audience, which is free of coded language, jargon, and acronyms, and meets the purpose of the communicator.
   c. Districts must vary the conditions of emergency drills and fire drills. Drills must be held at both expected and unexpected times and under varying conditions that require school staff, students and
building occupants to take protective actions based on the specific circumstances of the simulated incident.

d. Districts must vary the time of day in which emergency drills and fire drills are held. In setting the drill schedule, districts must consider drills beginning at nonstandard times, such as within an hour of the start of the school day, during lunch, when students are between classes, or within an hour of the end of the school day.

c. Emergency drills and fire drills must test all applicable functions included in the threat scenario, such as panic buttons, participant movement (lockdown, shelter-in-place, or evacuation), simulated communications with first responders, notification to parents, and appropriate protective actions, such as turning off lights, and covering windows.

d. Emergency drills and fire drills must be conducted in accordance with developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate procedures. Districts are authorized to develop policies that provide for accommodations for drills conducted by exceptional student education (ESE) centers, as defined in Section 1003.57(1)(a), F.S. District accommodations for drills conducted at ESE centers, if any, must be included in the written policies and procedures for exceptional students that are submitted to the Department in accordance with subsection 6A-6.03411(2), F.A.C.

4. Requirements for specific types of drills.


b. Emergency drills.

(I). Elementary, middle and high schools are required to conduct six (6) emergency drills every school year that are nonconcurrent with fire drills. One emergency drill must take place within the first ten (10) days of the beginning of the school year, and the remaining drills must take place at least every 45 days that school is in session. Four (4) of the six (6) emergency drills must address active threats. The remaining two (2) drills must address other emergency events, such as severe weather, natural disasters, hazardous materials, or reunification.

(II). Active assailant drills. District school safety specialists must coordinate with the sheriff in their county to determine which law enforcement officers are responsible for responding to each school in their district in the event of an active assailant emergency and must provide those officers a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours’ notice prior to conducting an active assailant emergency drill, pursuant to Section 1006.07(4)(a), F.S. These law enforcement officers must be physically present on each school campus and directly involved in the execution of active assailant emergency drills, unless their presence is determined to be unnecessary by the sheriff.

If you have any questions regarding school safety requirements and monitoring, please contact the Office of Safe Schools at SafeSchools@fldoe.org or at 850-245-5173.

TH/jc

cc: School District School Safety Specialists
    Charter School Governing Boards