



Preventing Fires

School fires are financially and emotionally devastating. Whether it is by accident or an arsonist, a fire can take away irreplaceable student work, teaching aids and personal items. Schools are also a home away from home for many children and a school fire can be traumatic. Consider the following to help prevent a fire at your school:

Fire Prevention

- Do not overload circuits. Refrigerators and microwaves are NEVER to be plugged into extension cords or power taps. They must be plugged directly into an outlet.
- Never use candles on campus.
- Keep combustibles away from lights, machinery and other sources of heat.
- Do not use electrical cords that have been damaged or are frayed.
- Keep pathways clear and do not block exit doors with desks, storage or other items that hinder evacuation.
- Check container labels and material safety data sheets to make sure you don't store incompatible substances close together.
- Limit non-fire retardant, decorative paper to less than 25% of the total wall area. Keep paper and decorations away from electrical outlets.
- Do not chain extension cords together. (This was the reason for SIG's most costly property loss – daisy chain of extension cords)
- Know the location of your closest fire extinguisher. Request training for your staff on how to use the extinguisher. Your district safety person, your local fire department or your fire extinguisher vendor can assist.
- Ensure sprinkler heads have at least 18" clearance – avoid stacking items too close to sprinklers.

Arson Prevention

- Do not post paper on outside walls unless they are under a protective covering. Loose papers are easy fuel for a potential arsonist.
- Check all windows and doors to ensure that they close and lock securely. Keep them locked when school is out.
- Be aware of possible warning signs indicating someone congregating on school grounds that shouldn't be there. For example: cigarette butts, matches, graffiti, discarded bottles and garbage. Vandalism and fire go hand in hand.
- Ask your neighbors to keep an eye on your school after hours and provide numbers to call if they see something suspicious.
- Promote the WeTip program to the school staff, families and neighbors.