



## Emergency Drills Guidance

### Introduction

All schools and school districts are encouraged to evaluate the considerations below with local stakeholders (i.e., emergency services, health departments, and other key organizations) and determine how, or if, the suggestions should be applied. Inviting emergency responders to observe and/or participate in all drills is encouraged. Unless communicated otherwise, all drills required by law are in effect for the 2020-2021 school year. *In an actual event, social distancing guidelines become secondary to the actual safety of individuals involved. Take steps to preserve human health and life.*

### Fire Drills (Iowa Code 100.31)

Required not less than four times per school year – twice between July 1 and December 31 and twice between January 1 and June 30. During the 2020-2021 school year, each district shall assure that each student takes part in at least one drill per semester. Modifications might include:

- Scheduling additional time to conduct each drill.
- Practicing evacuation in a slower, methodical process while emphasizing appropriate personal physical distance. Wearing masks may be appropriate if concern of infection is elevated.
- Conducting drills more frequently with small groups to reduce the number of individuals evacuating at any given time.
- Identifying one-way avenues or hallways to avoid congestion and crossing paths.
- Expanding rally points to accommodate distancing and staging handwash/sanitizing stations.
- Direct students to wash/sanitize hands prior to returning to rooms.

### Tornado Drills (Iowa Code 100.31)

Required not less than four times per school year – twice between July 1 and December 31 and twice between January 1 and June 30. During the 2020-2021 school year, each district shall assure that each student takes part in at least one drill per semester. Modifications might include:

- Scheduling additional time to conduct each drill.
- Explaining procedures during local siren tests.
- Clearly announcing the drill and practicing it in a slower, methodical process while emphasizing appropriate personal physical distance. Wearing masks may be appropriate if concern of infection is elevated.
- Moving students to the shelter location one classroom or group at a time.
- Identifying “one-way” avenues or hallways to reduce congestion and “crossing paths.”
- Stage wash/sanitizing stations in or near shelter locations. Ensure social distancing measures so students do not gather around stations.
- Direct students to wash/sanitize hands prior to returning to rooms.

## **Emergency Operations (Active Shooter/Intruder) Drill (Iowa Code 280.30)**

Required at least once per school year in each individual school building. Modifications might include:

- Increasing number of table-top exercises with staff to ensure procedures are understood.
- Explaining procedures to students and staff with visual aids.
- Conducting more frequent small drills with smaller groups of students/staff.
- Practicing procedures to move small groups to safe locations (if applicable) while emphasizing appropriate personal physical distance. Wearing masks may be appropriate if concern of infection is elevated.
- Staging wash/sanitizing stations at safe locations and directing students to wash/sanitize hands prior to returning to rooms. Ensure social distancing measures so students do not gather around stations.
- Recording (with video) drills conducted by staff and emergency services using limited number of actors and utilizing video to educate students in procedures.

## **Bus Evacuation Drill (281 IAC 43.40)**

Required twice per year – once in the fall and once in the spring. Modifications may include:

- Conducting the drills in a slower and methodical pace while encouraging personal physical distancing. Wearing masks may be appropriate if concern of infection is elevated.
- Practicing evacuations with a handful of passengers and rotating participants.
- Conducting procedures in a secure parking lot to ensure room for physical distancing.
- Providing sanitizing products for passengers and directing the participants to sanitize hands during pre-determined points of the procedures.
- Practice evacuating using the front service door. Be sure students are aware of the rear door exit (much like being told about the window and roof exits, though they never actually use them for evacuations).

Reverse evacuation and a number of other drills may be performed and can be practiced in the “COVID” environment with the same considerations. Simply allowing students to exercise social distancing during a drill is acceptable as long as they understand the need to react with urgency in an actual emergency. Students must be aware that social distancing may not be safely possible during an actual emergency. Providing greater vocal reinforcement during any exercise may be necessary.

Source credit to Missouri Department of Education.