

## School Security Drill Law N.J.S. 18A:41-1

### FAQs

Q- What are School Security drills?

A- School Security drills are an exercise, other than a fire drill, to practice procedures that respond to an emergency situation including, but not limited to, a non-fire evacuation, lockdown, or active shooter situation and that is similar in duration to a fire drill.

Q- How many drills are required per academic year?

A- As of November 1, 2010, every school is required to hold at least one fire drill and one school security drill each month within the school hours, including any summer months during which the school is open for instructional programs.

Q- What types of drills are required?

A- During the academic year schools are required to hold a minimum of **two** of each of the following security drills:

- Active shooter; Evacuation (non- fire); Bomb threat; and Lockdown.

Q- What other types of school security drills can be held?

A- The following are examples of other security drills that schools can hold:

- Shelter-in-place; Reverse evacuation; Evacuation to relocation site; Testing of school's notification system and procedures; Testing of school's communication system and procedures; Tabletop exercise; and Full scale exercise.

Q- When are school security drills required to be conducted?

A- As of November 1, 2010, every school is required to hold monthly school security drill within the school hours, including any summer months during which the school is open for instructional programs.

Per Chapter 4 of the New Jersey Fire Code; 408.3.1 First emergency evacuation drill. The first emergency evacuation drills of each school year shall be conducted within 10 days of the beginning of classes.

As of September 2011, schools are required to conduct a school security drill within the first 15 days of the beginning of the school year.

Q- Who is required to participate in school security drills?

A- All building occupants are required to participate in drills. However, two (2) of the eight (8) mandatory drills do not have to include students.

Q- How long should a school security drill take?

A- A school security drill is similar in duration to a fire drill.

Q- If a school has an incident occur which results in a school security response will it be considered a school security drill?

A- Responses made necessary by the unplanned activation of emergency procedures or by any other emergency shall not be substituted for a required school security drill.

Q- Who should be notified as to when a school security drill will be held?

A- Schools will provide emergency responders with a friendly notification at least 48 hours prior to holding a security drill. Emergency responders are not required to observe security drills, however, it is encouraged that schools invite emergency responders to attend and observe at least four different security drills annually.

Q- What type of school security drill records should the school/district keep and submit?

A- Districts are required to annually submit the "Security Drill Statement of Assurance" provided by the Department of Education to their county office of education by June 30 of each year. The county office shall forward an information copy to the respective county prosecutor's office. The "Security Drill Record Form" provided by the Department of Education shall be completed by all schools and retained at the district level.

Q- What is the difference between an active shooter drill, lockdown drill and sheltering-in-place?

A- Active Shooter: An Active Shooter or armed assault on school grounds involves one or more individuals' intent on causing physical harm to students and staff. Intruders may possess "weapons" which include but are not limited to: gun(s); assault rifle(s); explosives(s); knife(s) including all other edged weapons; or other harmful devices. In an active shooter situation one or more subjects who are believed to be armed/has used/has threatened to use a weapon to inflict series bodily injury or death on other person(s) and/or continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims; their prior actions have demonstrated their intent to continuously harm others; and, their overriding objective appears to be that of mass injury and murder.

Lockdown: A lockdown involves occupants of a school building being directed to remain confined to a room or area within a building with specific procedures to follow, such as locking doors, closing or opening windows and shades and, seeking cover. A lockdown may be the appropriate response when a dangerous person(s) is believed to be on or near the premises and

school administrators are taking these measures to minimize risk that the occupants will be exposed to danger. Lockdowns necessitate a law enforcement response and immediate intervention.

Sheltering-in-place: Sheltering-in-place is similar to a lockdown in that the occupants are to remain on the premises; however, occupants may be moved to another part of the building to minimize risk of exposure to a dangerous event taking place outside of the building. For example, if there is a release of a chemical cloud from a nearby plant, to evacuate the occupants may put them at greater risk than sheltering them within the building.

Q- What is the difference between a bomb threat drill and a non-fire evacuation drill?

A- Bomb Threat: The primary concern in a bomb threat situation is the safety of the building occupants. The school administrator (SA) plays a major role in responding to bomb threats. It is the responsibility of the SA to order an evacuation, if the bomb threat is deemed credible and reasonable. If reasonable cause does not exist, the SA should immediately consult with law enforcement about ordering an evacuation or lockdown of a school building. The SA has three options when faced with a bomb threat, the SA can: 1) assess and decide that the threat is not credible, 2) evacuate or lockdown the building immediately, or 3) search and evacuate the affected area. When a school has been evacuated and a device has not been found, it is the responsibility of the SA to order the re-occupancy of the school, based upon the information provided by law enforcement officials.

It remains the responsibility of law enforcement to take each of these threats seriously, respond to the scene when called, assist in evacuating the school building (if necessary), conduct thorough investigations, coordinate the search of the building, and advise the SA of the findings of the search and status of the bomb threat.

Evacuation: The need for orderly and safe evacuation during certain situations is critical to the safety of the occupants of a school building. A variety of situations may require evacuation ranging from natural events (i.e. flooding) to man-made situations (i.e. bomb threats, loss of power, gas leaks). All of these events pose a danger to the building occupants.

It is the responsibility of the school administrator to order an evacuation, if the threat is deemed immediate, credible and reasonable. School administrators must also notify emergency responders so that they are aware of the situation and may take appropriate action. If reasonable cause does not exist, school administrators should consult with law enforcement and emergency responders about ordering an evacuation of a school building. If law enforcement identifies any situation that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the occupants are exposed to a significant risk or the threats are reasonably confirmed, law enforcement shall order an evacuation.

Regardless of the underlying cause that necessitates the evacuation, it is the responsibility of law enforcement and other emergency services to respond and to assist in the orderly and safe

evacuation of a school building when the need arises. Once an evacuation occurs, law enforcement has the responsibility of advising school administrators of the extent of their specific efforts, their finding and when their efforts are concluded. After considering the information supplied to them by law enforcement, the final decision to reoccupy the facility rests with the school administrator.

Q- When can the fire alarm be use as an evacuation notification?

A- Fire alarm systems shall be initiated only during a fire evacuation or fire drill.

Q- Are child care facilities required to conduct school security drills?

A- Schools that provide an accredited Kindergarten class or higher grade are required to meet the mandates of *NJS 18A:41-1*.

Q- Is it required that school keep all doors and exits of their respective rooms and buildings unlocked?

A- New Jersey Statute 18A:41-1 states, "... shall require all teachers of all schools, whether occupying buildings of one or more stories, to keep all doors and exits of their respective rooms and buildings unlocked during the school hours, except during an emergency lockdown or an emergency lockdown drill..."

The law requires that doors can be opened from the interior of a room or building in case of emergency egress. Doors may be locked as long as someone can exit in an emergency.

Q- Who should receive school security drill training?

A- Per *N.J.S. 18A:41-7.2* , all staff members in the district or nonpublic school shall be provided with training on school safety and security that includes instruction on school security drills. Each staff member shall be provided with the training by November 2011 or within 60 days of the effective date of employment.

Per *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1(d)*, The district board of education shall develop and provide an annual in-service training program for all district board of education employees to enable them to recognize and appropriately respond to safety and security concerns, emergencies and crises.