



Department of Public Safety

Division of Fire Safety

Berlin Administrative Office

1311 US Route 302 – Berlin – Suite 600

Barre, VT 05641

Firesafety.vermont.gov

(phone) (802)479-7561

(fax) (802) 479-7562

School Safety FAQ's

Q. Can I place a secondary door locking device on my classroom door?

A. Only NFPA-compliant door hardware is permitted on classroom doors.¹

Q. Can doorways that lead from one classroom to another be locked or blocked?

A. If these doors are part of a required second exit, then they cannot be locked or blocked while the building is normally occupied.²

Q. Is it OK for me to lock my classroom door so that no one can leave?

A. Classroom door hardware must permit rapid egress from occupied rooms, and must be NFPA-compliant.³

¹ NFPA-compliant door hardware allows locking from inside classrooms, and unlocking by authorized personnel from outside by means of a key. Unlocking or unlatching means from inside the classroom must be accomplished without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort (See Door Hardware attachment in Safety Grant package).

² In many older schools, doors connecting classrooms were required as a means of secondary egress. This can be evaluated by Division of Fire Safety staff.

³ Occupant control over means of egress is a fundamental provision of life safety in schools, and is a main reason that school fire safety is so successful.



Q. Is it OK to remove fire alarm pull stations from my school?

A. In schools equipped with full, automatic fire sprinkler systems, it may be acceptable. Otherwise, the manual fire alarm system is a required fire safety feature for all educational occupancies.⁴

Q. Can we announce fire drills in advance to alleviate concerns with upsetting staff or student?

A. Where valid concerns exist, an announcement may be made in advance of one or two of the first drills held.⁵

Q. Can individuals faced with an imminent threat take measures to block/barricade a door to keep intruders out?

A. In an emergency situation where imminent harm is likely, extreme measures to protect life may be necessary.

Q. Does an automatic fire sprinkler system in a school change any other requirement?

A. A complete sprinkler system greatly enhances fire safety in any occupancy, and allows greater flexibility when dealing with other concerns (removal of pull stations; security issues).

⁴ Removal of pull stations, delay in response to a fire alarm, or installation of unapproved hardware to 'secure' classroom doors can affect overall life safety. Any changes to door hardware, pull stations, conduct of drills or delay in alarm response requires input from an authority having jurisdiction (Division of Fire Safety fire marshals, or approved municipal partners).

⁵ School fire and emergency drills are most effective when unannounced, since fire is always unexpected.