

Fire Safety Instruction

If a fire occurs at a school, TAFE campus or office it is important that everyone knows what to do. The discovery of a fire can cause panic, which can be more dangerous than the fire itself. If everyone knows what to do and is confident with the procedures, then panic and injury can be averted. Instruction of staff in the procedures developed by the site is critical to ensuring everyone's safety. All staff, students and regular volunteers or visitors should know the evacuation procedures. This should be clear in the site's Critical Incident Plan.

Why do instructions need to be given?

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority administers the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* and the *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008*. These incorporate a range of legislative requirements for 'occupiers' e.g.

Principals and Managers including:

- maintaining a plan of action to be followed in the event of a fire to ensure the safety of all people at the workplace, and
- providing workers with adequate instruction on the actions they need to take to ensure their and other's safety.

What instructions need to be given?

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* prescribes two types of instruction that must be given to all staff, students and regular visitors:

1. 'General Evacuation Instructions'
 - These instructions are to be given within 2 days of starting work and then annually.
 - General evacuation training includes the location of exits, communication devices and fire fighting equipment and the procedures for evacuation.

and

2. 'First Response Evacuation Instructions'
 - These more detailed instructions are to be given no later than one month after beginning work and at intervals of not more than 2 years
 - First response evacuation instructions include the operation of manually operated fire alarms and fire fighting equipment (extinguishers, hose reels and blankets) in the building. These instructions can be given by practical hands on training or instruction via a CD, DVD etc.

For detailed information about the content of this training and other requirements for Fire Safety refer to the QFRS document "[Fire Safety Management Tool for Owner/Occupiers](#)."

Training is to include:

- Procedures to be followed in the event of a fire;
- Means of escape from a building or area;
- Where fire fighting equipment is and how to operate it;
- Where fire alarms/warning systems are and how to operate them;
- Leading students/visitors/volunteers to an exit;
- Marshalling students/visitors/volunteers in a safe place;
- Checking whether staff, students, visitors and volunteers are present; and
- Reporting anybody who is not present at the safe place.

Whilst it is important to know how to use the equipment, in an emergency, the priority should always be to ensure the safe evacuation of all students, visitors and staff.

Health & Safety Fact Sheet

How should instructions be given?

There is no requirement for workers to undertake an approved course or for an instructor to have specific competencies. The legislative requirement is for staff to be given instruction in the aspects previously listed.

The new Fire Safety Adviser (FSA) role required by the *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* is being centrally coordinated for Education Queensland schools. There is **no** requirement to have instruction delivered by an FSA or 'qualified person'. The central FSA role will develop a strategy to ensure appropriate training is available and delivered at all of our school sites.

A range of resources and more information about training requirements is available on the Creating Healthier Workplaces Website at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/hazards/emergency.html>. There are a number of DVDs or training packages that will fulfil the requirements.

Fire Drills – Emergency Evacuations

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* requires at least one fire drill to be conducted each year. However, due to the large student population at our school sites, our department recommends that practice fire drills be held at least once per term. The drills should not be allowed to become stereotyped, as the situation under actual fire conditions may vary widely (e.g. a lockdown transitioning to an evacuation).

All other departmental workplaces must conduct at least one drill per year. It may also be determined through a risk management process that more frequent drills are required and conducted.

What records must be kept?

A record of both kinds of instructions (general evacuation instructions and first response evacuation) must be kept. For each fire instruction the following information is to be recorded:

- name of persons receiving instructions
- name of instructor
- date of instructions given
- description of instructions

More Information

QFRS document “[Fire Safety Management Tool for Owner/Occupiers](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au/buildingsafety/legislation.asp)” on the QFRS site:
<http://www.fire.qld.gov.au/buildingsafety/legislation.asp>

[Fire Extinguisher Training Course—Portable Fire Extinguishers, Library Services - Professional Collection.](http://education.qld.gov.au/library/services/professional.html)
<http://education.qld.gov.au/library/services/professional.html>

[Creating Healthier Workplaces website - Emergency Planning.](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/hazards/emergency.html)
<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/hazards/emergency.html>

[Local Fire Station](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au/about/regions/)
<http://www.fire.qld.gov.au/about/regions/>

Building Fire Regulation 2008
<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/B/BuildgFireSR08.pdf>