



# Five Minutes to ***Fire Safety***

## Topic: Why Do We Drill?

Fire drills are a staple of school life. Regardless of what the weather is like outside and regardless of the best lesson plans, fire drills are guaranteed to be inconvenient. But what's actually required and why do we do it?

The requirement for monthly fire drills actually shows up in a state statute. Kansas Statutes Annotated 31-133(a)(5) requires "administrators of public and private schools and educational institutions... to conduct at least one fire drill each month at some time during school hours, aside from the regular dismissal at the close of the day's session...."

Fire drills are necessary so that students of all ages know how to make an efficient and orderly escape. During their extensive training, teachers are taught that each child learns in a variety of ways – generally by doing, seeing, or hearing. An element of each of these is present with the required fire safety procedures in schools: fire drill prep plans are provided for the visual learners, an aural explanation of where the class will go for the drill should be provided by the teacher prior to the event, and the class as a whole will physically exit the building as practice for the active learner.

This is also why we do tornado drills, which are also required by K.S.A. 31-133. This statute requires three drills during the course of the school year. It's our recommendation, however, that one tornado drill be done towards the beginning of the school year to familiarize students with the location of their tornado shelter. We often think of spring as the season for severe weather, but this is Kansas! Tornadoes in October and November are not unheard of.

All of these drills are extremely important. Fire alarm systems and smoke detectors can't protect the students, teachers, and staff in our schools if the building occupants can't get out of the building. Likewise, tornado sirens can't help protect people if they don't know where to go. A successful fire and tornado drill program is an important part of a successful fire safety program.

For more information: Check out Fire Fact 027 online.



Kansas State Fire Marshal  
700 SW Jackson, Suite 600  
Topeka, KS 66603-3714  
Phone: 785-296-3401  
Fax: 785-296-0151

To access this and previous topics online, visit us at [www.accesskansas.org/firemarshal](http://www.accesskansas.org/firemarshal).