

POLICY

Name: Use of Schools for Sleeping Accommodation

Effective Date: May 2002

Review date: April 2012

Abstract: Utilization of existing facilities for activities other than those originally anticipated in their design is becoming more prevalent as a means of optimizing resources available to local communities. When events are scheduled to be held in any location throughout Nova Scotia there may be a need to use schools to provide temporary sleeping accommodations for the people attending these events.

Assessment of the temporary use should be carried out under the provisions of Article 2.1.2.2 of the National fire Code of Canada 2010.

This policy is intended to both direct and assist school boards, the organizing committee and fire officials in the assessment of facilities to provide safe temporary sleeping accommodations and set out criteria to use in ensuring that safeguards are in place and fire safety responsibilities are established.

1.0 Scope

This guideline has been established to aid school boards, officials and event organizers and fire officials in the assessment of school facilities for safe temporary sleeping accommodations in school buildings in Nova Scotia. Since sleeping accommodation is not normally considered in the design of schools, Article 2.1.2.2 of the National Fire Code of Canada (NFC) is applicable to the temporary use.

Article 2.1.2.2 of NFC states: "Activities that create a hazard and that are not allowed for in the original design shall not be carried out in a building unless **approved** provisions are made to control the hazard."

The article prohibits an owner or occupier from using a facility for a purpose other than that for which it was designed without first obtaining approval from the Authority Having Jurisdiction, this being, in the Province of Nova Scotia, the Office of the Fire Marshal or an authorized representative. Further, the article provides the authority for the Fire Official to approve the use of school or other designated facilities for temporary use such as sleeping accommodations. Prior to granting approval, the Fire official must be satisfied that appropriate measures are taken in the form of fire safety systems and procedures to provide an adequate level of life safety for the occupants who may be in the facility at the time.

1.0 Scope (cont'd)

The guideline provides criteria that should be considered in determining the suitability and approval of the facility for sleeping accommodation, including the installation of fire safety devices and establishment of fire safety procedures for school board personnel, volunteers etc. There are some minimum requirements that must be provided in the facility before consideration can be attempted and these are identified in Part A on the School Designation Form (see Appendix C).

2.0 Submission for Approval

The submission for approval shall be made to the Office of The Fire Marshal or an Authorized Representative at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the planned event. It is the owner's responsibility, the school board, to ensure that the submission contains all of the required information for the Office of the Fire Marshal to make a decision. It is also important to note that it is the school boards responsibility to comply with all of the conditions of the approval.

Prior to making submission, the school board must meet with the local fire officials to determine any additional requirements that may be necessary for the application. A confirmation letter of this meeting outlining any requirements as a result of this meeting shall be included with the application.

The submission to the Office of the Fire Marshal for approval to use a school on a temporary basis for overnight accommodation shall include all of the following:

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- Covering letter identifying the facility
- Fire safety responsibilities and procedures
- Site and floor plans
- Guest (tenant) information sheet
- Current inspection reports for fire safety systems located in the building
- Copy of the results of the meeting with local fire officials; and
- School designation form

Each of these items is covered in more detail in the following sections.

3.0 School Board Submission Cover letter

The cover letter must be prepared by an employee of the school board in responsible charge identifying the reason for the application, the period of time for the temporary use, the accompanying documentation and confirmation that the information provided has been reviewed by the appropriate senior staff member. (For your convenience a draft letter is attached in Appendix A.)

4.0 Fire Safety Procedures

In order to ensure adequate on site response to a fire emergency that may occur in the facility during a temporary use, sufficient human resources must be present in each location. These persons shall include the school custodian, at least two supervisory personnel from the host organization and a guest from each sleeping area to act as fire warden for their area. Where a single sleeping area, such as a gymnasium, has an occupant load greater than 50 persons, there must be at least one fire warden for each 50 guests.

On the first day of occupancy, fire wardens shall be selected and an initial meeting held with the school custodian, supervisory staff and fire wardens. The duties for these individuals shall be discussed and a full fire drill held, with all occupants participating. The school custodian, supervisory staff and fire wardens must be familiar with the means to manually activate the fire alarm system. During the fire drill, the occupants shall familiarize themselves with their evacuation routes and understand where they are to meet once outside.

Duties and responsibilities for these persons must include the details identified in subsection 4.1 to 4.4 in this policy.

4.1 Definition of school custodian – a school custodian is an employee of the school board who is in responsible charge of the school during the event and who is familiar with the layout of the school and all of its fire safety features and systems.

4.2 School Custodian

The custodian must be on duty at all times that the building is occupied and be familiar with the school and its emergency equipment and systems.

Regular daily duties:

- Check fire alarm system for operation
- Check egress routes and exits to ensure that they are available for use and not obstructed
- Check that exit signs are illuminated while the building is occupied
- Check that emergency lighting is operational
- Check that smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are in place and functional
- Check that access routes are kept clear
- Collect and remove refuse from the building

Emergency duties in event of fire or alarm:

- Activate the fire alarm
- Call fire department
- Provide access to public address system if necessary and safe to do so
- Meet emergency responders , supervisory staff and fire wardens at main entrance
- Confirm everyone has safely evacuated the building

4.3 Guest supervisory staff

The supervisory staff must be readily identifiable to both the occupants of the facility and, in the case of an emergency, to the responding fire department. It is recommended that the supervisory staff wear a reflective vest.

Regular duties:

- Ensure that the fire wardens are appointed and on duty
- Conduct a fire watch patrol throughout the facility once per hour to include
 1. Check egress routes and exits to ensure that they are available for use and not obstructed
 2. Check to ensure that there is no smoking
 3. Check to ensure that there are no open flames (candles)
 4. Check that doors to rooms not in use are kept closed
- Conduct patrol of the exterior to ensure appropriate site security
- Meet once per evening with fire wardens and custodian prior to securing school

Emergency duties in the event of a fire or alarm:

- Activate the fire alarm
- Ensure that evacuation has started and report to the school custodian
- Report to custodian of any persons that may be still in the building

4.4 Fire Wardens

Regular daily duties:

- Assign a helper to any person who may need assistance in evacuating the building
- Take evening roll call
- Ensure means of egress from sleeping area kept clear
- Be aware of evacuation procedures
- Report any fire hazards to supervisory staff
- Ensure that there is no smoking or open flames present
- Ensure door to sleeping area kept closed during sleeping hours
- Meet once per evening with the supervisory staff and custodian prior to securing the school and report location of persons who require assistance to evacuate

Emergency duties:

- Assist in evacuation of assigned sleeping area to outside collection area
- Close door to sleeping room after room evacuated; if safe to do so
- Check evening roster and inform supervisory staff of any person not accounted for who may still be in the building
- Designated fire warden – check washroom/ change rooms for any persons; if safe to do so

5.0 Site and floor plans

- Site and floor plans of the facility must be prepared and submitted with the application. The plans shall indicate the rooms where sleeping will take place and the egress routes intended for use by the occupants. A safe outside assembly area must be identified on the site plan for the guests to gather in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- A copy of the evacuation routes showing the exits from the building must be posted in each sleeping area.

6.0 Fire emergency procedures

A guest information sheet must be prepared for distribution to each guest at check-in, providing information on the emergency procedures and fire precautions. In addition, a copy of the information sheet shall be posted in each sleeping room.

A sample information sheet is attached in Appendix B. The sheet must be available in the appropriate language(s) as may be necessary for each facility.

7.0 School designation form

The school designation form should be completed and accompany the application. This form will identify the facility, provide the name of the contact person for the school board, indicate that the minimum requirements for use have been met and establish the occupant load for the facility. (a copy of the form is attached in Appendix C)

8.0 Fire protection equipment

In addition to an automatic sprinkler system or fire alarm system provided in the building, approved single station smoke alarms must be provided in each sleeping room. In large sleeping areas, such as a gymnasium, where the ceiling height may be such that it would reduce the effectiveness of smoke alarms, the smoke alarms may be omitted. In these cases a smoke alarm is required in the corridor leading to the gymnasium where the corridor is not already equipped with smoke detectors connected to the building fire alarm system.

Approved carbon monoxide detectors must be provided in rooms and corridors beside service rooms containing fuel-fired appliances and in the room directly above service rooms.

These devices may be battery operated.

In the event that a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector activates, the fire alarm emergency procedures must be initiated immediately.

Appendix A - School Board Submission Letter

School Board Letterhead

SAMPLE ONLY

Office of the Fire Marshal

Re: School Name
School Address
Temporary use for Sleeping Accommodation
Dates

On behalf of the _____ School Board, we are submitting an application to permit the temporary use of the above captioned school for sleeping accommodation for _____ persons for the period from _____ to _____.

8 _____

Accompanying this application, please find attached the fire safety procedures for designated persons, site plan, floor plan(s) indicating the proposed sleeping areas in the school, the fire safety procedures for guests and the completed school designation form.

The _____ School Board will comply with the Fire Safety Procedures identified in section 4 of the "Use of Schools for Sleeping Accommodation Policy" issued by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

All of the information has been prepared and reviewed for accuracy by:

Name: _____ Position: _____

Yours truly,

Appendix B – Fire Emergency Procedures

Fire Emergency Procedures

Upon discovery of Fire:

- Leave a the fire area immediately and assist anyone in immediate danger to evacuate
- Close all doors behind you to confine the fire ; if safe to do so
- Activate the fire alarm and alert other occupants (staff, fire warden, supervisory staff, custodian)
- Use closest safe exit or exit stairwell to leave the building; do not re-entre the building
- Proceed to the designated outside assembly area

Upon hearing the Fire alarm

- Follow any instructions that may be given by the fire warden
- Leave the building immediately
- Close all doors behind you to confine the fire; if safe to do so
- Use closest safe exit or exit stairwell to leave the building; do not re-entre the building
- Proceed to designated outside assembly area

NOTE:

- Do not re-enter the building
- Do not use elevators

Fire safety Precautions

- Any garbage or refuse is to be deposited into the proper receptacle daily
- Open flames (candles) are not permitted
- Cooking appliances are not permitted in sleeping areas
- No smoking within the school building or on school property

APPENDIX C - School Designation Form

Temporary Use of Sprinklered Schools for Sleeping Accommodation	
School Name:	School Board (SB):
Address:	SB contact person:
	Phone #'s
Minimum requirements:	
Ventilation: Mechanical <input type="checkbox"/> Natu <input type="checkbox"/>	Fire safety procedures in place: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Fire evacuation routes posted: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Smoke alarms in sleeping rooms Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> and corridors providing access to gymnasium Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Carbon monoxide detectors provided in rooms and corridors adjacent to service rooms containing fuel fire appliances: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Fire alarm system in service: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Last inspection date: _____ Sprinkler system in service: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Last inspection date: _____ Insurance carrier notified of change in use: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sprinklered Schools Only	
Occupant load Sleeping rooms* to be on main floor level only*: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maximum 45 m (150 ft.) travel distance to an exit: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Only rooms within travel distance limits used for sleeping: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Occupant load* per room = net area* in m ² / 4.6 m ² = _____ persons - Maximum 25 persons Total occupant load = _____ (sum of occupant loads of all sleeping areas)	
Notes: Sleeping rooms - hazardous classrooms excluded Main floor level - other levels may be considered upon specific request only Occupant load - based on 4.6m ² (50 ft ²) per person Net area = clear floor space of classroom or gymnasium	
Prepared by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Process for designation of schools used for sleeping accommodation

1. Assigned technical staff of the school board shall complete the "designation" form.
2. The package of forms and schematic plans for designated school shall be accompanied by a letter from the school board official confirming accuracy and acceptance of the operating conditions. These shall be submitted for review at least two weeks prior to the event.
3. Designation forms and schematic plans indicating sleeping rooms shall be filed with the fire department.

Operating conditions:

1. Equipment and furniture - may be stored off site or in unoccupied rooms – storage in sleeping rooms or exits and access to exits is not permitted.
2. "Portable classrooms" are not be used for sleeping accommodation unless they are sprinkler protected.
3. Access to kitchens and/or cooking appliances is restricted to authorized personnel.
4. Access to hazardous classrooms is prohibited.
5. Adequate guest supervisory staff, minimum of two, to exercise the school fire safety plan shall be on duty at all times.
6. At least one fire warden shall be designated for each sleeping room and/ or one fire warden for each 25 persons sleeping in gymnasium.
7. A fire drill shall be held on the first day of the event.
8. Guest supervisors shall have emergency contact information and access to a telephone or cell phone.
9. A custodian, designated by the school board, shall be present while the school is in use for sleeping accommodation.
10. Exits and emergency lighting shall be maintained operational during the event.
11. Lighting shall be provided in the access to exit routes.
12. Daily walk through by custodian to ensure compliance with fire code requirements:
 - Exit lights illuminated/ emergency lighting operational
 - Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are functional
 - Fire alarm system is operational and functional
 - Sprinkler system is available
 - Egress routes and exits are free of obstruction
 - Maintain records
13. Schematic plans of the site identifying sleeping rooms are to be kept in an accessible location.
14. Refuse shall be collected and removed from the building daily.
15. Open flame devices are not permitted on site.
16. Use of any cooking appliance shall be restricted to use by authorized personnel only.
17. Smoking is not permitted in the school or on school property during the event.
18. The custodian shall have access to the public address system.
19. Fire department access routes shall be maintained clear at all times.