
2. POLICIES and PROCEDURES

2.1. Fire Policy and Procedures

1-6. Checklist Reference

**LEGISLATIVE
REFERENCE 27(1)**

- 27(1) Every operator of a day nursery shall ensure that in respect of each day nursery operated by the operator,
- (a) a written procedure approved by the local fire chief is established with respect to the duties of each member of the staff of each day nursery in the event of a fire;
 - (b) each staff member of each day nursery is instructed as to his or her responsibilities in the event of a fire before commencing work for the first time;
 - (c) the written procedure referred to in clause (a) is posted in a conspicuous place in each room in each day nursery that is used for the care of children;
 - (d) a fire drill is conducted at least once a month;
 - (e) a written record is kept of all fire drills, all tests of the fire alarm system and all tests of fire protection equipment and that each record is retained for at least two years from the date of the drill and test; and
 - (f) there is a designated place of shelter in the event the day nursery must be evacuated due to an emergency.

INTENT

The intent is to ensure that staff responsibilities are clearly outlined and that children are familiar with the evacuation procedure involved in the event of fire.

The record of tests of the fire alarm system and fire protection equipment should reveal the status of these devices.

A designated place of shelter provides a point of assembly where children and staff can be accounted for and temporary care can be given if the day nursery must remain vacant.

Note: Each municipality may impose further restrictions related to fire safety.

INDICATORS**Indicator Type:** Documentation

1. There is a written procedure specifying the duties of each member of staff in the event of fire, approved by the local fire chief.
2. A written record is kept of all fire drills. This will show that fire drills are conducted at least once a month.
3. A written record shows tests of the fire alarm system and fire protection equipment.
4. Where applicable, the fire drill records date back at least two years.

Indicator Type: Physical Inspection

1. The written fire procedure is posted in a conspicuous place in each room used for the care of children.

Indicator Type: Interview

1. The operator confirms that the written procedure is acceptable to the local fire chief.
2. The operator indicates a place of emergency shelter available to the day nursery.
3. The operator confirms that each staff member is instructed as to the fire procedure.
4. Operators and or staff confirm that fire drills have been conducted at least once a month.

GOOD PRACTICE

Contained emergencies include fire or other life threatening situations on the premises. Planning steps in case of a contained emergency include the following:

1. An appropriate designated place of shelter which can be used at any time of year, should the day nursery become uninhabitable, must be selected. There should be written approval that the facility may be used in the event of an emergency. Advise parents of the designated place of shelter as part of the

**GOOD PRACTICE
(cont'd)**

admissions policy. Examples of emergency locations are churches, community centres, libraries, shopping plazas, schools and other day nurseries.

2. Establish a system to notify parents.
3. Select a fire alarm signal which is an audible signal, not used for any other purpose, and operable only by adults.
4. Ensure that all staff are familiar with the operation of an alarm system where it is already installed in a multi-purpose building.

**ACTIONS AND
DUTIES OF STAFF**

In advance of an emergency, staff should,

- (a) teach the children an immediate response when an emergency signal is heard (e.g. stand up and face the teacher); and
- (b) choose a place in the room where the children will line up (e.g., along the wall).

The person who discovers a fire should,

- (a) assist anyone in immediate danger;
- (b) try to isolate any burning area by closing the door;
- (c) sound the alarm; and then
- (d) telephone the fire department. (The number should be clearly posted beside the telephone).

Other staff members should immediately undertake their pre-assigned emergency duties. The duties should include the following:

- Directing children to safety outside once they are in line, with one adult leading and other adults placed throughout the line and one adult at the end.
- Turning off stoves or other such appliances.
- Retrieving medication.

**ACTIONS AND
DUTIES OF STAFF
(cont'd)**

- Retrieving the emergency information and current attendance record and checking the number of children against the attendance record. Maintaining an up-to-date record is absolutely essential.

Note: 1. If parents arrive before the attendance is taken, they must wait for this procedure before the child is released to their care.

2. The required contents of the emergency information are found in section 29.3, DNA Manual 6.4.58-59. This information should be kept in a small file box, with a card for each child.

- If possible, searching the premises (done by a staff person assigned as floor warden) including washroom areas, closets and other hiding places for children, to ensure that all duties have been fulfilled and all persons have left the building.
- Closing all doors, ensuring that the building is locked after everyone has vacated it.
- If necessary, ordering and supervising evacuation to the designated place of shelter until parents are notified and arrive.

**NEIGHBOUR-
HOOD AND
REGION-WIDE
EVACUATION**

The day nursery's procedures for contained emergencies should be followed in a neighbourhood or region-wide evacuation unless the supervisor receives direction either directly or indirectly through the police or fire departments. The supervisor must then alert the staff and prepare them to follow the evacuation instructions received from the police or fire departments. The staff is responsible for supervising any other children who may be delegated to their care during such an event.

**SPECIAL
INSTRUCTIONS**

Operators must comply with the Ontario Fire Code, made under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*.

FIRE DRILLS

Operators should contact their local fire department for advice in establishing fire drill procedures acceptable to their local fire chiefs. Fire department staff can also suggest a time limit for evacuation of the building.

**FIRE DRILLS
(cont'd)**

Plans, assigning specific duties to every staff member and volunteer in case of fire, must be prepared. (Each room occupied by children requires a specific procedure applicable to any time of the day).

It is suggested that fire drills are practised once a week until children and staff are familiar with the procedures and monthly thereafter. When the children are able to respond promptly and correctly to the fire drill signal, it may be appropriate to teach an alternate exit route. The time limit for evacuation suggested by the fire department can be used as a goal during all practices. Drills should include evacuation from all areas including the sleep rooms, although not at sleep time. Practices should be held on different days of the week and at different hours of the day.

Note: Newly enrolled children and new staff or volunteers must learn the fire drill and fire safety procedures.

FIRST-AID

The first precaution is to know exactly what to do for a burn or smoke victim. It is recommended that a staff member with recent training in first-aid be on duty at all times.

Training is available from many sources, including The Canadian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance. Any central or local branch of these organizations or the medical officer of health will provide information.

First-aid training should be kept current.

SMOKING

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* prohibits smoking in Day Care Centres.

HALLWAYS

Passageways leading to exits must be clear at all times.

SLEEPING

Cots should be spaced at least 46 centimetres (18.1 inches) apart and with an aisle of at least 92 centimetres (36.2 inches) wide.

**STAFF: CHILD
RATIOS**

Staff on the premises during rest period must never be less than two-thirds the required ratios, so as to ensure an effective emergency evacuation.

STORAGE

The Ontario Fire Code requires the following:

1. In day care centres, all "flammable and combustible" liquids, such as paint and cleaning fluids, are stored in areas inaccessible to children.
2. Ensure that combustible waste materials do not accumulate in amounts or locations which would constitute a fire hazard.
3. Ensure that the store room or metal storage cabinet have a three-quarter hour separation. This means that a fire would be contained in the room or storage cabinet for a minimum of 45 minutes before spreading.
4. Flammable creative materials are stored in metal containers or containers that are approved by the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (U.L.C.).
5. In day care centres, all waste containers be made of non-combustible materials (do not use plastic; waste containers should have lids).

Note: For more details, contact your local Fire Department.

NIGHT-TIME CARE

If night-time care is given, emergency lighting must be provided in case of power failure. Such emergency lighting must meet all applicable codes and standards.

**CHRISTMAS,
BIRTHDAYS AND
SPECIAL DAYS**

Staff should plan for emergency exit on occasions when large groups are present for parties and other special programs.

1. Use flameproof paper decorations and artificial Christmas trees.
2. Use only approved low voltage electric light decorations and provide adult supervision whenever the lights are in use.
3. Do not use extension cords in areas that may be used as

**CHRISTMAS,
BIRTHDAYS AND
SPECIAL DAYS
(cont'd)**

pathways for emergency exit. Unless approved, open flames (i.e., candles) cannot be used.

4. Make certain that any flammable material, such as paper wrappings and paper napkins, are removed promptly.

**WALL AND
WINDOW
COVERINGS**

The Ontario Fire Code states that where there are more than 100 children and staff in a day nursery, flame-retardant drapes, curtains and other decorative materials must be used in any lobby or exit area.

Some materials, whether made from natural or synthetic fibres, tend to ignite and burn more rapidly than others. Standards for manufacturers have been set, and these are enforced by regulations.

**ELECTRIC
HEATING UNITS**

Do not use any installation, which would permit a child to insert a toy or tool in it and contact the wiring. Clothing or paper should not be hung near enough to any unit to catch fire.

- Note:**
1. Special hazard areas should be recognized and precautions taken.
 2. The words "flammable" and "inflammable" have the same meaning. They both mean that material so labelled will catch fire easily and burn rapidly.

The words, which tell the consumer that a product has been made as safe (fire-retardant) as possible are "non-flammable" and "un-inflammable." Watch for these words, and/or for the international symbols as they give important information.