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STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heads of Fire Departments

FROM: Stephen D. Coan
State Fire Marshal

DATE: August 1, 2011

SUBJECT: Reporting of School Fires

“An Act Relative to the Reporting of Fires in Schools” was signed into law by Governor Romney on May 12, 2006. The law (Chapter 80 of the Acts of 2006) became effective on August 10, 2006. I am re-issuing this information for your use as we approach the new school year.

This law **requires** that the principal of any public or private school of grades 1-12 shall **immediately report any incident involving the unauthorized ignition of any fire within the school building or on school grounds, to the local fire department.** The principal shall file a written report to the local fire department within 24 hours. The principal must file this report whether or not the fire department responded. The fire department shall report the incident to the Marshal pursuant to Chapter 148 § 2 (MFIRS).

The law was created to mandate that schools report fires that may have previously gone unreported. The effect will be greater protection of our children and the ability to identify possible juvenile fire setters to provide appropriate early intervention.

If you have any questions please contact our Public Education Unit at 978-567-3380 or Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit at 978-567-3375 or in Western MA 413-587-3181.

Mandatory Report of Any School Fires

M.G.L. C 148. s. 2A

M.G.L. C 148, Section 2A. "The principal of any **public or private school** that provides instruction to pupils in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, shall **immediately** report any incident involving the unauthorized ignition of any fire within the school building or on school grounds to the local fire department. The principal shall submit a written report of the incident to the head of the fire department within 24 hours on a form furnished by the department of fire services. The report shall be filed without regard to the extent of the fire or whether there was a response by the fire department. The head of the fire department shall report such incident to the marshal in accordance with section 2."

This form is part of the mandatory reporting requirement under M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37L.

Remember to call 9-1-1 for any fire not already extinguished upon discovery.

Date: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of School District: _____

City/Town: _____

Name of Reporting Person: _____
(principal or designee)

Signature of Reporting Person: _____

Telephone # of Reporting Person: _____

Date & Time of Fire (if known): _____

Date & Time Fire Discovered: _____
(if different than when it occurred)

Who Discovered the Fire?: _____
(Name and Function: teacher, administrator, custodian, or student)

Location of Fire: Inside Outside

More Specific Location: _____
(e.g. floor and function such as "in a trash container in the 2nd floor boys' lavatory")

For Fire Department use
Report received by: _____
Date: _____

Requirement for School Evacuation/Multi-Hazard Plans

ADVISORY

To:	Head of Fire Departments
From:	Stephen D. Coan, State Fire Marshal
Date:	September 11, 2000
Re:	Requirement for School Evacuation/Multi-Hazard Plans

Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000, by the Massachusetts Legislature, requires all school districts to formulate specific school emergency plans. This Act, cited below, places the responsibility to develop these plans upon the Superintendent of each school district and requires that Superintendent work with local fire and police departments in its development. This advisory is provided to you in order that you are aware that such requests for assistance and collaboration should be forthcoming. The Act reads as follows:

"Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the superintendent of each school district shall, prior to the beginning of the school year, meet with the fire chief (emphasis added) and police chief of the city, town or district to formulate a school specific "Muti-hazard evacuation plan" for each school under the superintendent's supervision. Said multi-hazard evacuation plan shall encompass, but not be limited to, evacuation for fires, hurricanes and other hazardous storms or disaster in which bodily injury might occur, shootings and other terrorist activities, and bomb threats. Said plan shall be formulated for each school building after a review of each building. Said plan shall include, but not be limited to: (1) establishment of a crisis response team; (2) designation as to who is in charge of said team and designated substitutes; (3) a communications plan; (4) crisis procedures for safe entrance to and exit from the school by students, parents and employees; and (5) policies for enforcing school discipline and maintaining a safe and orderly environment during the crisis. Each district, with the assistance of the local police and fire departments (emphasis added), shall annually review and update as appropriate said plan. At the beginning of each school year, students at each school shall be instructed as to the plan that is developed."

Over the past year, each fire department received a copy of the "School Emergencies, Community Pre-Planning Guide," published by the Executive Office of Public Safety. Many of you participated or sent representatives to seminars on this planning guidance that were held throughout the state. I suggest that this guide may be beneficial in assisting school districts in meeting their planning requirements
