

Future Facility Changes or Upgrades



Any future facility changes or upgrades should be promptly shared with local law enforcement and fire departments prior to implementation so they maintain situational awareness and can make any necessary changes to their plans.

Why?

- All school construction projects are required to meet the NH State Fire Code as governed through RSA 153:1. A summary of statutes can be found on the NH State Fire Marshal's website <https://www.firemarshal.dos.nh.gov/> or you may call the office directly at 603-223-4289.
- All NH public schools are required to meet minimum construction standards set forth in NH Department of Education (NHED) Administrative Rules. These standards are known as Ed 321 and can be found here <https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/ed321-buildingaid.pdf> or by calling NHED at 603-271-3494.
- All school construction projects are required to meet the NH State Fire Code as governed through RSA 153:1 and the NH State Building Code as governed through RSA 155-A:1.

Access Controls

Consider an electronic door locking mechanism in which one fob, otherwise known as a proximity reader, gets personnel into all schools within a district. This is also applicable for towns that have more than one building on a single campus. It is important to have a hard key and a fob that is housed in the off-site secure lock box.

Important!

For public safety accessibility, it is important that police and fire personnel are able to gain physical entry into the building in the event of an emergency situation. Coordinate with both when planning building entry features and protocols.

Barricading Devices

Barricading devices are not directly permitted by the State Fire Code. Instead, as a best practice, the NH School Safety Preparedness Task Force recommends securing all interior doors with a door locking mechanism, such that the door can be locked from both sides and unlocked from inside without a key, tool, or special knowledge. For guidance, please download the one-page document "Door Locking Mechanism #54," located on the NH School Safety Resources website <https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/recommendation-54/>. A variance from the NH State Fire Marshal's Office may be considered on a case by case basis.

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Local building code and fire officials review plans and specifications for all school construction in their community. It is important to involve local officials at the beginning of any new construction or facilities upgrade planning process.



- Local police and fire departments should be included in the beginning stages of all emergency operations planning, including as it relates to site planning and traffic flow. Please refer to <https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/rsa-18964-emergency-response-plans/> for further information on the coordination with local emergency response officials.
- Every fire chief in NH is required to inspect each public and non-public school within their community once per year in relation to occupant loads, egress, protection, operating features, building services, inspection documentation, school security, and emergency planning.
- NH State Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for reviewing plans and specifications prior to all public school construction to ensure compliance with the NH State Fire Code and the NH State Building Code. All non-public schools are required to be in compliance with the NH State Fire Code and NH State Building Code. NH State Fire Marshal's office also provides technical assistance to non-public schools, as needed.

To request technical assistance, visit the NH State Fire Marshal's Office website <https://www.firemarshal.dos.nh.gov/> or call 603-223-4289.

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For more information about this recommendation, please contact:

NH State Fire Marshal's Office | fmo@dos.nh.gov | 603-223-4289

