

Conducting School Disaster Drills During COVID-19

Guidance for Montana Schools



Montana Code Annotated: Disaster Drills

20-1-402

There must be at least eight disaster drills a year in a school. Drills must be held at different hours of the day or evening to avoid distinction between drills and actual disasters.



Want to know more about preparing for emergencies? Visit the Office of Public Instruction's [Emergency Planning & Safety](#) page for planning tools and other resources.

General Recommendations:

- For all drills, adhere to all physical distancing guidelines and face covering recommendations as closely as possible.
- In the event of an actual emergency, physical distancing and face coverings should not be prioritized.
- Prior to implementing an adapted drill, ensure all teachers and staff are aware of changes.
- Ensure hand sanitizing takes place after each drill.
- For remote learners, encourage students and families to practice appropriate disaster drills in their own homes, including knowing who to call and how to stay safe.

Earthquake Drills:

- Conduct multiple drills with small groups of students and/or staff so physical distancing can be maintained.
- Follow normal drop, cover, and hold protocols while maintaining physical distance and wearing face coverings.

Fire Drills and other Evacuation Drills:

- Conduct multiple drills with small groups of students and/or staff so physical distancing can be maintained.
- Use a “blocked” format with one classroom evacuating at a time, or multiple classrooms evacuating if multiple exits are available for simultaneous evacuation.
- Increase number of evacuation locations to allow for physical distancing.

Lockdown and Shelter in Place Drills:

- Conduct drills with adults first, or with adults only, so physical distancing can be maintained.
- Conduct multiple drills with small groups of students/staff so physical distancing can be maintained.
- Record a video with a small group of people demonstrating what to do during a lockdown and use the video to educate others.