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.

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.

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.