

School Safety FAQ COVID-19 Guidance

1. Are we still required to conduct our every 30-day fire drills during closures?

TCA 68-102 states that fire drills requiring full evacuation shall be held at least one (1) time every thirty (30) SCHOOL DAYS, with two (2) fire drills occurring during the first thirty (30) full days of the school year. Days that the school is closed are not considered school days.

It may still be prudent to continue testing alarm systems, to ensure they maintain proper working order. The same may be true related to water systems, boilers, etc., depending on local processes and systems.

2. Is building safety and security still a concern during school closure?

Staff may still be in the building conducting deep cleans or prepping food for students. All safety policies must be upheld.

3. Will federal aid be available?

A national state of emergency has been declared by the president which invokes the Stafford Act to release federal aid. These funds could possibly reimburse districts for costs associated with resources and time that have been spent on this emergency. In order to request federal reimbursements, documentation will need to be maintained. Documentation needs to include the date, start and stop time, and description of person or resource utilized specifically for this emergency.

4. What monitoring should occur when schools are closed?

Districts and schools should maintain and extend the same policies and practices that are used during other extended periods of building closure (ex. summer, fall, winter, and spring breaks). This would include monitoring that all doors and windows are secured, keys are accounted for, regular physical checks on the facility occur, etc.

Districts should provide clear direction related to expectations for any school personnel who maintain any level of responsibility related to the safety and security of schools, including School Resource Officers. The safety and well-being of any staff or stakeholder should be prioritized.