

STATE OF VERMONT AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS	Associated Policy #401	Page 1 of 14
Fire Safety Standard Operating Procedure		
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GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

Fire safety prevention, equipment, and evacuation procedures are particularly crucial in correctional facilities. In addition to the typical dangers posed by fire, concerns arise in facilities due to the likelihood of incarcerated individuals not having control over their path of escape, and the need to maintain the safety and security of incarcerated individuals, staff, and others during fire prevention, safety, and evacuation procedures.

All correctional facilities in Vermont shall adhere to the procedures outlined in this document at all times.

FIRE SAFETY OFFICER

The Superintendent of each facility shall appoint one primary Fire Safety Officer annually, and may appoint other staff to work with the primary Fire Safety Officer in meeting the duties of this role. The Fire Safety Officer shall be provided with all necessary training, supervision, and support to fulfill this role. The Office of Professional Standards and Compliance (OPSC) shall provide the training for this role, including:

1. An annual “training for trainers” training;
2. Fire Behavior and Evacuation training;
3. Fire Extinguishers training;
4. The use of respiratory protection equipment training; and
5. Site-specific training, including facility evacuation routes.

FIRE EQUIPMENT

A. Fire Equipment Standards

1. The Security and Operations Supervisor (SOS) and the Fire Safety Officer shall establish a well-defined method of distinguishing where the keys to locked fire equipment are located.

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- [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
2. The SOS and the Fire Safety Officer shall coordinate with BGS and any necessary outside agencies to develop a process for obtaining a newly charged fire extinguisher to replace a discharged one.

B. Evacuation Hoods

1. The DOC provides evacuations hoods for staff to wear over their heads, to protect them from fire, smoke, and gases in an evacuation during a fire or smoke emergency.
2. The DOC provides training on the use of the evacuation hoods to all security staff.
3. The DOC provide a review of how to use the evacuation hoods as part of the annual fire safety training.
4. Security staff shall use evacuation hoods for self-protection during an evacuation situation in which air quality is compromised.
5. Evacuation hoods are intended for one-time use only. Staff shall not use an evacuation hood that has been previously used as it may not afford an adequate level of protection.
6. The Fire Safety Officer shall:
 - a. Inspect evacuation hoods as part of their monthly inspections;
 - b. Ensure the evacuation hoods are properly stored, the packaging is inspected, and they are discarded when appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions; and
 - c. Check expiration dates of evacuation hoods and replace as necessary.
7. Staff shall ensure evacuation hoods are present and sealed during weekly fire exit checks.
8. During fire drills, staff shall use mock evacuation hoods or evacuation hoods which are near-expiration and scheduled for removal from service, as authorized by the Fire Safety Officer (not new, sealed, evacuation hoods).

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C. Damaged or Malfunctioning Fire Safety Equipment

1. Staff shall report any apparent damage or malfunctioning of fire safety equipment to the on-duty Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor (CFSS) upon discovery.
2. If a fire extinguisher malfunctions, facility staff notify the CFSS, who shall:
 - a. Arrange to have it replaced; and
 - b. Notify the Fire Safety Officer for appropriate follow-up.




FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

A. Staff Training

1. The Superintendent shall ensure that all facility staff are trained in fire behavior and evacuation, and the use of related fire equipment available in the facility.
2. All facility staff members shall complete:
 - a. Initial training and assessments prior to assuming duties within the correctional facility, including the following topics:
 - i. Fire behavior and evacuation;
 - ii. The use of fire extinguishers; and
 - iii. The use of respiratory protection equipment.
 - b. A refresher training at least once annually, including all of the above topics.
3. The Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure the Fire Safety Officer provides the required facility refresher training.
4. The Superintendent, or designee, shall maintain documentation of each facility staff member's fire safety training.

B. Materials, Chemicals, and Fuels

1. The DOC shall only purchase and use fire resistant bedding within correctional facilities.
2. The SOS and the Fire Safety Officer shall establish and maintain a complete listing of all chemicals and fuels within the facility. 

C. Responding to Fire Hazards









1. All facility staff members shall develop the ability to recognize a potential fire hazard.
2. Upon receipt of a report of a fire hazard, the CFSS shall:
 - a. Initiate corrective action; and
 - b. Report the hazard to the following as soon as practicable:
 - i. Superintendent;
 - ii. SOS; and
 - iii. Fire Safety Officer.
3. The Fire Safety Officer shall follow-up on all reports of a fire hazard to ensure all hazards have been neutralized.

FIRE INSPECTIONS AND DRILLS

A. Fire Exit Checks

1. The SOS and the Fire Safety Officer shall ensure all exterior fire doors are kept clear at all times. Facility staff shall ensure a adequate snow removal to allow individuals to exit and move to evacuation areas.

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- c. The Superintendent, or designee, and CFSS shall create a plan to ensure safe exit in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- d. The Superintendent, or designee, shall follow-up with BGS to ensure the malfunction is repaired.

B. Monthly Fire Inspections

The Fire Safety Officer, or designee, shall perform a monthly fire inspection of the facility.

1. These monthly inspections shall ensure all fire equipment is functioning properly, and shall include visual inspections of:
 - a. Respiratory protection equipment;
 - b. Fire extinguishers; and
 - c. Evacuation routes, to ensure they are clear and accessible.
2. In addition to inspecting the items above, the Fire Safety Officer, or designee, shall note the condition of exit signs and emergency lighting throughout the facility, and notify BGS of any in poor condition or not functioning properly.
3. The Fire Safety Officer shall complete the monthly fire safety inspection report during the course of the monthly fire inspection. This report shall include the:
 - a. Weekly fire exit and door checks;
 - b. Monthly fire extinguisher checks; and
 - c. Monthly respiratory protection equipment checks.
4. The Fire Safety Officer shall:
 - a. Provide a copy of all completed monthly fire safety inspection reports to the Superintendent; and
 - b. Ensure the reports are maintained in the facility Fire Safety file.

C. Inspections By Other Entities

1. Vermont BGS




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2. Fire Marshal's Office or Local Fire Departments

Each facility shall be inspected by the Fire Marshal's Office or local fire department annually, in accordance with the facility's [Fire Prevention, Safety, and Reaction Plan](#).

3. Vermont Department of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA)

- a. VOSHA may inspect a correctional facility in cases when an employee was injured as the result of a fire or other incident.
- b. Staff shall work with BGS to rectify any matters of concern raised by a VOSHA inspection.

D. Fire Drills

1. The SOS and the Fire Safety Officer shall ensure one fire drill, on each shift, once each quarter is conducted. These drills shall be as complete as possible and shall involve a different area of the facility each quarter.
2. When directed by the Fire Marshal's Office or the Director of Facilities, a "no notice" drill shall be conducted.
3. Whenever possible, staff shall utilize and include the local responding fire department in fire drills.
4. The CFSS shall create an incident report, in accordance with the policy on incident reporting, to document each fire drill and their results.
 - a. The SOS shall review the report.
 - b. The Superintendent shall:
 - i. Review and add comments to the incident report;
 - ii. Order any changes necessary;
 - iii. Maintain documentation of the fire drill and all changes to the file plans in the facility [Fire Safety file](#); and
 - iv. Send a copy of all changes to the fire safety plan to:
 - a) The local fire department serving the facility;
 - b) BGS; and
 - c) The Fire Marshal's Office.

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FIRE PLANS

A. Fire Prevention, Safety, and Reaction Plans

1. The Superintendent of each facility shall develop a comprehensive fire prevention, safety, and reaction plan.
 - a. This plan shall be submitted for approval to the Director of Facilities annually, by July 31st.
 - b. The fire prevention, safety, and reaction plan shall:
 - i. Be developed with the cooperation of the:
 - a) Facilities Director;
 - b) Local fire department serving the facility;
 - c) Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS); and
 - d) Department of Public Safety Fire Marshal's Office ("Fire Marshal's Office"); and
 - ii. Require essential inspections annually, performed by the Fire Marshal's Office or local fire department. The plan shall require that BGS be notified of the inspections and that DOC staff coordinate the inspections with BGS.
2. The Superintendent, or designee, shall file the fire prevention, safety, and reaction plan in the facility [Fire Safety file](#). This file copy shall be updated with all changes made to the plan.
3. Annually, the Superintendent, or designee, shall provide a copy of the updated plan to:



B. Fire Evacuation Plans

1. As part of the fire prevention, safety, and reaction plan, the Superintendent of each facility shall develop and implement a safe fire evacuation plan that allows for the safety, custody, and security of all incarcerated individuals involved. The fire evacuation plan shall:
 - a. Be developed with the cooperation of the following entities:
 - i. The local fire department serving the facility; and
 - ii. The local police department and the Vermont State Police;

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- b. Include the following components:
 - i. A visual diagram with written directions of evaluation routes from each area of the facility;
■ [REDACTED]
■ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
2. The Superintendent, or designee, shall file the fire evacuation plan in the facility [Fire Safety file](#). This file copy shall be updated with all changes made to the plan.
3. All DOC staff members shall familiarize themselves with the evacuation plans, specifically:
 - a. The evacuation procedures and routes for each area of the facility; and
 - b. The responsibility of each post in the facility during an evacuation.
4. The Superintendent shall ensure each incarcerated individual is made aware that there are fire evacuation plans and routes and what is expected of them in the event of a fire evacuation.
 - a. The Unit Officer shall verbally advise incarcerated individuals of the evacuation and routes for their living or working area upon initial housing assignment. The Unit Officer shall make a logbook entry documenting this notification.
 - b. When an incarcerated individual is transferred to a different area of the facility, the Unit Officer shall advise them of the evacuation plans and routes for their new area and document this notification with a logbook entry.
 - c. Fire evacuation routes shall be posted in each living unit, in the form of a diagram.
5. The Superintendent, or designee, shall provide the following information:
■ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
■ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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6. The Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure that all exterior doors are clearly and visibly marked on the outside of the building with a unique identifier that matches the evacuation plan.

FIRE SAFETY FILE

The Superintendent shall maintain a “Fire Safety” file in the “Security and Operations” folder on the S: Drive, which shall include the following documentation:

1. Fire drill results and the Superintendent’s comments;
2. Weekly checks of fire exits and doors;
3. All completed Monthly Self Inspection Reports;
4. A copy of all incident reports documenting all fires;
5. The fire prevention, safety, and reaction plan, along with all updates and changes; and
6. The fire evacuation plan, along with all updates and changes.

RELATIONSHIP WITH FIRE MARSHAL’S OFFICE

A. Fire Marshal’s Office Access to Correctional Facilities

1. Personnel from the Fire Marshal’s Office shall have reasonable 24-hour access to correctional facilities by presenting personal and departmental identification.

■ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

B. Fire Marshal’s Office Notifications

Facility staff shall create an incident report, in accordance with the policy on incident reporting, in each of the situations below, and notify the Fire Marshal’s Office:

1. By telephone, as soon as practicable within the first hour, anytime a problem is discovered with the fire protection/detection system that cannot be repaired or made operational within four hours of discovery.

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- a. This shall include any problem discovered in the:
 - i. Fire alarm system;
 - ii. Sprinkler system;
 - iii. Smoke control system; or
 - iv. Emergency fire door operations, when the space cannot be cleared and remain unused.
- b. The telephone notification shall be followed by a copy of the written incident report.
2. Within 72 hours, anytime it is discovered that someone tampered with the fire protection/detection system.
 - a. This notification may be a copy of the incident report.
 - b. This information is shared with the Fire Marshal's Office so that office may track problems with device placement or the type of device installed.
3. Anytime there is a fire, as described under the [Fire Response Heading](#) in this document.

C. Fire Marshal's Office Contact Information

The Fire Marshal's Office may be contacted:

1. During regular business hours by telephone; or
2. During non-business hours, by contacting local barracks of The Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety.

FIRE RESPONSE

A. In the Event of a Fire

1. Whenever circumstances jeopardize respiratory safety, facility staff shall:
 - a. Make an immediate emergency call via radio;
 - b. Extinguish, or contain, the danger at its source when safe to do so, in accordance with training; and
 - c. Direct all personnel and incarcerated individuals to evacuate the affected area, while maintaining security, in accordance with designated fire evacuation routes. Staff shall remain aware of any specific barriers or identity-based differences or needs that may interfere with their ability to evacuate safely, and make reasonable and appropriate accommodations to help them do so.

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2. Staff shall not assume the role of a trained firefighter, or attempt to rescue individuals from a fire or to suppress a fire beyond its initial, containable phase.

B. Initial Report of Fire

All facility staff members and volunteers shall immediately report any fire to the CFSS. Staff and volunteers shall report all fires, regardless of size, even if they were quickly extinguished.

C. Fire Notifications and Documentation

1. Upon report of a fire, the CFSS shall:
 - a. Supervise the first response;
 - b. Create an incident report, in accordance with the standard operating procedure on facility incident reporting; and
 - c. Initiate necessary notifications, in accordance with the policy on incident reporting;
 - d. Notify the Fire Marshal's Office.
 - i. The notice to the Fire Marshal's Office shall be immediate, by telephone, whenever any of the following occur:
 - a) Death or injury resulting from the fire;
 - b) A fire that extends beyond the cell or room of its origin;
 - c) Smoke that extends beyond the unit of the fire's origin; or
 - d) A fire protection system malfunction during the fire.
 - ii. In all other situations, or in cases when the fire occurred outside of the Fire Marshal's Office's normal business hours, the notice to the Fire Marshal's Office shall be made within 24 hours of occurrence or on the next business day.
2. Upon notification that there has been a fire, the Superintendent shall:
 - a. Ensure the automated fire or smoke detection equipment in the area where the fire occurred is functioning properly; and
 - b. Review the incident report to ensure:
 - i. There was coordination with BGS and the Fire Marshal's Office; and
 - ii. That the fire/smoke detection equipment in the area where the fire occurred was functioning properly, and if they were not, what steps have been taken to fix the problem.

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3. Within 24 hours of the fire, or on the next business day if the fire occurred on a weekend or holiday, the SOS shall provide a copy of the incident report to the local responding fire department and the Fire Marshal's Office.
4. Following the fire, the Superintendent shall recommend any necessary changes or repairs to the automated fire or smoke detection system to BGS, and shall coordinate their implementation.
5. A copy of the incident report detailing the fire and any resulting changes or repairs shall be maintained in the facility [Fire Safety file](#).