

# Health Life Safety Regulations

## - Important Notice -

Dear Lake County Educators:

We are very pleased that you have chosen to provide educational services to our deserving Lake County students. The Lake County Regional Office of Education (ROE) desires to partner with you in this important endeavor and to serve as a valued resource. Please know that the State of Illinois' School Code provides many regulations related to "health life safety" (HLS) that all school buildings must follow to ensure the safety of both students and staff. Annually, a representative of the Lake County ROE will inspect all rooms in your school building for compliance with state law. We are providing the below list of regulations as a guide for staff to follow when preparing educational spaces and to educate staff on the annual HLS inspection requirements. Please note that the below HLS information is not an exhaustive list of all state requirements, but rather those most relevant to educators. Your district may have additional or more restrictive policies than what is listed below. Finally, know that these regulations and district policies are to be followed at all times and not just when inspections are underway. Staff should consult their building leadership for clarification throughout the year as needed.

**Household Furnishings** – Upholstered chairs, lounges, futons, sofas, etc. are not permitted unless they have a tag that indicates that they meet the California flammability requirements or are appropriately fire rated.

**Lamps** – Floor lamps and desk lamps are only permitted if they have a tag indicating they have been certified by the UL or ETL. No open light bulb sockets are permitted, and light bulbs should be appropriately shaded.

**Area Rugs and Door Mats** – Decorative household area rugs are not permitted. Only area rugs that are clearly tagged as meeting flammability standards are permitted. Decorative doormats are not permitted (trip hazard, fire). School Specialty and other similar school supply companies manufacture acceptable fire-rated area rugs.

**Curtains** – Window and other decorative curtains are not permitted as they are not fire rated and promote fire travel.

**Window Decorations** – Paper, artwork, decorations, instructional resources, etc. are not permitted on exterior windows. Items may be hung 12-inches away from exterior windows.

**Decorative Lighting** – Decorative or stringed lighting must have a UL tag and all bulbs working. A maximum of three (3) strands may be plugged together, and the joined light strands must be plugged directly into a wall outlet. The lighting may not be wrapped around paper or other items that would create a fire hazard. LED lights are strongly recommended. Lights should be unplugged or turned off at the end of the day. Check your district's policy for allowable use and/or additional requirements.

**Artwork, Decorations, and Teaching Materials** – Ceiling decorations may not be hung from sprinkler heads nor impede a sprinkler functioning. Wall decorations, paper, or instructional materials may not cover more than 20% of a single wall. Schools constructed after July 1, 2016 are allowed 50% coverage of a single wall.

**Door Glass-Vision Panel** – A minimum of 100 square inches of visibility must be maintained in a door window/vision panel.

**Extension Cords and Multiple Plug Adaptors** – Household extension cords are not permitted. Multiple plug adaptors that convert an outlet into multiple outlets are not permitted. Staff must use a surge strip when additional electrical outlets are needed. A commercial grade extension cord may be used on a short-term basis but must be unplugged when not in use. Extension cords and surge strips may not be connected together to create a

“daisy-chain.” An appropriate length surge strip or commercial grade extension cord should be utilized to prevent daisy-chaining.

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**Storage** – A 24-inch gap must be maintained between stored items and the ceiling in all non-sprinkled rooms. The gap may be 18 inches if the room is sprinkled.

**Unobstructed Exits** – Rooms should be arranged so that occupants can safely navigate and exit the room in the event of an emergency. No items should be stored on stair landings, in vestibules, in hallways, or in a manner that blocks an exit.

**Door Locks** – Occupants must be able to open doorways with a single motion. No additional locking mechanisms may be added that would require a special key or device or that would prevent an occupant from using a single motion to open the door.

**Door Hold Open Devices** – The use of an attached drop-down doorstop, door wedge, string, wire, or any other material to maintain a propped door is strictly prohibited, as such devices allow for rapid fire travel.

**Door Magnets** – Door magnets that prevent a door from latching are not permitted unless all areas surrounding the door are sprinkled. Even if the surrounding area is sprinkled, the ROE strongly discourages the use of door magnets anywhere as they create a security hazard. Best practice is to forego door magnets and to keep all classroom doors locked when occupied.

**Exit Doors** – For security purposes, exit doors should be checked daily and at the conclusion of the day for full closure and secure latching. Exit doors should not be propped, as doing so allows unauthorized building entry.

**Evacuation Maps** – All rooms should have an evacuation map that provides a visual diagram/map hung in a conspicuous place that informs and depicts to room occupants where they should travel in the event of severe weather or fire. Evacuation maps should not be located in desk drawers or folders, but visible to any occupant.

**Occupancy Signs** – Rooms that accommodate an occupancy of 50 or more people must have a visibly posted occupancy sign.

**Fire Alarm Pull Stations and Extinguishers** – No items should be located in a manner that obstructs a fire alarm pull station or fire extinguisher.

**Appliances** - High voltage appliances, e.g. toasters, toaster ovens, microwaves, refrigerators, etc., must be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Keurigs are recommended and may be plugged into a surge strip.

**Space Heaters** – Space heaters are only allowed if they are UL approved, plugged directly into a wall socket, and have a tip-over feature that causes the heater to turn off if the unit falls over. Space heaters should not be located where they create a safety hazard to students. Space heaters must be electric and cannot be fuel burning.

**Stairways and Bleachers** – Storage is not permitted under open stairs or bleachers.

**Corridor Width** – A corridor's required width may not be reduced and obstructed by chairs, tables, or other objects during normal occupancy periods.

**Science Labs** – Exhaust fans are required where objectionable odors or fumes are produced. Fume exhaust hoods shall not be used for storage. Protective eyeglasses shall be provided to and worn by occupants participating in dangerous lab activities. Eye wash stations should be accessible and routinely checked for proper functioning.

**Flammable and Combustible Liquids and Other Chemicals/Portable Gasoline** – Such items must be stored in approved containers and located in appropriate fire-safe cabinetry.