

Fire/Tornado Drills

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.21(3)/Group Day Care Homes: 290-2-1-.11(1)(g) - The center/Group Day Care Home shall conduct drills for fire, tornado and other emergency situations. The fire drills will be conducted monthly and tornado and other emergency situation drills will be conducted every six months. The center/Group Day Care Home shall maintain documentation of the dates and times of these drills for two years.

Family Day Care Homes: 290-2-3-.11(2)(c) - The home shall practice fire drill procedures with children at least monthly. Such drills shall be documented and maintained on file for one year. **290-2-3-.08(8)** - Documentation of monthly fire drills required by rule .11(2)(c) shall be maintained in the home.

Rule Type: Non-Core Rule

Intent of the Rule

To intentionally protect the health and safety of children and staff in case of an emergency. To increase children's and staff's preparedness when an emergency occurs. Documentation of drills ensures that all children have been accounted for and are out of harm's way.

Clarification

Emergency drills are necessary to prepare children and staff about how to respond appropriately to numerous potential emergencies. Routine practice of emergency drills fosters a calm, competent response to an emergency when it occurs. A child who is coached properly ahead of time will have a better chance to be safe. Documentation ensures that all children are accounted for, that emergency plans are conducted appropriately, and drills are carried out in a timely manner.

Indicators

- ✓ Child care programs must conduct fire drills monthly.
 - Recommendation: All children should be evacuated to a safe location outside of the facility within two minutes or less of an emergency alarm.
 - Note: To lessen children's fears, child care programs should practice the escape plans with the smoke alarm activated so all children will be familiar with the sound.
 - TIP: Consider having the child care program's fire evacuation procedure reviewed and approved by a fire official to ensure the evacuation routes and meeting place(s) are the best way to safely evacuate children from the building.

- ✓ Child Care Learning Centers and Group Day Care Homes must conduct tornado drills every six months.
 - Note: While this is not a requirement for Family Day Care Homes, it is best practice to follow this procedure to ensure children's safety in the event of a tornado.
 - Organizational TIP: Hallways or rooms used for shelter should be free from clutter and, when possible, free from windows.
 - Recommendation: Consider using a different sounding alarm, such as a whistle, for a tornado drill versus a fire drill so that children and staff are not confused about which emergency drill is taking place. Practice the drill using the type of alarm that would be used during an actual tornado emergency.

- ✓ All child care programs must document monthly fire drills. Child Care Learning Centers and Group Day Care Homes must also document semi-annual tornado drills.
 - TIP: Sample forms for documenting fire drills and tornado drills can be found on the Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning website. (See resources below.)
 - Note: Child Care Learning Centers and Group Day Care Homes must maintain documentation of these drills for two years. Family Day Care Homes must maintain documentation of fire drills for one year.
 - Organizational TIP: Have one staff person responsible for scheduling and documenting emergency drills. Maintain documentation in a central location for easy access by child care staff, child care consultants, etc.

Smoke Alarm Tips:	Fire Extinguisher Tips:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test all smoke alarms monthly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Press the test button to ensure the alarm is working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire extinguishers should be kept no more than 30 feet from the kitchen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change batteries yearly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pick a specific date (i.e., when the time changes, your birthday or anniversary, etc.) and change the batteries on that date every year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operator must know how to use the extinguisher. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is no time to read directions during an emergency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install smoke alarms on all levels of the home or center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check fire extinguishers monthly to ensure they are fully charged.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use interconnected or hard-wired smoke alarms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When smoke alarms are interconnected, they all sound the alarm at the same time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extinguishers should be installed in plain view above the reach of children near an escape route and away from stoves and heating appliances.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTE: Family Day Care Homes are required to have at least one 2-A:10-B:C fire extinguisher.
Additional Tips:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation cribs should be easily identified and located close to an exit door. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep supplies in each classroom in an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that staff can use during emergency procedures. The emergency kit could include: the class roster, first aid kit, drinking water and disposable cups, snacks, diapering supplies, books and/or activities for children's use at an evacuation location, emergency contact information for children, a length of rope or a guide line for young children to hold onto in case they need to walk with staff somewhere as a group, etc. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post evacuation plans by each exit door. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide children into smaller groups and assign them to a particular staff person to further ensure that all children are accounted for. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule emergency drills at different times during the day and during different activities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a weather radio for alerts of weather service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazards. Weather radio services also broadcast non-weather-related emergency information, such as in the event of a natural disaster, an AMBER Alert or a terrorist attack. 	

Resources:

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Fire/Tornado Drill Form

CCLC/GDCH: http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/FireandTornadoDrillForm_Center.pdf

FDCH: <http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/FireDrillLog.pdf>

Play Safe! Be Safe!

<http://www.playsafebesafe.com/>

Sparky the Fire Dog

<http://www.sparky.org/>

National Fire Protection Association

<http://www.nfpa.org/>

Caring for Our Children

<http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/3.4.3.3>

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/tornado>

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/home-fire>

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

<http://m.fema.gov/tornadoes>

<http://m.fema.gov/before-fire>

<http://m.fema.gov/during-fire>