

ARSON PREVENTION TIPS

REDUCE FIRESETTING OPPORTUNITY

Remove garbage cans daily during non-school hours. Garbage has been used as an ignition source for arson fires or to keep an unwelcome visitor warm.

Cut back vegetation and clear away any debris around campus buildings to reduce fire risk and hiding places. Keep vegetation watered and green.

Keep dumpsters at least 10 feet away from buildings and roof overhangs. Make sure all discarded materials are placed inside the containers and padlock them after school hours.

Check lighting with a night walk through your campus. Replace all burned out bulbs. Install lighting, including motion sensor lights, in currently dark and secluded areas.

Securely store combustibles such as paint, gasoline and oil in proper flammable storage containers in a locked location to restrict access. Minimize the quantity of combustibles in storage and dispose of materials you don't need.

In outside hallways and quads, post all notices and paper signs in protective display cases.

Block access to narrow spaces or gaps between portable structures with fencing or other barriers.

Include fire safety education as part of your school's curriculum. Have your local fire department's public education officer talk to students about arson and the serious consequences of that crime.

A construction site can be an easy target for arsonists. Fence the area and secure it with alarms or by installing cameras for video surveillance. Limit the amount of debris and clear it away from the building.

PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED BUILDING ENTRY

Check all windows and doors to ensure that they close and lock securely. Keep them locked when school is out.

Remove ladders and equipment when not in use and store appropriately.

Check your site for structures around buildings that may provide unwanted access to roof areas. Prevent your school's roof from becoming a playground.

Roof vents and skylights should be protected with grills, bars or covers. Roof access latches should be locked.

Secure all vents and screens to crawl space areas under campus buildings and portables. A heavy-gauge screen with flanges that bolts to the outside of the building helps prevent access.

Skirting should be fitted at the base of portable classrooms to prevent access under the buildings.

REDUCE POTENTIAL FOR FIRE DAMAGE

Check that automatic sprinkler systems are fully operational. Inspect water supply sources regularly.

Inspect fire, heat, smoke and intrusion alarm systems monthly to be sure they are working properly and that the alarm signal is audible where needed. Repair all malfunctioning elements.

Train your staff on the use of the school's fire extinguishers, and ensure that the equipment is serviced regularly and in good working condition.

Report all suspicious fires, no matter how small, to the local fire department. Request that they come to investigate for possible arson. Early intervention with a firesetter may avert future arson fires.

Keep fire hydrants free of debris and vegetation for easy accessibility by the fire department.

SECURE YOUR SCHOOL SITE

Strongly consider installing surveillance cameras which deter all types of crime.

Add or increase nightly security patrols on campus.

Turn on your outside sprinklers during night hours, especially in the 11p.m. - 1 a.m. time period. Intruders don't like to get wet.

Keep window coverings closed after school hours to hide room contents. Fires are sometimes set to cover up breaking and entering and theft.

Manage access to your site. Consider how responsible community members using your school after hours may reduce your vulnerability to arson, simply by their presence.

Discourage loiterers and intruders at your school. Be aware of possible warning signs - for example, cigarette butts, matches, graffiti, discarded bottles and garbage - indicating someone on school grounds who shouldn't be there. Vandalism and arson go hand in hand.

Promote arson prevention at a school staff meeting. Show the video, *30 Ways To Prevent School Arson*, to increase awareness about the potential for arson at your site and the significance of a loss to your school community.

Include the video as part of your safety plan. Use the prevention tips checklist to evaluate your school's arson risk.

Present the video at a parent-teacher organization meeting. Empower them to be extra eyes on campus regarding arson prevention and suggest how they can help.

Invite your school's neighbors to be partners in your fire prevention plan. Ask them to keep an eye on your school after hours and report any suspicious activity.