Washington County School District
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Administrative Letter A176

Facility Fire Codes & Safety Standards

Administrative Letter A176 Facility Fire Codes and Safety Standards - Approved 1/26/26.

The following letter defines requirements for compliance with fire codes and safety standards within Washington County School District facilities. District staff shall follow the following standards:

Placement of Combustible Material on the Classroom Door (IFC 1010.1)

- Classroom exit doors **cannot** have paper, teaching aids, or decorations attached to either side of the door. The exit door must look like an exit.

- Glass panels in a classroom door **cannot** be fully covered or obstruct the view into the classroom. This includes paper, decorations, etc. The only exception is during an emergency lockdown drill or incident.

Classroom Artwork and Teaching Material (IFC 807.5.2.2 & 807.5.2.3)

- Wall displays of student art and teaching aids that are attached to the wall surface cannot cover more than **50 percent** of that wall surface. Artwork cannot be installed from floor to ceiling and should be broken up into areas.

- Decorations and banners **cannot** block fire alarm devices, smoke detectors, fire sprinkler heads, etc.

Exit Corridor / Hallway Artwork and Teaching Material (IFC 807.5.2.2)

- Artwork and teaching materials that are attached to the wall surface of exit corridors/hallways **cannot** cover more than **20 percent** of that wall surface.

Three-Dimensional Artwork (IFC 807.1 & IFC 807.5.2.2)

- Dimensional artwork is not allowed in schools. The amount of paper used to create the art “scrunch” and twisted paper creates air channels into the art and increases the fire load. This will include trees, vines and other objects made from paper.

Hanging Displays (Artwork, Teaching Aids, etc. from the Ceiling) (IFC 701.2.1)

• The hanging and displaying of classroom artwork and other decorative materials from acoustical ceiling systems is prohibited. The acoustical ceiling system is part of a fire-resistance-rated horizontal assembly.

• Do not attach anything to a light fixture, fire alarm sensor, fire strobe lamp, fire sprinkler head or overhead pipe runs.

Draperies, Curtains, and other Fabrics (IFC 807.2)

• Draperies, curtains and other similar loosely hanging furnishings and decorations are not allowed. Blinds can be installed as needed and must meet specific performance criteria.

Storage Detachments from the Ceiling (IFC 315.3.1)

• Storage must not be within **18 inches** of the ceiling.

Classroom Exit Door Clearances (IFC 1003.6 & ADA 404.2.3)

• All exit doors in a classroom, whether to the outside of the school building or into a corridor hallway, must be kept clear of any obstructions. There must be **a minimum of 60 inches of clearance**, in a square shape, at each door to allow for a quick and safe exit from the room.

Clearance at Fire Alarm Pull Stations (IFC 907.6.5)

• Do not obstruct access to, and/or visual contact with the fire alarm pull station. There must be **a minimum of 36 inches** of clearance, in a square shape, from the pull station.

Clearance at Electrical Panels (IFC 603.4 & NEC 110.26)

• Do not obstruct access to, and/or visual contact with the electrical panel. There must be **a minimum of 36 inches** of clearance, in a square shape, from the electrical panel.

• Markings shall be provided on the floor denoting the 36 inch clearance requirement.

• Maintain a clear exit path from any electrical panel to the exit door.

Clearance at Fire Extinguisher Locations (IFC 906.5)

• Do not obstruct access to, and/or visual contact with the fire extinguisher. There must be **a minimum of 36 inches** of clearance, in a square shape, from the fire extinguisher.

Clearance at Data, Telecom, Network, and Low-Voltage Equipment (TIA-569-D)

• Do not obstruct access to, and/or visual contact with all network racks, UPS systems, patch panels, and building low-voltage control panels. There must be **a minimum of 39 inches** of clearance, in a square shape, from data, telecom, network and low-voltage equipment.

• Maintain full-height access (floor to ceiling) for ladder racks, fiber trays, and cable pathways.

Use of Extension Cords/Surge Protectors (IFC 606.3 & NEC 400)

• Extension cords may not be used as a permanent source of power. UL listed surge protectors are permitted but cannot be “piggy-backed” one to another. Caution must be taken to ensure that the use of the surge protector does not cause additional safety issues, such as trip hazards.

Candles in Schools (IFC 308)

• Open flame devices, including candles, lava lamps, candle warmers, scent diffusors or the burning of incense is **not** allowed in schools.

Furniture for the Classroom & Wellness Room (IFC 807.1 & NFPA 101 10.3.2.1)

• Furniture should be of a commercial grade and must meet specific performance criteria.

• Couches are only permitted in the office area, faculty rooms and secondary media centers.

Cooking in the Classroom (IFC 308, IFC 606.1 & IMC 507)

• Cooking in the classroom is prohibited unless that classroom was designed for that purpose.

Main Electrical/Boiler/Mechanical Room Storage (IFC 315.3.3)

• Combustible materials shall not be stored in boiler/mechanical rooms. Maintain **at least 36 inches** of clearance from any fuel fired equipment.

• Combustible storage is not allowed within building main electrical distribution equipment rooms.

Household Appliances (IFC 603 & District Policy)

• Mini-Fridges, toaster ovens, coffee pots, microwaves, etc. **cannot** be in classrooms. These types of appliances are allowed in break rooms, teacher workrooms, faculty rooms and collaborative rooms where children are not allowed unless accompanied by an adult.

Portable Heaters (IFC 603.9)

• One (1) Portable 120V electric heating appliance per standard circuit is allowed **if** it meets the following requirements:
o Must have a heating guard over the heating element.
o Must be UL Listed.
o Must have automatic shut off if tipped over.
o Must be turned off when not monitored.

• Portable unvented fuel-fired heating appliances are **not allowed**.

Internal Classroom Door Locks **(State Fire Marshal’s Office Mandate**, IBC 716, IFC 705, ADA 404 & R698-13-6)

• School classrooms and other instructional areas must have doors equipped with locks that allow them to be securely locked when occupied by students.

• Door stops, wood wedges and bottom of door kick down hold opens are not allowed.

• Magnets or other methods to circumvent door locks may not be used to prevent the door from being locked and latched while school is in session.

Storage Closet Converted to Occupiable Space (IBC 1201-1209 & District Policy - Form 1105)

• Storage closets are not designed to be occupiable space. Storage closets shall **not** be used as an office space, teaching space, or wellness room.

• District Form 1105 - No major alterations, additions, or repairs shall be made by anyone to any school equipment or property without prior written approval.