



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

The State Office of Religious and Independent Schools
Room 1076 Education Building Annex
89 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12234

E-mail: soris@nysed.gov
Web: www.p12.nysed.gov/nonpub
Tel: (518) 473-8202
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September 21, 2022

Dear Religious and Independent School Leaders:

You are receiving this notice as a reminder of your upcoming obligation under Education Law Section 807-a to have your facility inspected for fire safety annually and file a report of inspection with the Commissioner of Education. NYSED encourages annual filing of fire-safety inspection reports for all schools, even though this requirement does not apply to:

- Religious and independent schools in the cities of New York (five boroughs), Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers;
- Any school outside of the above areas that has a total enrollment less than 25 students.

You must arrange to complete an inspection after July 1, 2022 but prior to December 1, 2022, and the inspection report must be filed with the Commissioner prior to December 16, 2022.

For the 2022 reporting year, The State Office of Religious and Independent Schools (SORIS) will collect the Fire Safety Reports from religious and independent school leaders through an online secure portal.

- Additional information including directions, sign-in information and a training webinar on how to use the new online portal has been posted to our [website](#).
- School leaders are responsible for getting approval of these inspections and in for data entry in the online portal.
- The inspector's contact information must also be provided, so that if questions arise, we are able to contact the inspector.
- Paper copies of the reports will still be accepted. However, we encourage schools to submit inspection reports via the new online portal. If your school does not have an account, directions on how to obtain is posted to our [website](#).
- A hard copy of your inspection report should be kept at the school and made readily available to relevant officials, if requested.

Please direct your questions as follows:

- Inspection requirements, reporting forms, or how to use the online portal may be directed to SORIS at SORIS@nysed.gov
- Code references may be directed to the Office of Facilities Planning at Firesafety@nysed.gov.

Please ensure the **Non-Public School** fire safety manual and fire safety report forms are used to inspect facilities. The Non-Public Fire Safety Inspection Manual and fire safety report forms can be accessed here:

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/nonpublic-schools/manual-nonpublic-school-facility-fire-building-safety-inspections.pdf>

https://www.p12.nysed.gov/nonpub/fire_safety_report.html

If hard copies of the report are being submitted, please send to:

New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue, Room 1074 EBA
Albany, NY 12234

Education Law requires that the person performing your school's fire safety inspection hold a valid certification from the NYS Department of State as a Building Safety Inspector (BSI) or a Code Enforcement Official (CEO).

In accordance with Education Law 807-a, the following methods, or any combination of such methods, must be used to conduct a fire inspection:

- **Requesting inspection by the county fire coordinator**, or officer performing the powers and duties of a county fire coordinator pursuant to a local law of the county in which the building is located;
- **Requesting inspection by the fire department** of any city, town, village, or fire district in which the building is located;
- **Requesting inspection by a fire corporation** which is subject to the provisions of section 1402 of the not-for-profit corporation law, if such building is located within the area described in the certificate of incorporation of any such corporation;
- **Requesting inspection by a fire inspector (Building Safety Inspector or Code Enforcement Official)** who holds a valid certification.

Please remember this is an **annual** requirement, and it is intended to ensure all schools are operated and maintained in a safe and healthy manner for the benefit of the children and staff in your community.

Thank you for your continued support and hard work to keep students safe.

Sincerely,



Christina E. Coughlin
Assistant Commissioner for the Office of
School Governance, Policy and Religious and
Independent Schools