

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE to running FIRE DRILLS – a tiered approach



The Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire Safety, Evacuation Procedures and Evacuation Schemes) Regulations 2018 provide clear guidelines around reporting of fire drills. This summary provides guidance on options to run a fire drill based on the building complexity, desired outcomes, and intended learning outcomes.

TYPE OF FIRE DRILL	DESCRIPTION	PROCEDURE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OPTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS
TIER 1 BASIC DRILL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Suitable for most premises where there are no special fire features, e.g. fire curtains. › No special evacuation requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Activate fire alarm sounders / bells using 'Bulgin Key' at fire alarm panel. › Record evacuation time etc. - in line with 32(3) of the FENZ regulations 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Meets compliance requirements for building evacuation' . › Ensures occupants are familiar with evacuation tones and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Talk to building occupants / staff about systems in the building, such as fire doors which automatically shut in a fire. › Ask someone to use a manual call point to activate the alarm – most people have never used a call point - this is a good training opportunity. › Checking egress routes are clear. › Accounting for occupants.
TIER 2 COMPREHENSIVE DRILL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Suitable for premises with special fire features, e.g. fire curtains that may change usual egress from a building. › Concerns for evacuation, e.g. independent living aged apartment. GP surgery, tall buildings, Internal Places of Safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Operation of local smoke detector, if fitted. › Treat as genuine event, walk through entire process for staff including operation of manual call points. › Consider movement of all persons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Occupants have some understanding of how the building systems will respond to a fire. › Wardens fully understand their procedure and alarm system operation. › Staff are aware of theory behind evacuating persons requiring assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Escalate to a manual call point to activate the alarm – depending on how system is configured – intent to activate whole evacuation procedure. › Discuss use of hand-operated fire-fighting equipment (extinguishers and fire hose reels). › Check correct function of all systems interfaced to the fire alarm system.
TIER 3 IMMERSIVE EVACUATION TRAINING (requires full risk assessment & planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Suitable for training staff in buildings with complex evacuation procedures such as: hospitals, care homes, high rise, air traffic control. Other high value or hazard environments, prisons, stadiums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Place alarm system into 'Fire Mode' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alert / Evacuation tones will sound – Lifts etc. may shut down – Fire curtains and other systems will activate – Simulate shutdown/ relocation procedures. › Engage with occupants requiring assistance. › Engagement for occupants outside immediate area. › Consider CIMS implications. › Moving into significant event planning. › Props such as theatrical smoke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Staff have a good understanding of the fire alarm system and procedures. › Staff are well trained to evacuate vulnerable persons using evacuation aids. › Use of alternative evacuation routes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Staff and occupants need to be trained to assist others. › Requirements to use evacuation aids, e.g. evacuation chairs. › Consider inviting key stakeholders, e.g. rapid response teams / FENZ. › Check correct function of all systems interfaced to the fire alarm system.

NOTE:
 1: Some buildings will have more onerous requirements, as documented in the approved Evacuation Scheme for the building.
 2: For medium to high risk premises, intermittent use of Tier 2 and Tier 3 fire drills can be useful.