

School Board Working On Action Plan For Safety Violations

By Jane Slayton
AE/MS Principal

On February 11, Investigator Stephanie Johnson from the New Hampshire Fire Marshal's Office, accompanied by Andover Fire Chief John Landry, did a partial walk-through of the Andover Elementary/Middle School. During that brief inspection, concerns were noted regarding the location of the kindergarten classroom, the insufficient size of the egress window in the music classroom, and the fact that the boiler room was not separated from the remainder of the building with a one-hour separation or sprinklers. Investigator Johnson and Chief Landry made arrangements to return for a more thorough inspection.

As a result of this preliminary inspection, it was decided that before the students returned from February vacation the kindergarten classroom had to be relocated to a first floor location. It was also expected that plans would be made to address the egress problem in the music room and the boiler room separation issue.

Principal Jane Slayton and custodian Bill Anderson accompanied Investigator Johnson and Chief Landry on a three hour follow-up inspection on February 25 during the school vacation. Many violations were noted.

All violations that could be corrected within our budgetary means have been addressed. Those problems corrected quickly consisted of:

- Removing extension cords
- Using surge protectors within their capacity
- Removing coat hooks in hallways
- Replacing light fixtures
- Removing all door stops and not having classroom doors held open
- Installing a smoke detector in the electrical room
- Adding exit signage

Fire safety problems that still exist and need to be addressed include:

- Egress windows in the older part of the building need to open properly and safely. Many of the windows are very difficult to open and close, and some will not stay up without propping.
- More electrical outlets are needed in the building.
- Kitchen doors are not fire-rated.
- Kitchen tray pass-through is not fire-rated.
- Doorway by kitchen stairs – The right hand exit door obstructs the exterior stairs when in the open position.

- The boiler room is required to be separated from the remainder of the building with a one hour fire-resistance rated separation or sprinklers.

- Library corridor – Storage must be removed or enclosed in a closet/storage area.

- Library corridor – The proper fire rating for this corridor must be completed.

- Music Room – The egress window in the music room does not comply with the requirement that every room or space greater than 250 square feet used for classroom, educational, or student occupancy is required to have not less than one outside window for emergency rescue.

- Music Room / Library corridor – The doors are required to swing in the direction of egress.

- Middle School Attic – The single-layer gypsum board and wood framed portions providing separations in this area do not appear to comply with the requirements for UL-listed assemblies having a minimum one-hour fire resistance rating.

A corrective action plan needs to be formulated and submitted to the New Hampshire Fire Marshal's Office for approval within 30 days. The Andover School Board and administration have been working with Andover Fire Chief Landry to address the violations. The violations and work completed to date were discussed at a work session of the Andover School Board on May 26. They will also be on the June 2 agenda for the Andover School Board.

Chief Landry has worked constructively with the Andover school administration and school board for several years. In recent years, the intercom system was upgraded for safety reasons, all classroom doors had locks installed on the inside, the fire alarm system was upgraded, pull stations were lowered to meet requirements, and illuminated signage was installed throughout building.

Although John Landry has stepped down and turned responsibilities over to Andover Fire Chief Chuck Ellis, he has continued to offer assistance and guidance as we work to provide a safe learning environment for the children of Andover.

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Practice Fireworks Safety This Fourth Of July

By Jeff Miller
East Andover Fire Department

In 2006 there were an estimated 9,200 injuries from fireworks in the United States. While this is the lowest injury rate the Consumer Products Safety Commission has recorded since it started tracking injuries in the 1970s, it is still too high.

In addition, in 2005 the National Fire Protection Association estimated there were 1,800 structure fires and 700 vehicle fires caused by fireworks. Fireworks also caused an estimated \$39 million in property damage in the United States.

In Andover, we have been very lucky that our emergency services have not had to respond to either fires or injuries caused by pyrotechnics. This is due in part to a state law banning the unregulated sale of certain types of consumer fireworks. However, many of these types of fireworks are brought illegally into the state. Many of these may not have been tested for safety and can be quite dangerous.

The State of New Hampshire further regulates fireworks displays to ensure that minimum safety standards are met. These include the training of pyrotechnicians and having a large enough area around the site where the fireworks are to be set off to ensure that debris does not come down on bystanders.

Here in Andover we are very fortunate that Atlas Advanced Pyrotechnics has an excellent safety record for our annual Fourth of July display. However, for the safety of everyone, it is important to remember that the Fire Marshal's Office requires that we have a secure perimeter of 500 feet around the site before loading and displaying fire works can occur. This includes the Northern Rail Trail from Lawrence Street to Park Street, from 1 PM on the afternoon of the Fourth to 7AM the next morning. This allows us plenty of time to set up the display safely and to confirm there are no dud shells in the fallout area.

Fireworks are very dangerous items. Here are some safety tips to remember:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- Use fireworks outside only.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Wear appropriate safety equipment such as safety glasses, a long-sleeved shirt, and long pants.
- Keep a bucket of water or hose handy in case of a malfunction or fire.
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, or flammable materials.
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned. Instead, wait 20 minutes and then soak duds in a bucket of water.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Have a designated shooter.
- Do not ever use homemade fireworks or altered fireworks. This includes combining fireworks.

Also, remember that in the state of New Hampshire the following laws apply:

- You must be 21 or older to purchase permissible fireworks.
- You must be 21 or older to display permissible fireworks.
- You must be in a community that allows the use of permissible fireworks. Check with your local fire officials.
- You must be on your own private property or have written permission of the property owner.

Only fireworks that are listed as permissible by the State of New Hampshire may be sold and possessed in communities that allow their possession and use. Firecrackers, bottle rockets, and reloadable-type shells are illegal in New Hampshire to have in your possession and/or use.

If you have any other question about fireworks safety, please speak with your local fire chief or go to FireworkSafety.com or NH.gov/safety/divisions/firesafety/ fireworks

Please be safe this Fourth of July.



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