



Office of Religious and Independent School Support
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September 26, 2023

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 education facility inspected for fire safety annually and file a report of inspection with the Commissioner of Education at the New York State Education (NYSED). NYSED encourages annual filing of fire-safety inspection reports for all religious and independent 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 the fire safety inspection after July 1, 2023, but prior to December 1, 2023, and the inspection report must be filed with the Commissioner of Education at NYSED prior to December 16, 2023.

For the 2023 reporting year, The Office of Religious and Independent School Support (ORISS) will collect the Fire Safety Reports from religious and independent school leaders via the [NYSED Application Business Portal](#).

- Additional information including directions, sign-in information and a training webinar on how to use the business portal has been posted to the [Religious and Independent School Support website](#).
- Religious and independent school leaders are responsible for getting approval of these inspections and for data entry in the business portal.
- The inspector's contact information must also be provided, so that if questions arise, we are able to contact the inspector.
- We encourage schools to submit inspection reports via the [NYSED Application Business Portal](#). Inspection reports will be also accepted via email at NPfiresafety@nysed.gov.
- A hard copy of your inspection report should be kept at the school and made readily available to relevant officials, if requested.

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 ensure the **Non-Public** School fire safety manual and fire safety guidance and forms are used to inspect facilities.

[The Manual for Non-public School Facility Fire and Building Safety Inspections](#)

[Nonpublic School Guidance and Forms](#)

Please direct your questions as follows:

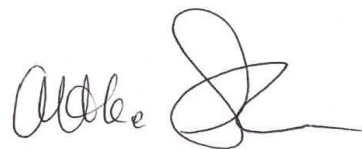
- Inspection requirements, reporting forms, or how to use the online portal may be directed to ORISS at ORISS@nysed.gov

Code references may be directed to the Office of Facilities Planning at Firesafety@nysed.gov.

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 students and staff in your community.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Althea Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Althea Johnson
Director, ORISS