



Fire Safety Advice: Education Facilities

All Australian schools have a duty of care to students and principals and teachers must take all reasonable steps to reduce risks and suitable and safe premises.

Educational facilities can have the same hazards as any other workplace but they also have a range of risks inherently associated with their presence in the community. Schools and universities are often the target of accidental fires or arson. Also, many educational facilities incorporate laboratories or workshops where pupils may be exposed to fire hazards, dangerous substances and machinery.

To help education facility managers protect against fire, Wormald offers the following advice:

1. Conduct a fire safety audit to highlight potential fire risks around the facility. This will help to determine the fire protection solution required.

- Hazards will vary depending on the facility but electrical equipment, kitchen or heating appliances, chemicals in student laboratories, flammable liquids and combustible waste material.
- Consulting a fire protection specialist can help to ensure all hazards are identified and the most appropriate fire protection solution is installed.

2. Keep up to date with regulation and legislation. Education facility managers must know their responsibilities when it comes to ethical and legal fire safety requirements. Australian legislation and standards relating to fire safety change regularly so it's important to stay on top of things.

- Keep up to date on all national and state-based fire safety regulations and standards in relation to fire protection equipment, maintenance or training.
- Develop a fire prevention plan in accordance with Australian Standard AS3745:2010 Planning for Emergencies in Facilities.



3. Install adequate fire protection equipment. Fire protection equipment can include basic fire extinguishers or fire hose reels, passive fire solutions such as fire doors or more advanced fire detection and suppression systems. When deciding on the most suitable fire protection solution, considerations include:

- legislation and standards
- size and type of building
- materials being handled on the premises

4. Service and maintain: A high level of reliability is essential when it comes to fire protection. Fire protection systems and equipment should always perform to the standard to which they were originally designed and installed.

- Regular testing can validate the functionality of the systems and equipment and help uncover any faults or issues that may cause malfunction.
- Australian Standard AS1851-2005 Maintenance of fire protection systems and equipment recommends fire protection systems be regularly inspected.

5. Provide appropriate signage for all hazards, fire protection equipment and emergency exits.

- Fire extinguishers and other fire safety equipment should be clearly marked.
- Emergency exits signs should be visible so that in the event of an evacuation, all building occupants, including less mobile residents, can be directed to escape quickly.

6. Train: A confident team that is able to respond appropriately in the event of a fire is an invaluable investment and can substantially reduce the impact of a crisis.

- Everyone at the school or university should know how to respond to a fire emergency and how to use the fire equipment onsite. In schools, students should be taught the importance of fire safety and a fire escape plan should be practiced regularly.
- Fire safety training can be included in staff induction where new employees are briefed and trained on what to do in the event of a fire.
- Fire wardens should be fully trained on their responsibilities, fire equipment and the emergency warning and communication systems in their premises.

Fire protection specialists can provide professional advice, helping to take the stress out of maintaining fire protection systems and provide peace of mind for facility managers. If you'd like more information on any of the above, or on how Wormald can help protect your business, contact us on 133 166 or visit our website www.wormald.com.au

About Wormald

Wormald is Australasia's leading provider of fire protection solutions. Since 1889, it has designed, manufactured, supplied, installed and serviced fire detection and protection systems for a wide variety of industries, including building and construction, health care, military, government, leisure management, corporate, education and domestic.

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Phone 133 166 | Website www.wormald.com.au