

PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY DRILLS & REPORTS

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House Bill 4713 (Substitute H-1)

Sponsor: Rep. Joseph Graves

Committee: Education

Complete to 10-15-13

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4713 (PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H-1)

House Bill 4713 (H-1) would amend the Fire Prevention Code (MCL 29.19) to revise the number and scheduling of required public school safety drills, and to provide reporting requirements. A more detailed description of the bill follows.

Fire Drills

Currently under the law, schools with grades kindergarten to 12 must conduct a minimum of six fire drills each school year, four of which must be held in the fall, and two during the remaining part of the school year. House Bill 4713 (H-1) would require a minimum of five fire drills (not six). Two of those drills would have to be held before December 1, one would be held in January, and the two remaining fire drills would be held during the remaining part of the school year.

Tornado Drills

In addition, the law requires two tornado safety drills each school year at all schools and facilities listed in Section 19(1); that is, all schools, including state supported schools, colleges, and universities, and all school dormitories. Under the law, these drills must be conducted for the purpose of preventing fires and related hazards and injuries caused by severe weather. House Bill 4713 (H-1) would retain but modify this section. Under the bill, two tornado safety drills would continue to be required each school year, but the bill specifies that at least one of the tornado safety drills would have to be conducted in March. The bill also specifies that these drills would be conducted for the purpose of preventing injuries caused by severe weather (removing from their purpose the prevention of "fires and related hazards").

Lockdown Drills

Schools with grades kindergarten to 12 must also conduct a minimum of two drills in which the occupants are restricted to the interior of a secured school building. House Bill 4713(H-1) would require three (not two) of these "lockdown" drills, with one to be conducted by December 1 and one after that date. The law now specifies that these drills include security measures that are "appropriate to an emergency such as the release of a hazardous material or the presence of an armed individual on or near the premises." House Bill 4713 (H-1) would specify, instead, measures "appropriate for an emergency such as the release of a hazardous material or the presence of a *potentially dangerous* (rather than armed) individual on or near the premises."

Under current law, "lockdown" drills must be conducted in coordination with the local emergency management coordinator, the county sheriff, or the chief of police or fire chief for the municipality where the school is located, and be undertaken consistently with applicable federal, state, and local emergency operations plans. House Bill 4713 (H-1) would eliminate this requirement. Instead, the bill requires that the governing body of a school seek input from the administration of the school and local public safety officials on the nature of the drills.

Drills when Students Not in Classrooms

A school with grades kindergarten to 12 must conduct *some* of the drills required under this section of the Fire Prevention Code during lunch and recess periods, or at other times when a significant number of the students are gathered but *not* in the classroom. House Bill 4713 (H-1) requires, instead, that at least one of the drills be conducted during a lunch or recess period, or at another time when students are gathered but not in classrooms.

Documentation of Drills

House Bill 4713 (H-1) adds two new subsections to the Fire Prevention Code requiring that a public school post documentation of a completed school safety drill on its school website within five school days; the documentation remain on the website for at least three years; and that the documentation include at least the name of the school, the school year of the drill, the date and time of the drill, the type of drill completed, the number of completed drills for that school year for each type of drill required under the Code, the signature of the school principal (or a designee) acknowledging completion of the drill, and the name of the individual in charge of conducting the drill (if different from the school principal).

List of Drills to County Emergency Management Coordinator

In addition, not later than September 15 of each year, the chief administrator of a school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy (or a designee) would be required to provide a list of the scheduled drill days for all of their school buildings to the county emergency management coordinator (appointed under Section 9 of the Emergency Management Act). The *county* emergency management coordinator would, in turn, be required to provide this information to the appropriate *local* emergency management coordinator, if any, and consistent with applicable federal, state, and local emergency operations plans, to the Department of State Police district coordinator, and the county sheriff for a county, or the chief of police or fire chief for a municipality where the school is located.

Technical Amendment

Finally, now under the law, the Department of State Police Emergency Management division must develop a model to be used by a school when conducting a "lockdown" drill. House Bill 4713 (H-1) would retain this provision, but specify the Department of State Police Emergency Management *and Homeland Security* Division.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no apparent fiscal impact in the proposed HB 4713 to school districts or intermediate school districts (ISDs). Exchanging one required fire drill for one additional lockdown drill should necessitate no additional costs.

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