Frequently Asked Questions
School Safety Inspections for Existing K-12 Schools

1. **Question: What qualifies for a school safety inspection?**

   Answer: The following qualifies for a school safety inspection:

   a) Only K-12 school buildings as defined in the New and Existing School, College and University Fire Safety Rules, which have been previously recognized by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for school use. The school building may have been previously used but currently dormant and wishes to re-open or it may be currently operating and requests the issuance of a new school building number or entity code.

   The following does not qualify for a school safety inspection:

   a) Any building previously approved as a K-12 school that has changed use and now wishes to go back to a K-12 use. This building must be reviewed and inspected as a new K-12 school in accordance with Public Act (PA) 306 of 1937 and PA 207 of 1941.

   b) A previously approved school building which has undergone any unapproved construction or remodeling.

2. **Question: My building wasn't a state recognized school but ran as a church affiliated school. Do we still qualify for a school safety inspection?**

   Answer: No. Only previously approved state recognized schools will qualify for a school safety inspection. Upon receipt of your application, the information provided will be verified with the records at MDE to verify that the building was previously registered as a school.

3. **Question: We closed our elementary school two years ago and leased the building out to the city as a community center or business complex. Do we still qualify for a school safety inspection?**

   Answer: No. Because the building changed use it no longer qualifies for a school safety inspection. In order to receive approval, a complete set of construction documents shall be signed and sealed by an architect or engineer and submitted to the Bureau of Fire

Services (BFS) for plan review as if the building were being built new. All of the code requirements for new school construction will be applied.

4. **Question: What information do I need to provide to request a school safety inspection?**

   Answer: The Application for School Safety Inspection [BFS 980] shall be filled out in its entirety. The application form can also be filled out online through the Accela Citizen Access portal. All of the requested information is necessary to assist the Bureau in determining if the building qualifies for a school safety inspection as well as the fire safety requirements that apply to the building. Failure to complete the form may delay the application and inspection processes.

5. **Question: How can I find out what my MDE entity code is?**

   Answer: To look up a building's entity code, click on the Entity Quick Search link. You may search by the school name, county or city in which the school is located, or by the school's zip code.

6. **Question: How long does the process take?**

   Answer: The application review process should generally take about seven (7) business days or less. If the building qualifies for a school safety inspection, BFS will send a confirmation e-mail to the applicant along with the assigned project number and an invoice for a non-refundable deposit of $150.00, which will be applied to the total inspection fee. The deposit must be paid prior to inspection. Refer to question 8 for payment options.

   Once the school safety inspection has been completed, BFS will issue an inspection report (BFS-40 form) and an invoice for payment if the inspection fees exceed the amount of the deposit. Additional inspections may be required before full fire safety approval can be granted.

7. **Question: What are the costs associated with a school safety inspection?**

   Answer: School safety inspection fees are based upon an hourly rate of $50.00 per hour. The hours include all necessary time for travel, consultations, inspections and research required for the inspection. Factors such as the size and condition of the existing school building may affect the total amount of time needed. A deposit of $150.00 will be applied toward the inspection fee.

8. **Question: How can I pay for my invoice?**

   Answer: Acceptable payment options include:

   a) Online payments are accepted if paying with a valid MasterCard, Visa or Discover credit card. Debit card payments are also accepted as long as there is a MasterCard, Visa or Discover logo on the card. To make a payment online, click on the following link:
   https://www.thepayplace.com/mi/deleg/planreview

   Be sure to have your project number available, which was sent to you in the confirmation email.

   b) Check or money order payments are also accepted. Please make the check or money order payable to the "State of Michigan" and mail to the address indicated on the invoice.

9. **Question: What can I expect to complete if the building is not up to code?**

   Answer: This depends on the condition and age of the building as well as when it was last approved. The building will have to comply with Part 2 of the New and Existing School, College and University Fire Safety Rules for Existing School Buildings. These rules reference the 2012 Edition of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101, Life Safety Code (LSC) which must be purchased separately from NFPA. The requirements listed in Chapter 15 of NFPA 101, LSC, 2012 Edition apply unless the Rules make an amendment to a specific provision.

10. **Question: Will I have to add a fire alarm or sprinkler system?**

    Answer: This will depend on what systems are already in place. Existing maintained systems may be allowed to remain. As indicated on the application form, all fire protection systems (fire alarm, sprinkler, and hood suppression as applicable) are required to have annual inspections by an Act 144 Certified Firm that is registered with BFS. Documentation of the annual inspection performed on the system within the previous year will be required prior to any approvals being granted on existing systems. In addition, any work that must be completed to bring the systems into compliance shall be submitted for plan review in accordance with the requirements of Act 144.

11. **Question: The building never had a fire alarm system before. Will we have to add one?**

    Answer: Yes, you will be required to have a fire alarm system. Plans for this system shall be submitted for plan review in accordance with the requirements of Act 144.

12. **Question: If the violations found require additional fire alarm, sprinkler or construction work to bring the building into compliance, what do we do?**

    Answer: A complete set of construction documents shall be signed and sealed by an architect or engineer and submitted to BFS for plan review. Any construction work that exceeds $15,000.00 in value must be submitted by an architect or engineer with the Application for Plan Review. You will also be responsible to obtain all required permits through the Bureau of Construction Codes.