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SAFETY ALERT

No. 12-01

Improving Classroom Safety

April 2012

Since 2001, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) has conducted routine health and safety inspections in schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District. The inspections are designed to assess compliance with federal, state and local regulations dealing with school health and safety.

While these assessments are vitally important, schools also play an important role in achieving a safe learning environment. The attached "Common Safety Violations in School Classrooms" will provide school staff with easy-to-follow directions to improve classroom safety.

This summary of common classroom safety violations provides guidance on exits, fire extinguishers, overhead storage, extension cords and many other safety violations commonly found during inspections. Prepare your school for your next OEHS inspection and help make your classrooms safer in the process.

This document is also a useful tool to communicate safety hazards as part of your site's [Injury and Illness Prevention Plan](#) (IIPP). Utilize it as part of your annual IIPP training. Providing copies to your staff will help increase their understanding of classroom safety.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please call the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199 or visit www.lausd-oehs.org.

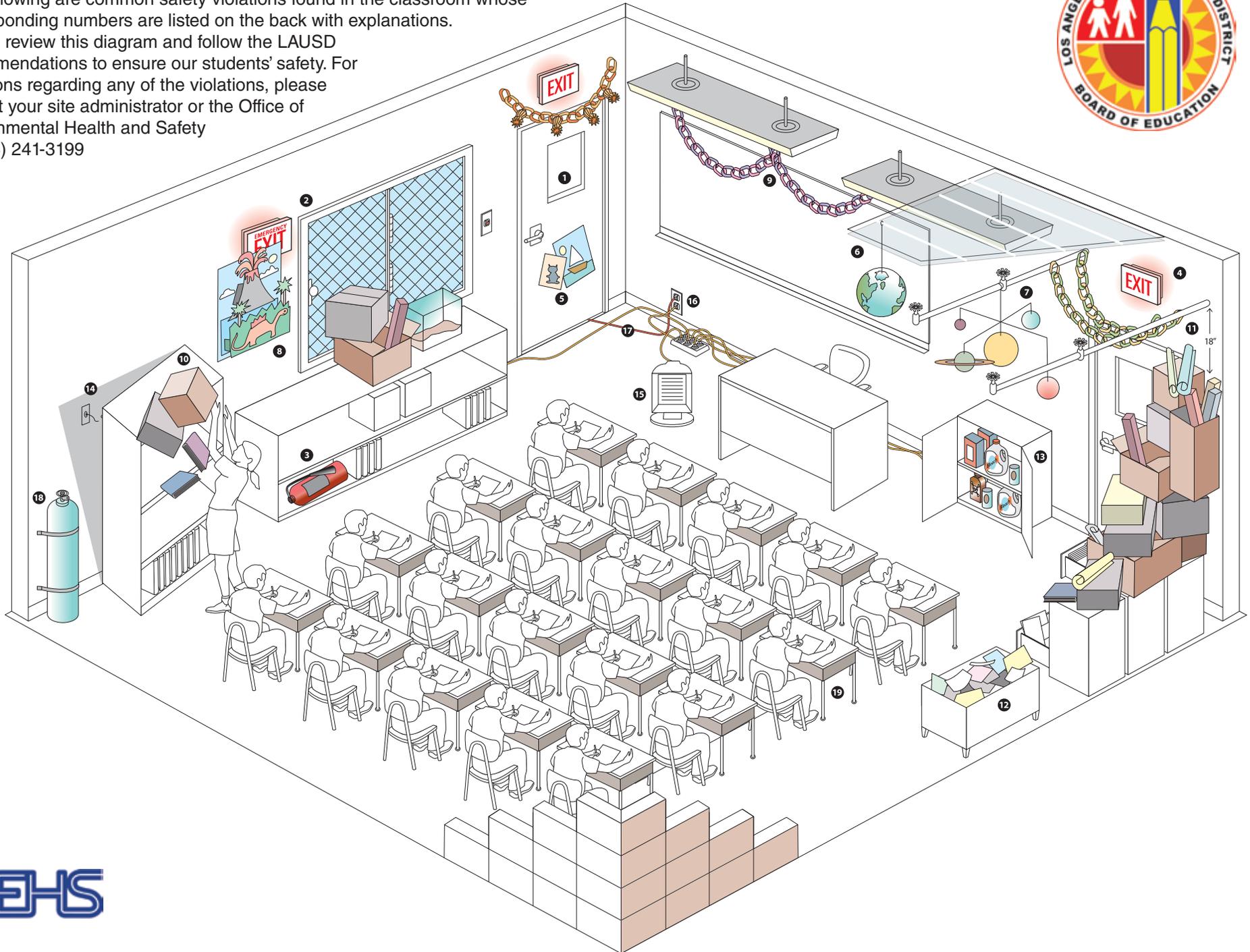
DISTRIBUTION: OEHS Website

Attachment

Common Safety Violations in School Classrooms

The following are common safety violations found in the classroom whose corresponding numbers are listed on the back with explanations.

Please review this diagram and follow the LAUSD recommendations to ensure our students' safety. For questions regarding any of the violations, please contact your site administrator or the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199



Common Safety Violations in School Classrooms

- 1 Classroom exits shall remain clear and not blocked by any obstructions, such as cabinets that open into the exit path.
- 2 Classroom emergency exit windows shall not be blocked by items stored under or in front of the windows.
- 3 Classroom fire extinguishers shall be mounted in plain view and not blocked or hidden.
- 4 Exit signs for emergency window exits shall be visible at all times. Illuminated exit signs, when provided, shall be illuminated at all times.
- 5 Classroom exit doors shall not have decorations on the door.
- 6 Decorations or classroom materials that are suspended from ceilings shall be treated to be flame retardant and never impede an exit.
- 7 Suspending or hanging decorative items from fire sprinkler pipes is not allowed.
- 8 Flame retardant classroom wall decorations shall not extend out from the walls or cover exit signs.
- 9 Suspending decorative or instructional items from classroom ceiling lights is not allowed.
- 10 Material stored on top of shelves or cabinets may not be closer than 3 feet to the ceiling. This material shall **also** be secured so that, during an earthquake, it will not fall. Unfastened or unrestrained materials shall be removed.
- 11 Materials stored on top of shelves or cabinets may not be closer than 18" to automatic sprinkler heads.
- 12 Excess paper and other supplies, shall be stored in an orderly manner in approved storage closets and not in open classrooms.
- 13 Hazardous materials, such as cleaning products and chemicals used for instruction, shall be stored in approved secure locations and always kept out of reach of children. Science chemicals and very hazardous materials must be kept in hazardous materials cabinets.
- 14 All bookcases and cabinets shall be secured to walls.
- 15 Approved portable heaters shall be positioned so that they are not close to combustibles.
- 16 Do not plug more than one extension cord and one power strip into an electrical outlet. Extension cords shall be removed and stored at the end of the school day. Extension cords may not be put into permanent use. Extension cords and power strips may not be plugged in series.
- 17 Extension cords may not be extended from one classroom to another or create a tripping hazard.
- 18 All compressed gas cylinders shall be attached with restraints to prevent them from overturning.
- 19 Do not exceed the classroom occupancy load by putting too many students or desks in the room. (20 square feet per student.)

Most classrooms safety violations can be avoided by keeping classrooms clean, neat and well organized. Do not try and store more materials than your room was designed to safely handle. Do not obstruct the existing fire safety systems that are there to protect all occupants. Do not try and exceed the capacity of the room's electrical system with plug strips and extension cords. Always look out for conditions that have the potential to hurt students.

In addition to the illustrated classroom violations, there are some fire/safety violations that occur outside of the classroom. If you notice any of the following, please notify your site administrator.

Do not store items in basements or under stairs unless the entire area is sprinklered.

When storing items in closets or workrooms, maintain a 3 foot (36") clearance around all water heaters, electrical panels, fire alarms and portable fire extinguishers.

Parking of vehicles on campus shall be limited to official parking stalls only. Do not park vehicles on school grounds in such a way as to block paths or egress and access or any fire lanes.