



MAR 31 2010

DepEd MEMORANDUM
No. **131**, s. 2010

CONTINUING FIRE SAFETY AND AWARENESS PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau Directors
Regional Directors
Schools Division/City Superintendents
All Others Concerned

1. In an effort to strengthen the fire safety advocacy in schools, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Community Relations and Special Concerns and the Department of Education (DepEd) will jointly support and make the observance of the national "Fire Prevention Month" this March as meaningful as possible. The objective of this year's observance is to promote a strong, broad awareness of fire safety and the importance of prevention and preparedness in schools throughout the country.

2. In view of the reports received by this Department about a fire incident in Gaid, Dimasalang, Masbate wherein a school was burned by angry parents, and in Quezon province wherein eight (8) classrooms of a public school were burned by lawless elements, destroying all records, and leaving nearly 150 students without classrooms, there is an urgent need to give priority attention and be conscious about fire safety. Reports from BFP indicate the most common violations of schools such as:

- a. Absence of fire sprinkler, lack of fire fighting equipment/fire extinguishers, irregular servicing or non-maintenance of existing fire extinguishers that do not comply with ISO 9001-2008 series certified as preferably required to ensure the use of quality and non-ozone depleting products;
- b. Lack of markings for emergency exits, and the blockage of these exits with furniture and other items;
- c. Hazardous electrical wirings due to age and deterioration, substandard installations;
- d. Inadequate provision of outlets and their overloading, particularly through the common practice of connecting excessive equipment/appliances via octopus outlet and other inappropriate extension; and
- e. Non-organization of fire brigades and lack of preparedness for fire emergencies.



3. In order to avoid the incidence of fire in schools, a continuing "Fire Safety Program" shall be implemented in cooperation with the Bureau of Fire Protection as a result of consultations with regional/division and school officials. The following are the major proposals that have been suggested for implementation:

- a. A continuing "Fire Safety Program" in all schools, incorporating orientations on fire drills, and specific trainings on fire prevention, civilian response in fire emergencies, first aid to victims and related topics;

The program encourages the activation/organization of a Fire Brigade, Kiddie/Junior Marshall in each school, which would take steps to remove fire hazards and correct Fire Code violations in the school premises, and act as fire safety officers and first aiders during emergency situations. Girl/Boy Scouts, Cadets, Marshals could be the first choice to handle these responsibilities.

- b. Educational campaign by incorporating appropriate fire safety and prevention topics in school subjects, focusing on practical applications at home, school and in the community. The teaching of fire safety and prevention topics is designed to enable the pupils/students as well as teachers, to have an outreach effect on the safety awareness levels and practices in their own homes and communities.
- c. Strict compliance with this DepEd Memorandum, mandating all concerned school officials, ideally for a visible demonstrating effect, based within the provisions of the Fire Code of the Philippines.

4. Since risk of fatalities in case of fire in schools is being magnified by the violations of the provisions of the Fire Code of the Philippines, the number of young children who spend most of their time in schools, mentors who are mostly unprepared to manage the emergency situation, vulnerabilities from bad elements, and the risk brought about by the El Nino phenomenon, all stakeholders in education are therefore enjoined and encouraged to coordinate with the Local Government Units (LGUs) through the Bureau of Fire Protection in their respective localities for the implementation of the above-stated continuing fire safety programs and the correction of all Fire Code violations as stated.

5. Immediate and wide dissemination of this Memorandum is desired.


MONA D. VALISNO
Secretary

Reference: None

Allotment: 1—(D.O. 50-97)

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

CAMPAIGN

POLICY

SAFETY EDUCATION