



# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

## PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

RPHY J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.  
GOVERNOR

WILLIAM "RUT" WHITTINGTON, COLONE  
DEPUTY SECRETARY

### MEMORANDUM

April 25, 1996

TO: All School Boards  
All Private Schools  
All Colleges and Universities

FROM: V. J. Bella *vjb*  
State Fire Marshal

It has come to the attention of this Office that the practice of blocking exits, chaining and locking exits and otherwise hampering the proper exiting from occupied school facilities is still occurring in Louisiana. This along with nonworking exit lights present a situation that is unacceptable to this Office.

Louisiana Revised Statutes 40:1583 clearly state, "no person shall bolt, lock, obstruct, or block any exit or any passageway, or permit anyone else to do so, while the structure, water craft, or movable is in use for public assemblage". This Office will not tolerate anyone violating this Law. We will not allow time for anyone to remove any such obstructions. If our Inspectors encounter any blockages or locks they will immediately order the facility vacated and closed. This Office will then seek legal action to invoke R.S.:40:1621 which states "whoever fails to comply with any order issued by the Fire Marshal or his authorized representative, under any provisions of Part III, of Chapter 7, of Title 40 R.S. 40:1569 excepted, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned for not more than six months or both. Each days violation of an order constitutes a separate offense and may be punished as such at the discretion of the Court".

Through this letter I am notifying all public and private schools, all colleges and universities and any facilities where educational classes are offered of the requirements of this Law. We cannot and will not put the lives of students, teachers, employees, and the general public at risk from the threat of fire or other life threatening situations due to violations of this Law.

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

5150 FLORIDA BOULEVARD, BATON ROUGE, LA. 70806

(504) 925-4911

1-800-256-5452

Page Two  
April 25, 1996

TO: All School Boards  
All Private Schools  
All Colleges and Universities

Please take immediate steps to notify all school Principals, Administrators or other responsible person that the Fire Marshal's Office will be inspecting each and every facility and that we will issue NO WARNINGS.

VJB:eg  
c: All Fire Marshal Employees  
All Fire Prevention Bureaus  
All Fire Departments

SCHOOLS

2/50

TOTAL P.02

1