

New York (State) Factory Investigating Commission, Preliminary Report of the Factory Investigating Commission, 1912

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

FIRE DRILLS

The Commission personally witnessed fire drills in factory buildings, and some testimony was taken upon this subject. The Commission believes that in factory buildings where more than twenty-five persons are regularly employed above the second story, a fire drill should be conducted. One of the purposes of the fire drill should be to indicate to the occupants where the stairways are, and the means of reaching them. It has been found in many of the larger buildings where the occupants use the elevators to go to and from their work, that the location of the stairs or exterior fire-escapes is unknown. ... (T)he drill should be supervised by the local Fire Departments. A fire drill is also extremely useful in preventing panic. While of course not so effective in the case of occupants of a loft or factory building as in the case of school children, it undoubtedly would go far in preventing a mad rush towards the exits. If the fire drill accomplishes nothing more than to acquaint the occupants of a building with the different exits, to compel them to use those exits at stated intervals, and to keep them clear and unobstructed, it will have served its purpose. The periodical fire drill will constantly bring to the minds of employee and employer alike the possibility of fire and the necessity for using every proper means to prevent the same. The Commission makes the following recommendation:

Fire Drills. In every factory building or manufacturing establishment in which more than 25 persons are regularly employed above the ground or first floor, a fire drill of the occupants of such building shall be conducted at least once in every three months under the supervision of the local Fire Department or one of its officers. Every employer and employee shall aid and assist such Fire Department and its officials in conducting such fire drill. In the City of New York the Fire Commissioner, and elsewhere the State Fire Marshal, is authorized and directed to prepare appropriate rules and regulations to make effective this provision; said rules and regulations to be posted on each floor of every such factory building or establishment.

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/texts/reports/nyfic_1912_p38.html