

**Virginia Department of Criminal Justice
Services Center for School and Campus Safety**

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Memo No. VCSCS 21-007

MEMO To: Virginia Public School Superintendents, Administrators, SROs, and Crisis Management Team Members

From: Donna Michaelis

Date: November 20, 2020

Subject: **Drill Waivers Due to the Impact of COVID-19**

The Virginia Department of Education has issued information regarding [School State Policy Waivers](#) and [State-Level Waivers and Relief Measures in Effect](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This memo serves to inform you of the options schools have related to drill waivers.

Based on the authority granted to him in Chapter 1283 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly (part of the Appropriation Act), as signed by Governor Northam on April 27, 2020, the Superintendent of Public Instruction has provided a waiver of §§ [22.1-137.1](#), [22.1-137.2](#) and [8VAC20-131-260](#) as well as § [22.1-184](#) so that a school board may delay the implementation of the following:

1. Mandatory lock-down and tornado safety drills until such time as it is logistically feasible to conduct such drills; and
2. Mandatory school bus emergency drills until such time that any transportation services have resumed at which point, school boards shall have 90 calendar days to conduct such drills.

Each local school board has the power, if they wish, to waive lockdown and/or tornado drills for the entire division or on a school-by-school basis. There is no process by which the division is required to request or notify DOE of the decision to waive the above-mentioned drills. **All fire drills are still required in accordance with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code.**

Schools are encouraged to continue to work with first responder partners to optimize the safety and effectiveness of all drills. The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety staff is available to assist with any questions.

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