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**A study of fire safety preparedness in different categories of public
Secondary schools of Thika west district, Kenya**

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ABSTRACT

Fire safety preparedness is an important element of any school's strategic plan and is essential in reducing the probability and effects of school fires. The research was undertaken in Thika West district, which had 6 fire outbreaks, deaths, injuries as well as property worth millions burnt in various incidences of fire in different public secondary schools. This research assessed the level of fire safety preparedness in public secondary schools in Thika West district, based on the Ministry of Education safety regulations. It also evaluated whether schools have met the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), 2007 and the Fire Risk Reduction Rules, (2007). The 16 public secondary schools were categorized as national, provincial and district schools. Tools for data collection included questionnaires, observation check-lists and interviews. Questionnaires focusing on fire safety preparedness as required by the guidelines of the Ministry of Education was developed and distributed to 608 respondents who included 125 teachers, 8 principals, 80 non-teaching staff and 395 students on a drop and pick later basis. An observation check-list was also developed based on the requirements of the Fire Risk Reduction Rules(2007).The data was analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. The level of implementation of Fire Risk Reduction Rules(2007) was 29.2% which meant there was a high risk of fire outbreaks in schools. The provision of fire warning in these schools rated 25%, fire assembly points 20% whereas conduction of fire drills was inadequate at 13.3%. The Ministry of Education safety regulations were not fully implemented and fire safety management strategies were inadequate at 33.3%. This study recommends the Ministry of Education to make fire safety compulsory at all levels

of learning as there is a serious gap in implementation of its circular by the school management. The schools should implement proper designs of the new buildings in order to enhance safety and also implement adequate fire management strategies.