

Liberals pull alarms on fire safety in schools

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[CBC News](#)

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones wants Newfoundland and Labrador's fire commissioner to ensure the province's schools are safe.



Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones wants a full-scale investigation into the fire safety of Newfoundland and Labrador schools. (CBC)

Jones made the call after fire commissioner Fred Hollett said Wednesday there are "significant gaps" in how all public buildings are inspected for fire safety, including hundreds of schools.

Hollett's office found numerous fire safety violations in 10 health-care institutions, including several hospitals, even though they had passed previous inspections.

Hollett's office has now broadened its review to look at all other hospitals, nursing homes and clinics.

In the house of assembly Wednesday, Jones pressed for an investigation to include schools as well.

"We also understand that the same process that was used for inspections in these health facilities is also being used for inspections in our school system," said Jones, who asked Education Minister Joan Burke to see whether schools are actually complying with fire safety regulations.



Education Minister Joan Burke says she will double-check with school boards on compliance with fire regulations.
(CBC)

Burke said she met in March with the heads of the province's school boards and asked them "if there were any fire safety issues, anything that needs to be brought to our attention."

She said there were "no outstanding issues."

But Jones pressed further, noting that the government gave the same assurances last month about the state of health facilities, before Hollett's latest investigation showed serious problems.

"The protocol [Burke] refers to did not work in the health-care sector. It did not work when it came to inspections of life and fire safety issues in our health-care facilities," Jones said.

"Why do you have so much confidence in the fact that they are working in our school systems?" Jones asked.

Burke said she would double-check with school officials "to see if there are any issues or anything we need to do, just in case that protocol is not being followed."

Burke also rejected the call to have Hollett's office conduct personal inspections until she hears there are in fact problems.