



## PRESS ARTICLE

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**Dr. NITIN V. RAIKER, DIRECTOR,**  
**Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services, Govt of Goa.**  
**Bsc, LLB, MA(Socio.), ADFE, NFSC (Nagpur),**  
**Gold Medallist, FI Fire (UK), TOT, USAR & MFR (UK).**

### **“SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE HOSPITAL & FIRE SAFETY AWARE SOCIETY – TOGETHER FOR FIRE PREVENTION”**

Every year on **National Fire Service Day**, observed on **14 April**, the nation pays tribute to the brave firefighters who laid down their lives in the line of duty and renews its commitment to strengthening fire prevention and emergency preparedness. The day commemorates the sacrifices made during the tragic **Bombay Dock Explosion**, where several fire service personnel lost their lives while combating a massive blaze. The observance serves not only as a memorial but also as a reminder that fire safety is a shared responsibility requiring collective action by government institutions and the public alike.

For the year **2026**, the theme **“Safe School, Safe Hospital & Fire Safety Aware Society – Together for Fire Prevention”** underscores the critical importance of safeguarding essential public institutions and building a culture of safety within our communities. Schools and hospitals represent two of the most sensitive and high-occupancy environments in society. The safety of students, teachers, patients, and healthcare professionals must remain a paramount priority.

Educational institutions accommodate large numbers of children and young adults who may not always be fully aware of fire hazards or emergency procedures. Similarly, hospitals house vulnerable patients, including those with limited mobility, making evacuation during emergencies particularly challenging.

Fires in such premises can lead to severe consequences if adequate preventive measures, infrastructure, and preparedness mechanisms are not in place.

Ensuring fire safety in schools and hospitals requires strict adherence to building codes, installation of fire detection and alarm systems, provision of adequate firefighting equipment, clearly marked evacuation routes, and regular inspection and maintenance of electrical installations. Equally important are periodic evacuation drills, staff training, and awareness programmes that enable occupants to respond calmly and efficiently during emergencies.

The Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services, Government of Goa, in coordination with local authorities and stakeholders, continues to strengthen regulatory compliance and safety awareness through inspections, fire safety audits, and training programmes. Special emphasis is being placed on conducting fire safety education sessions in schools and hospitals across the state. These initiatives aim to ensure that administrators, teachers, medical staff, and support personnel are familiar with emergency protocols and can initiate immediate response measures until professional assistance arrives.

Beyond institutional safety, the theme highlights the need for building a **fire safety aware society**. Fire prevention begins at the individual and household level. Careless handling of electrical appliances, unsafe storage of flammable materials, and lack of awareness about fire hazards remain common causes of accidental fires. Public participation in adopting safe practices, reporting hazards, and cooperating with safety authorities plays a crucial role in preventing fire incidents.

Community engagement programmes, awareness campaigns, and public demonstrations are essential tools for strengthening this culture of prevention. Fire safety education in schools can instil lifelong habits of safety among young citizens. Similarly, community outreach initiatives conducted by fire services can

help disseminate knowledge about basic firefighting techniques, emergency evacuation, and the correct use of fire extinguishers.

Technological advancements and modernization of fire services also play a key role in enhancing emergency response capabilities. The Government of Goa continues to invest in modern firefighting equipment, communication systems, and specialized rescue units to address diverse emergencies including urban fires, industrial incidents, and disaster situations. Training and capacity building of fire service personnel remain an ongoing priority to ensure readiness in an increasingly complex risk environment.

However, the most effective fire safety strategy remains **prevention**. Compliance with fire safety regulations, proactive risk assessment, and collective awareness significantly reduce the likelihood of catastrophic incidents. Institutions must treat fire safety not as a formality for regulatory approval but as an integral component of operational management.

On this **National Fire Service Day 2026**, I urge all citizens, educational institutions, healthcare establishments, commercial entities, and community organizations to reaffirm their commitment to fire safety. Let us work together to create **safe schools, secure hospitals, and a fire safety conscious society**.

The brave firefighters who risk their lives every day to protect communities deserve our deepest respect and cooperation. By adopting safe practices, supporting preventive measures, and remaining vigilant, we can honour their sacrifice and ensure a safer future for all.

**Together, let us strengthen our resolve for fire prevention and build a resilient and fire-safe society.**

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