

KERATAN AKHBAR

NAMA AKHBAR: NEW STRAITS TIMES (LETTERS)

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GUIDELINES

Let's learn hard lessons from religious school fire

THE fire at the Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah religious school in Kuala Lumpur was another black page that affected everyone, not just the education sector. Unfortunately, this incident was not the first. There have been others.

As details of the investigation emerge, we find there were many causes and factors. Stakeholders must reassess their approaches in enforcing the law and to avoid a recurrence.

The proposed amendment to the Education Act 1996 should include the administrations of private religious schools to ensure compliance with federal and state laws on occupational safety, health and safe buildings.

State governments have to take a broader view.

Monitoring compliance to fire safety requirements must include wardens, staff members and teachers. Simple guidelines are required for better understanding.

The Fire and Rescue Department is recommended to enhance its audit processes, not only on hospitals, but also on schools (public and private, religious and non-religious) to ensure strict compliance to fire safety requirements.

This applies to old and new buildings.

Local authorities should ensure that approvals are issued to buildings that comply with build-



The razed Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah religious school in Kuala Lumpur.
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ing safety conditions, especially the certificate of completion and compliance, and other statutory requirements.

There is an urgent need for new and simple legal guidance in the establishment of new religious

schools and safety compliance standards before approval.

This guidance should include a recommendation to reduce costs for fire safety equipment, to hold drills, and increase fire awareness and safety education.

With sustained, integrated and coordinated co-operation by federal and state governments, such tragedies can be prevented.

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