



Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Suggested Elements for Districts and Schools

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AN INTRODUCTION

This template aligns with the 2013 Presidential National Preparedness Directive's (PPD-8) Five Preparedness Missions: Prevention, Mitigation, Protection, Response, and Recovery.

This model is also in alignment with the Colorado Safe Schools Act CRS § 22-32-109.1, which requires each school district to adopt and implement a safe schools plan.

The Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC) has also included an Appendix Checklist at the end of this document that corresponds to this template, outlining the steps found here.

We appreciate your feedback as we update, improve, and share these documents with districts and schools across the state.

This template contains suggested best practices. However, for many Colorado schools, the resources necessary to accomplish many of the suggestions here are just not available. This is not a compliance document and the CSSRC does not have the authority to mandate these suggestions, nor has the Colorado Legislature mandated schools follow this template. The Colorado School Safety Resource Center provides this simply as a guidance document.

The Plan Introduction Should:

- Outline the importance of having a plan and the district's commitment (CRS § 22-32-109.1 – Safe Schools Act).
- Outline the premise upon which your plan is designed, i.e., 5-Missions of Preparedness: Prevention, Mitigation, Protection, Response, and Recovery (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2013).
- Identify the need to have teams utilizing the Incident Command System CRS § 22-32-109.1 (SB08-181).
- State the necessity of adapting the district plan for each unique school.
- Acknowledge that the plan is a living document that must be updated and practiced regularly.
- State the commitment to involve community emergency responders in the development, update, and practice of both district and school emergency plans.

TOOLS:

- [Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans \(REMS TA | June 2013\)](#)
- [Practical Information on Crisis Planning Brochure \(U.S. Department of Education\)](#)
- [Components of Comprehensive School and School District Emergency Management Plans \(U.S. Department of Education | Vol.2, Issue 2 2007\)](#)
- [Steps for Developing A School Emergency Management Plan \(U.S. Department of Education | Vol. 1, Issue 1 2007\)](#)
- [Engaging Administrators in School Emergency Management \(U.S. Department of Education | Vol. 2, Issue 5 2007\)](#)
- [Colorado School Safety Legislation \(CSSRC Website\)](#)

1. PREVENTION/MITIGATION

Prevention and mitigation are actions taken to reduce or eliminate risk to life and property from a hazard event. Both are important for the safety of students, staff, and visitors to the school. Each staff member is responsible for maintaining a safe learning and work environment. District officials and staff should be constantly evaluating their environment for potential threats, both natural and human-made. All steps to mitigate a potential threat should be evaluated and implemented where possible.

TOOL:

- [Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist \(CSSRC | Updated: April 2021\)](#)

1.1 Identification of Teams

Various teams will be necessary to plan and/or respond to crises. Individuals may participate on multiple teams. It is not the number of teams or number of members that is important *but that the functions described are completed.*

- District Safety Planning Team** – This team does the safety planning for the entire district and may also be trained to respond to individual schools as part of the District Crisis Response Team. Members of this team should also be prepared to provide through training, or contracting, both ongoing building safety assessments as well as assessments after crises.
- District Crisis Response Team (ICS)** – This team is trained to respond to crisis in the district and hold an Incident Command System (ICS) role in that response.
- Building Safety Planning Team** – This team does the safety planning for an individual school. Members of this team should also be prepared to provide both ongoing building safety assessments as well as assessments after crises. Community emergency responders should be invited to assist with the planning by this team.
- Building Crisis Response Team (ICS)** - This team provides the response to crisis in their school and may serve on the Building Safety Planning Team. They hold ICS role designations.
- Multi-Agency Crisis Planning Team** – The District Planning Team should work with community emergency responders (law enforcement and juvenile justice, fire, EMS, community mental health, victim advocates, etc.) and together form a Multi-Agency Planning Team to assist with both planning and responding as appropriate.
- Threat Assessment Team** – This multidisciplinary team of no less than three members (two of whom would be on-site) would include at least one administrator, one mental health staff member, and one law enforcement professional. It is the team trained in threat assessment in accordance with district policy.
- Psychological Recovery Teams** – The district will train mental health professionals district wide to be available as the psychological recovery teams to identify and provide follow up interventions for students and staff for any building/district crisis.

TOOLS:

- [CSSRC - ICS Organizational Charts, Team Lists and “Roles & Responsibilities” Documents under “Protection Documents” \(CSSRC website\)](#)
- [K-12 School Security Guide \(2nd Edition\) and School Security Survey \(CISA | ed., 2018\) & K-12 School Security Survey \(2018\)](#)
- [Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments: Key Principles for Safe Schools](#)
- [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design \(CPTED\) School Assessment \(CSA\)](#)
- [Hotspot Mapping: How Colorado is working to improve school climate to prevent violence](#)

1.2 Assessment Strategies

It is recommended that every school conduct the following regular assessments to assist in planning and evaluation of safety efforts:

- a. Physical Safety/Vulnerability Assessment of School Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment.
- b. “Hot spots” analysis and tracking of building safety resources (maps, software, sticker maps, etc.)
- c. Community-at-large assessments
- d. Psychological safety assessments
 - (1) Conduct School Climate Surveys:
 1. [Healthy Kids Colorado Survey and Smart Source Information](#)
 - a. [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System \(YRBBS\)](#)
 2. [Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado at Boulder](#)
 - a. Phone: (303-735-3655)
 3. CSSRC: [Resources for Positive School Climates](#)
- e. Conduct Resource mapping of safety, prevention, and intervention programs already in place.

1.3 Provide Adequate and Appropriate Supervision and Training

- a. Staff assignments for supervision including hallways, lavatories, bus stops, exits and entrances, playgrounds, etc.
- b. Staff training for rationale and response
- c. School Resource Officers (SROs)
- d. Visitor identification procedures

1.4 Policies and Procedures

Each district and school board is encouraged to develop and/or review safety related policies and procedures.

- a. Formally adopt National Response Framework as required in CRS 22-32-109.1 (SB 08-181, available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.)
- b. Threat Assessment
 - (1) [CSSRC Essentials of School Threat Assessment: Preventing Targeted School Violence](#)
- c. Discipline
 - (1) Colorado Department of Education – Behavior Statutes Clarification
 - (2) Colorado Office of the Attorney General -- Student Discipline Manual
 - (3) Colorado Department of Education -- Sexual Violence Reporting Guide

TOOLS:

- [Colorado Department of Education’s Behavior Statutes Clarification](#)
- [Colorado Office of the Attorney General’s Student Discipline Manual](#)
- [Colorado Department of Education's Sexual Violence Reporting Guide](#)

d. Hot spot mapping

TOOL:

- [Hotspot Mapping: How Colorado is working to improve school climate to prevent violence](#)

e. Harassment and Bullying Prevention CRS 22-32-109.1 (SB 01-80)

- (1) [Colorado Department of Education Model Bullying Policy](#)
- (2) Note: If your district is a member of the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) they will have sample policies for all contingencies

f. Technology (HB05-1036 Internet Safety Plan. CSSRC website: under Colorado School Safety Legislation) Cybersecurity

- (1) [Cybersecurity Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts](#)
- (2) [Cybersecurity Recommendations for K-12 Schools Using Video Conferencing Tools and Online Platforms](#)

g. [Drug and Alcohol Prevention](#)

h. School Engagement and Truancy

- (1) [Colorado Education Initiative](#)
- (2) [School Engagement](#)

i. Pandemic Procedures

- (1) [COVID-19 Resources for Schools](#)
- (2) [Community, Work & School](#)
- (3) [Addressing Biological Hazards That May Impact Students, Staff & Visitors](#)

j. Food Handling Procedures

- (1) [Food Safety - Policy](#)
- (2) [Food Safety and Emergencies: Preparedness Activities for Schools](#)

k. Mail Handling Procedures

- (1) [Best Practices for Safe Mail Handling \(U.S. DHS - Interagency Security Committee\)](#)

l. Policy and Procedures for the use or non-use of volunteers during a crisis

- (1) [Managing Donations and Volunteers as a Part of Education Agency Emergency Management](#)
- (2) [Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster](#)

m. **Other Safety Related Policies and Procedures**

1.5 Provide Anonymous Reporting

Schools are encouraged to have a mechanism for students to report dangerous situations/people. Providing an anonymous means of reporting encourages those reports.

- SAFE2TELL Anonymous Reporting Line implemented and promoted to students, staff, and parents for reporting situations of concern, e.g., threat of violence, weapons on school bus, etc.
 - Website: www.safe2tell.org
 - Office Telephone: (720) 508-6800
- Colorado Crisis Services Hotline and other services for an individual at risk of hurting themselves.
 - Website: <https://coloradocrisisservices.org>

- Phone: 1-844-493-TALK (8255) or Text “Talk” to 38255
- Dating Violence
 - [New National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline \(National Domestic Violence Hotline\)](#)
 - [Phone:](#) 866-331-9474
 - [Love is Respect](#)

1.6 Develop Written Interagency Information Sharing Agreements (HB 00-1119 and SB 00-133):

- a. Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice
- b. Community Mental Health Agencies
 - [Colorado Office of the Attorney General – Information Sharing](#)
 - [Children & Youth Information Sharing \(Colorado Division of Criminal Justice\)](#)

1.7 Increase Violence Prevention Awareness for Staff

Staff Education provided regarding awareness, response, and reporting of behavioral concerns, such as:

- a. Child Abuse Awareness and Reporting Responsibilities
- b. Mental Health Awareness
- c. Suicide Prevention, Response, and Reporting
 - d. School Engagement and Truancy Prevention
 - e. Substance Use Awareness, Prevention, and Response
 - f. Violence Prevention, Awareness, and Reporting Procedures
- g. **Other**

TOOLS:

- [Mandated Reporting – CSSRC Online courses](#)
- [Colorado Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline Reporting System](#)

NOTE: You, as the mandated reporter who suspects the abuse, are legally responsible for making certain that the report is made to the designated agencies immediately. This legal responsibility is not satisfied by merely reporting your suspicion to other school personnel, including your supervisor.

1.8 Provide Evidence-Based Violence Prevention Programs/Strategies to Students

Schools are encouraged to provide a continuum of evidence-based prevention and intervention efforts, including:

- a. Harassment/Bullying Prevention
- b. [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#)
- c. Suicide Prevention
- d. Drug and Alcohol Prevention
- e. School Engagement/Truancy
- f. Social Emotional Learning
- g. [Personal Safety and Safe Routes to Schools Instruction](#)
- h. Other

TOOLS:

- [Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Blueprint Programs](#)
- [Lists of Evidence-Based Programs available on the CSSRC Website](#)
- [Evidence-Based and Best Practice Body Safety Programs \(CSSRC\)](#)
- [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)

1.9 Provide Comprehensive School Health and Psychological Services

Schools are encouraged to provide resources for, or links to, comprehensive health and psychological services, such as:

- a. Health Education
- b. School Nurses
- c. School Counselors
- d. School Social Workers
- e. School Psychologists
- f. Drug and Alcohol Services
- g. Early Intervention/Problem Solving Team
- h. Establish connections with Community Mental Health Services
- i. Other

TOOLS:

- [Mental Health Colorado – School Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- [School Based Health Centers](#)
- [Colorado Association of School Based Health Care](#)

1.10 Additional Prevention/Mitigation Considerations (Recommended by U.S. Department of Education)

a. Infectious Diseases Prevention/Mitigation Measures

- (1) Surveillance system in place
- (2) Staff education
- (3) Parent/guardian education
- (4) Preventive hygiene
- (5) Coordination with local health officials
- (6) Sanitation supplies

TOOLS: Resources for incorporating pandemic plans into school Emergency Operation Plans:

- COVID-19 Resources:
 - [COVID-19 Resources for Schools, Students, and Families \(U.S. Department of Education\)](#)
 - [Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment COVID-19 Website](#)
- Influenza Planning:
 - U.S. Department of Education Pandemic Influenza Website (The U.S. Department of Education has established a pandemic influenza website with several resources that provide useful information for schools on developing pandemic influenza plans)
 - [Influenza \(Flu\) - CDC](#)
 - Provides one-step access to U.S. Government H1N1, avian and pandemic flue information. A federal government website managed by the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)
- [H1N1: Responding to an Outbreak in New York City Schools](#) (REMS TA)

b. Food Handling and Storage Precautions

- (1) Food allergy management
- (2) Contamination prevention

(3) Biosecurity measures

TOOLS: Guidance available for managing allergies and incorporating food defense plans into school Emergency Operation Plans:

1. [Food Allergies](#)
 - a. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains a website on food allergies in schools that contains the document, “Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs”
2. [Food Allergies: Supporting Safety in the School Environment](#)
 - a. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed several resources for schools related to food security and emergency management.
3. REMS TA Center:
 - a. [Food Safety & Emergencies: Preparedness Activities for Schools](#)
 - b. [Food Safety & Emergencies: Preparedness Activities for Schools \(Planning Resources\)](#)
 - c. [Food Safety & Food Defense for Schools \(U.S. Dept. of Education – REMS Express - Vol. 2, Issue 5, 2006\)](#)

c. Mail Handling and Delivery Safety

- (1) Consider a central location
- (2) Staff training on safe handling

TOOLS:

- [Best Practices For Managing Mail Screening And Handling Processes: A Guide For The Public And Private Sectors \(Non-FOUO\) \(September 2012/1st Edition\)](#)
 - Best Practices for Safe Mail Handling is available via the Interagency Security Committee secure portal. It is located in the library under ISC Published Documents. Questions or comments should be directed to TheISC@DHS.gov.

2. Protection

The protection phase includes developing an emergency plan, assigning roles and back-up roles for the plan implementation, and practicing the plan. It requires planning for the worst-case scenarios in order to be ready to respond in a rapid, coordinated, and effective manner when an actual crisis occurs.

TOOL:

- [Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist \(CSSRC | Updated: April 2021\)](#)

2.1 Develop the District and School Comprehensive School Safety Plans and Train Teams “Schools must adopt a safe school plan.” (SB00-133 Safe Schools Act. Available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.)

- School Board formally adopts National Response Framework (SB08-181. [Available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.](#))
- District develops Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with community partners as outlined in the Prevention Phase. (SB08-181)
- Superintendent will be responsible for final approval of all School Safety and Readiness

Management Plans.

TOOL:

- [How to Write a Compelling MOU for a School Resource Officer Program](#)
- [WS1: Template for a Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) for School Crisis Response Mutual Aid \(NASP\)](#)
- [State of Ohio Sample Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) for SRO](#)

2.1 a. Train District and School Teams

- (1) District Safety Planning Team will develop the district plan in collaboration with the Multi-Agency Planning Team and provide that plan to the District Crisis Response Team.
- (2) The Building Safety Planning Team will develop the plan for each site with guidance from the District Safety Planning Team and community first responders, as needed. This plan will be provided to the Building Crisis Response Team.
- (3) Each Building Safety Planning Team will assign ICS roles, back-ups and gather contact information to form the Building Crisis Response Team.
 1. [Recommended minimum trainings for all planning team members: FEMA – IS-100.C, Introduction to ICS and IS-362.A Multi-Hazard Emergency Training for Schools](#)
 2. Recommended minimum trainings for all response team members: FEMA – IS-100.C
 3. Those with federal grants are required to complete additional trainings. See the FEMA website or contact your grant administrator.
 4. Designate Incident Command Structure assignments, including contact information for key personnel and at least one back-up person for each role. (SB08-18 Available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.)
- (4) Develop and train a Threat Assessment Team(s)
- (5) Develop and train a Psychological Recovery Team(s)
- (6) Develop a Damage Assessment Team
- (7) Identify staff members trained in CPR & AEDs

2.1 b. Update Organizational and Supporting Information Essential to the Comprehensive School Safety Plans:

- (1) Updated floor and site plans
- (2) Updated topographic, floodplain, and street maps
- (3) Designate key operational locations including:
 1. Incident command post
 2. Evacuation sites both on and off-campus
 3. Shelter-in-place zones
 4. Staging areas for emergency personnel
 5. Media communications center
 6. Parent/student reunification sites
 7. Other considerations as appropriate

2.1 c. Develop Universal Emergency Actions for All Students and Staff

- (1) Lockdown
- (2) Secure
- (3) Shelter

- (4) Evacuate
- (5) Hold
- (6) Release/Reunification

TOOL:

- ["I Love U Guys" Foundation - Standard Response Protocol & Standard Reunification Method](#)

2.1 d. Develop Plans and Procedures for Students and Staff with Disabilities

- (1) Identify students and staff needing assistance.
- (2) Devise individualized plans for assistance and identify all those needed to implement plan.
- (3) Have information available to notify emergency responders of these individuals and designate staging areas for evacuation.
- (4) Train all appropriate students and staff necessary to assist in the event of an emergency

TOOL:

- [Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management Technical Assistance Center, Considerations for Students and Staff with Disabilities](#)
- [REMS Express Newsletter "Integrating Students with Special Needs into Emergency Response Planning" \[REMS Express Newsletter - v2, Issue1, 2006\]](#)
- [CDC Keeping Children with Disabilities Safe in an Emergency](#)

2.1 e. Develop Plans and Procedures for Field Trips

- (1) Itinerary
- (2) Detailed permission slips with medical information
- (3) Overnight accommodations appropriate
- (4) Screened, trained, and adequate numbers of adult chaperones
- (5) Emergency Management Plan for trip
- (6) Check of student insurance policies

2.1 f. Develop Plans for the Protection of Electronic Communications

- (1) Protect against damage to, or the unauthorized use of, and/or the exploitation of electronic communications systems
- (2) Restoration of electronic communications systems
- (3) Restoration of services to the systems and the information contained therein

2.1 g. Develop Plans and Procedures for Community Users of Facilities

- (1) Policies for outside users including complimentary mission
- (2) Duty to supervise
- (3) Users complete a facilities or joint use agreement
- (4) Proof of insurance with district named as additional insured on their policy
- (5) Users have an Emergency Management Plan
- (6) Implement a hazard reporting system

2.2 Establish Written Memoranda of Understanding for Response with the Following Agencies:

- a. Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice (SB00-133; HB00-1119)

- b. Fire Department (SB08-181)
- c. Emergency Medical Services (SB08-181)
- d. Community Mental Health Agencies (SB00-133)
- e. Other considerations as appropriate

2.3 Develop and Implement Effective Communications

a. Interoperability

- (1) Within district
- (2) With emergency responders

b. Staff communications

- (1) Develop process
- (2) Update contact information periodically

c. Student communications

- (1) Develop process and train staff to deliver messages to students
- (2) Develop and maintain accountability procedures throughout crisis

d. Parent communications

- (1) Develop emergency notification process and communicate this to parents
- (2) Develop parent/student reunification process and communicate this to parents
- (3) Update parent and emergency information periodically

e. Media communications

- (1) Designated, trained individual
- (2) Designated staging area

2.4 Conduct Annual Inventories of Safety Equipment and Supplies

- a. Inventory all assets and maintain records of inventory, including:
 - (1) Radios
 - (2) Go-Kits: These kits should be packed and ready at all times and should accompany the appropriate staff person each time a drill is practiced.
They include:
 - 1. Administrators' go-kits
 - 2. Medical go-kits
 - 3. Classroom go-kits
 - 4. Others as needed for your population/location
 - (3) The school should also have supplies on hand for an extended shelter-in-place situation with students, including but not limited to water, food, flashlights, and diapers for siblings sheltering in the building, etc.

TOOL:

- [U.S. Department of Education REMS Helpful Hints "Emergency Go-Kits" \[REMS Express Newsletter - Vol. 1 Issue 2, 2006\]](#)

2.5 First Responders Collaboration

Make district and building emergency plans and vital information available to community first responders.

- a. The **Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC)** is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's fusion center for the state of Colorado. School personnel are invited to join as a [CIAC Partner \(Website\)](#) and get the latest information on school emergencies, closures, and safety information,

as made available via open source or other confirmed sources.

All schools in Colorado, from the largest university to the smallest early childcare centers, may face the same emergency or threat. During these types of incidents, the State may be able to provide situational awareness to schools across a broad swath of Colorado, supporting the messaging of local and county law enforcement agencies. In all cases, the CIAC will simply be providing this messaging in an attempt to reach all stakeholders who have registered under the “School Personnel Registration” on the CIAC Site, not necessarily to direct response actions or supplant directions of local emergency responders. Schools may be advised of an event as a state group or as smaller regional groups based on proximity to the given event. ciac@ciac.co.gov Districts may also choose **other commercially prepared software packages**. These tend to be expensive and it would be wise to compare the features as the amount of up-front work required to upload the information is about the same for each. If your district chooses a vendor package, it is still important to be working with your local emergency responders as you write your plans and upload the information into whatever computer package you use.

2.6 Training in Universal Emergency Actions and Response for All Staff and Students

Establish your crisis team meetings, exercise, and drill schedules. Emergency exercises for the six universal emergency actions (See Response 3.1) should be conducted annually with **After Action Plans** and should include community emergency responders as often as possible. There are several different types of emergency exercises:

- a. **Tabletop exercise** – A group discussion guided through a simulated emergency/disaster. A thorough, yet low stress, group problem solving process.
- b. **Drill** – A coordinated, supervised exercise used to test a single specific operation. It involves deployment of equipment and personnel.
- c. **Functional Exercise**– This is a fully simulated interactive exercise that tests the capability of the school to respond to a simulated event. It focuses on coordination and organization, usually focusing on one complete function. Strives for realism, short of actually deploying emergency response personnel to the scene.
- d. **Full-scale exercise** – This is an exercise that is conducted as close to reality as possible, involving multiple emergency response functions and requiring full deployment of equipment and personnel.

TOOLS:

- [CSSRC - School Emergency Operations Plan Exercise Toolkit](#)
- [CSSRC Preparing and Conducting a Table Top Exercise for Your School - Online Training \(CSSRC | Created 2018\)](#)
- [Emergency Exercises: An Effective way to Validate School Safety Plans” \[REMS Express Newsletter - v2, Issue 3, 2006\]](#)
- [Planning and Conducting Functional Exercises \(REMS Express Newsletter - v2, Issue 4, 2007\)](#)

2.7 Release/Reunification Planning

Release/Reunification is a particularly challenging issue for schools and focusing on this with exercise development, practice, and clear policy communication to parents is necessary. This process requires accurate accountability of students and release of students to authorized adults.

a. Develop a plan

- (1) Clearly articulate expectations

- (2) Translate information as necessary
- b. Train staff and students on the plan**
- c. Communicate the plan to parents**

TOOL:

- [I Love You Guys Foundation Reunification Manual](#)

3. Response

Although in an emergency, districts will follow the Incident Command Structure, all school employees should be empowered to initiate a response. All school staff should be both well informed and routinely trained in the actions possible in an emergency.

TOOL:

- [Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist \(CSSRC | Updated: April 2021\)](#)

Considerations in a Crisis Response

- a. Safety of students and staff is the primary objective followed by stabilization of the scene and limiting acceleration/growth of the incident.
- b. Schools are encouraged NOT to use code words for emergency actions but communicate calmly and clearly about the actions necessary. These actions (although your district might label them differently) need to be agreed upon ahead of time and will include:
 - (1) Evacuation, Lockdown, Secure, Shelter, and Hold
 - (2) Any combination of the above may be necessary to meet the objectives of safety, stabilization, and containing the emergency.
- c. Emergency responders contacted as soon as possible even if the incident may be resolved before their arrival. Err on the side of more assistance rather than less.
- d. Notify the district authorities as soon as possible.
- e. Triage injuries and provide emergency first aid.
- f. Trust leadership and follow incident command, including unified command, when first responders arrive.
- g. Be sure your procedures for the orderly, safe reunification of students and parents are in place, practiced, and communicated annually to parents. Again, this is often the most challenging aspect of emergency response for schools.
- h. As part of the ICS, a district public information officer (PIO) is identified.
 - (1) A crisis team member at the school site is identified until the district PIO can arrive.
 - (2) A staging area away from the crisis, evacuation site, or parent reunification site identified immediately. Law enforcement officers alerted for assistance in establishing this site, if necessary.
 - (3) Alerting media to district announcements via the website may be part of the response.
 - (4) All information released to the media should have prior approval as outlined in your school/district policies.
- i. Students/staff with special needs – All emergency action plans must take into account students and staff with physical or emotional disabilities and prepare Individualized Evacuation Plans for them.

3.1 Implement Protocols for Emergency Actions

All school staff, students, and parents trained in preparedness for all hazards including the protocol for parent/student reunification. It is vital to work with your emergency responders in planning these actions and locations.

3.1 a. Lockdown – Lockdown procedures are used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building or external threats that enter the building. Lockdown is used in situations where an actual emergency or crisis threatening the safety of building occupants is occurring, or has occurred, on the school campus. It is also used when the potential for such a situation is high.

- (1) Identify appropriate “safe” zones within the school.
- (2) Plan procedures for lockdown.

3.1 b. Secure – Secure procedures are used to secure the building and protect building occupants where a higher than normal threat is present outside or near the campus. Secure is used as a preventative measure when threat of danger is outside the school building and may be in place for a few minutes, or longer periods, until the threat to safety is resolved. The threat might include animal sightings, criminal activity in the area, or suspicious persons. Educational activities may continue within the building as decided by administration.

- (1) Plan procedures for lockout/secure.

3.1 c. Shelter – Shelter procedures are used when students and staff must remain in a school building for extended periods during an event such as a weather emergency, a chemical contaminant, or terrorist attack. Shelter means to take shelter where you are and isolate the inside environment from the outside environment.

- (1) Identify appropriate “safe” zones within the school.
- (2) Plan procedures for shelter.

3.1 d. Evacuate – Evacuate procedures are used in a variety of school emergencies. An evacuation may be signaled by a fire alarm, direction over the intercom system, or by the instruction of emergency personnel. A partial evacuation of a section of the building may also occur as a situation warrants. Some evacuations may involve evacuation to an off-campus site, as instructed.

- (1) Evacuation sites both on and off-campus identified.
- (2) Evacuation sites off-campus checked for safety compliance.
- (3) Plan procedures for evacuations including critical transportation. This should include the safe evacuation of people and animals and the delivery of vital response personnel, equipment, and services to the site.

3.1 e. Hold – Hold procedures are used to keep students within their individual classrooms, so that emergency staff/responders can accomplish tasks in common areas. Hold means keeping all students and staff not assigned to the emergency in classrooms and other areas. This allows responders to move freely throughout the building during passing periods in order to safely provide medical aid and respond to fights or disturbances.

- (1) Plan procedures for hold.

3.1 f. Release/Reunification – Schools will want to conduct a smooth release and reunification procedure every time there is a critical incident. Making sure that parents/guardians are aware of the procedures and protocols including how they will be notified and what they are required to bring in

order to have their child released to them are very important. Parents/guardians need to keep their emergency contacts updated for an easy and safe transitions of students to parents/guardians.

3.2 Institute Response Procedures for the Following Circumstances:

3.2 a. Human-made Crises:

- (1) Bomb threats
- (2) Hostage situations
- (3) Intruders
- (4) Missing student/kidnapping
- (5) Report of a weapon on campus
- (6) Suspicious packages
- (7) Threats
- (8) Weapons/violence incidents

TOOLS:

- [Communication and Collaboration during Natural Disasters; Lessons Learned from Past Experience \(REMS Express Newsletter - V3, Issue 2, 2008\)](#)
- [CSSRC Media Guide](#)
- [Establishing and Developing Strategic Partnerships with Media Representatives \(REMS Express Newsletter - V2, Issue 8, 2007\)](#)

3.2 b. Accidents and Medical Emergencies:

- (1) Fire
- (2) Hazardous materials
- (3) Medical emergencies
 1. Food allergies
 2. Injury/illness/death (including student/staff appearing to be under the influence)
 3. Reasons to call 911
 4. Guidelines for medical transport
 5. Medical transport plan

3.2 c. Transportation Accidents

3.2 d. Utility failures

3.2 e. Pandemic Response Plan

3.2 f. Weather and Other Natural Disasters:

- (1) Weather alerts
- (2) Snowstorms
- (3) Thunderstorms/Flash flooding/Hail/Lightning
- (4) Tornadoes
- (5) Earthquakes
- (6) Wildfires

3.2 g. Other Specific Crises:

- (1) Child abuse
- (2) Death of student

- (3) Death of staff/community member
- (4) Memorials at school
- (5) Restraint/physical intervention procedures
- (6) Self-injury and other risk behaviors
- (7) Sexual Assault
- (8) Suicide
 1. Suicide threat/ideation
 2. Suicide attempt
 3. Suicide completion
 4. Suicide and memorials
- (9) Site specific hazards, e.g. mountain lions, bears, snakes, etc.

TOOLS:

- [National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement](#)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)
- ["Paying Tribute to Deceased School Community Members" & "Coping with the Death of a Student or Staff Member" \(REMS Express Newsletter - V3, Issue 3 & V3, Issue 2, 2007\)](#)

3.3 After Action Reports

SB08-181 requires written evaluations after exercises and all real world incidents. This is an opportunity to document the details of the response and to modify procedures in an ongoing effort to improve response.

TOOL:

- [After- Action Reports: Capturing Lessons Learned and Identifying Areas for Improvement - \(REMS TA V2, Issue 1, 2007\)](#)

4. Recovery

The goals of recovery are to return to education and restore the infrastructure of the school as quickly as possible. Recovery of the building begins with damage assessment and debris removal and continues until the affected area(s) returns to pre-emergency conditions. Recovery also includes attending to the psychological needs of students and staff after a crisis.

District and school staff should be trained in assessing the emotional needs of students, staff, and responders and to deal with the emotional impact of the crisis. Often it may be best to invite a crisis recovery team from outside the school immediately impacted to assist initially. This is because the crisis recovery team within the building may also be affected and may need to be available to deliver sustained services to students and staff for an extended time beyond the initial crisis.

When community mental health agencies will be utilized, interagency agreements and background checks, as well as parental permission to use such services, should be secured prior to the incident. Training community mental health personnel with the school/district recovery teams is optimal.

TOOL:

- [Best Practices Continuity of Operations \(COOP\) Template for Schools \(Available on CSSRC Website\)](#)
- [Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist \(CSSRC | Updated: April 2021\)](#)

4.1. Physical/Structural Recovery

- a. Ensure safety at educational site.
 - (1) Safety measures addressed
 - (2) Security measures visible
 - (3) Retrieval of personal belongings
- b. Assess critical infrastructure and support services and consideration of utilizing an alternative educational site.
 - (1) Damage assessment team
- c. Determine availability of equipment and supplies
- d. Resume transportation and food services
- e. Insurance support
- f. Documentation including photos
- g. Liability/legal issues

4.2 Business Recovery - Business continuity plan (BCP) or continuity of operations plan (COOP)

- a. Restore district administrative functions
- b. Ensure staff are supported
- c. Payroll system functioning
- d. Accounts payable and receivable restored
- e. Student registration in place
- f. Other records systems as needed
- g. Decision making in place for
 - (1) school closings/alternate sites
 - (2) restoration of business functions
 - (3) rapid execution of contracts

4.3 Restoration of Academic Learning – primary function of schools and all other elements of recovery phase will affect academics.

- a. Decision-making process in place for alterations to academic locations and/or routines
- b. Ongoing communication with staff, students, and parents

4.4 Psychological/Emotional Recovery

- a. Reaffirm Physical Health & Safety
- b. Support Psychological Recovery
 - (1) Immediate mobilization of the District/School Psychological Recovery Teams who have been previously trained
 - [Psychological First Aid, The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress](#)
 - *PREPaRE*, National Association of School Psychologists
 - *CSSRC*, Crisis Response Training
 - *As well as the FEMA/ICS courses IS-100.Sc and IS-362*

TOOLS:

- [PREPaRE Curriculum \(NASP\)](#)
- [CSSRC online course Crisis Planning for an Off-Campus Event](#)

(2) Teams conduct Psychological Triage

1. Primary level
2. Secondary level

3. Tertiary level

(3) Implementing immediate recovery also includes:

1. Limiting student/staff exposure to trauma
2. Providing ongoing assessment of emotional needs of students, staff, families, and responders and providing resources according to your crisis team's training model.
3. Consider establishing a "safe room" for those students needing support beyond that provided in each classroom. This will assist in returning the building to the business of education.
4. Communicate with students, staff, families, and the media often and appropriately as timely information is important to both physical and psychological recovery.

(4) Implement long-term recovery efforts.

1. Utilizing school/district teams as well as appropriate community mental health agencies.
 - These will likely include community mental health providers, victim advocates, religious leaders, or other appropriate outside intervention providers.
 - Memoranda of Understanding are signed with these partners prior to needing their assistance.
 - These community providers are trained with the school recovery team, if you plan to use their assistance.
 - They should also have all background checks/clearances required of school staff.
 - Parent permission obtained for students to speak to outside professional support that responds to the school. Students told they have the right to speak with school staff, if they choose. The school board needs to determine whether a passive or active permission to use outside providers will be necessary with parents and obtain permission at the beginning of each school year. Some districts have chosen to use a passive permission outlined in the student handbook.
2. Provide ongoing student updates and assessments
3. Provide ongoing staff updates and assessments
4. Provide necessary assistance to the caregivers
5. Conduct team member "debriefings"
6. Continue parent communication
7. Continue community communication
8. Carefully consider memorials – these might require a board policy so that efforts are consistent.
9. Plan for anniversaries for individuals, groups, and/or the entire school community

4.5 Capture Lessons Learned and Make Necessary Revisions to All Plans

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