This guide has been developed with federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act funds, and may be modified and reproduced for individual school and district use. The guide may not be reproduced in any form for sale or unauthorized distribution.
Baltimore County Public Schools
Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent       Towson, Maryland 21204

August 2, 2002

Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide

Approved for implementation:

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Superintendent
August 2, 2002
Date

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August 2, 2002
Date

J. Robert Haines
Deputy Superintendent, Business Services
August 2, 2002
Date
Baltimore County Public Schools

Promulgation Statement

The Baltimore County Public School System is committed to the safety and security of students, faculty, staff, and visitors on its campuses. In order to support that commitment, the Critical Incident Response and School Emergency Management Guide, is considered the overarching system plan and the basis of site-specific plans that are created annually and posted to the emergency plan Intranet site. The guide was adopted, is reviewed annually, revised, and updated as needed.

This plan is a blueprint that relies on the commitment and expertise of individuals within and outside the Baltimore County Public School system. Furthermore, the school system’s Safety and Emergency Management Steering Committee, which is made up of system employees, Baltimore County government public safety employees, and private sector members, meets monthly to assure a well integrated and current guide/plan.

All staff, students, and parents of Baltimore County Public Schools are following these procedures for safety, security, and emergency management on school grounds, at school activities, and while being transported by school transportation.

This plan is in accordance with existing federal, state, and local guidelines through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Dr. S. Dallas Dance
Superintendent
Baltimore County Public Schools

Dale R. Rauenzahn
Executive Director
Department of School Safety and Security

Date: 2/24/14

Department of School Safety and Security 2014
Foreword

In partnership with the Baltimore County Public Schools, Baltimore County Police Department, Baltimore County Fire Department, Emergency Operations Center, Baltimore County Government, and the Community at large this Critical Incident Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide has been developed to assist us in creating, reviewing, or updating our schools’ emergency and crisis response plan. As noted on the previous page, this manual has been approved for full implementation. Beginning with Unit 1, each page in the manual is dated in the footer to show the approval date and any revisions that would be made in the future.

In a natural or man-made disaster, or under national security conditions, events occur that necessitate the coordination and delivery of crisis intervention and response services. The Baltimore County Public Schools created an organized, rapid and effective response in the aftermath of crisis and disaster.

Mr. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger III, County Executive

"After September 11, we learned that we simply must be prepared to deal with the unthinkable. Though Baltimore County government routinely trains for dealing with disasters, we continue to enhance our preparedness. This school emergency management guide is part of that effort."

Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools

"Maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment is one of three systemwide goals of the Baltimore County Public Schools, and the importance of emergency preparedness has never been more evident than today. Our collaboration with public safety agencies and the creation of a coordinated, efficient crisis response plan has strengthened our ability to keep the students and staff in all of our schools safe."

Mr. Terrence B. Sheridan, Police Chief

"Schools have always been among the safest places in the nation for children. Students in American classrooms can learn and grow, free from many of the insecurities, threats, and anxieties facing them outside their schools. This Critical Incident Response and School Management Guide is part of the county's commitment to maintain schools as safe places for our children. The Guide is the product of an intense, cooperative effort by county agencies, and should reassure students and their parents that the county government is deeply committed to protecting and nurturing our young people."

John J. Hohman, Fire Chief

"The document before you is the result of a collaborative effort between Baltimore County's public safety agencies and the Baltimore County Public Schools. Many months of hard work and commitment by all involved have produced this Emergency Plan to make county schools safer for our children."
Baltimore County Public Schools

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Kentucky Community Crisis Response Board for the use of their manual as a model and acknowledge that much of this manual is directly based on their quality manual. The Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) would like to express its gratitude to the following agencies, associations, and advisory groups for assistance in completing the Critical Incident Response and School Emergency Management Guide:

- Baltimore County Executive's Office
- Baltimore County Police Department
- Baltimore County Fire Department
- Baltimore County Emergency Operations Center
- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
- Baltimore Assistants and Clerical Employees (BASE)
- Teachers' Association of Baltimore County (TABCO)
- Council of Administrative and Supervisory Employees (CASE)
- Association of Elementary School Administrators (AESA)
- Baltimore County Area Advisory Councils
- Special Education Advisory
- Parents, Teachers Association (PTA)

BCPS would like to express special gratitude to the following contributors, reviewers, and participants whose valuable insight, experience, and feedback made this guide possible:

- Fran Allen, Risk Manager
- Jimmy Artis, Emergency Management, Baltimore County Fire Department
- Karen Barnes, Principal, Deer Park Middle Magnet School
- Mel Blizzard, Emergency Preparedness Commander, Baltimore County Police Department
- Gloria Collins, BACE Representative
- John Damron, Special Assistant to Executive Director, Physical Facilities
- Pat Diehl, Resource Physical Therapist, Special Education
- Reginald Downing, AFSCME Representative
- Rita Fromm, Executive Director, Auxiliary Services
- Dianne Gilbert, Chief of Staff - Education Liaison, Baltimore County Government
- Keith Harmeyer, Principal, Loch Raven High School
- Patsy Holmes, Coordinator of Safe and Drug Free Schools
- Janice Lane, CASE, AESA Representative, Principal, Glyndon Elementary School
- Mary Jacqe Marchione, Director, Professional Development
- Pat Meyer, Area Advisory Councils' Representative
- Richard Muth, Administrator, Emergency Management, Baltimore County Fire Department
• Cindy North, TABCO Representative, Teachers
• Laura Nossel, President, Baltimore County PTA Council
• Joe Palozzi, Area Advisory Council Representative
• Roger Pancake, Specialist, Professional Development
• Kevin Pippin, Senior Operations Supervisor, Security
• Michele Prumo, Coordinator, Health Services
• Dale Rauenzahn, Director, Student Support Services
• Rowland Savage, Coordinator, Guidance and Counseling Services
• Michael Stelmack, Major, Baltimore County Police Department
• Wayne Thibeault, Principal, Sparrows Point High School
• Henry Wagner, Principal, Holabird Middle School
• Mark Warren, Captain, Schools Unit, Baltimore County Police Department
• Bill Wingerd, Manager, Operations
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Section 1

Preparedness & Communication

"Disasters are inevitable. Appropriate preparation is not."

(R. Lazarus)
Partnerships in Preparedness, Response and Recovery

The Baltimore County Public Schools provide guidelines for schools, districts, and communities to address school emergencies. Standard procedures are provided for emergency situations to assist facilities with a foundation for planning and a framework for action should an emergency situation arise.

The likelihood of effectively managing an emergency is increased with an established district level plan and individual building plans tailored to the conditions and resources of an individual school or facility. The guidelines contained herein provide a step by step model for districts and individual schools to develop their own School Emergency Safety Management Plan.

For purposes of this guide, “emergency” is defined as:

A sudden, generally unanticipated event that has the potential to profoundly and negatively impact a significant segment of the school population.

As envisioned, the school system has formed a System Team, with collaboration and partnership from local/county emergency service agencies. The System Team will follow the outline in this guide to create (or modify) its own local Emergency Management Plan, and will include appropriate local terminology, phone numbers, names, etc. The System Team will then provide the modified guide to each school for adaptation by School Emergency Safety Management Teams.

Each Emergency Management Plan is to be written with the explicit intent to protect and sustain life, reduce emotional trauma, assist in emotional recovery from trauma, and minimize personal injury and/or damage to property. The Critical Response and School Emergency Safety
Management Guide incorporates activities for preparedness, responding, and recovery for a variety of emergency situations. The Guide will help maximize the health, safety, and welfare of students, staff, and visitors when confronted by an emergency situation.

**New Challenges**
Historically, schools have been relatively well-prepared for emergency situations such as fires and severe weather. Schools understand the need to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is heard. They know procedures for calling 911 to report a fire, and know to seek shelter in the event of a severe weather warning.

Conversely, the recent wave of school shootings and other forms of interpersonal violence has stunned the country and uncovered a need for preparedness for a much broader range of emergencies. National attention has focused on school violence in communities across the country.

Further, although schools may have established procedures for dealing with many emergency situations, most do not have these protocols collected in a coordinated, concise manner. More so than ever before, schools are faced with ongoing challenges to be prepared for a wide range of emergency situations from medical emergencies to threats of violence, from severe weather to chemical release, and from sexual abuse to kidnapping.

**A Broad Perspective**
The Baltimore County Public Schools oversee 162 schools and have set three broad goals:

1. **To improve achievement for all students**
2. **To maintain a safe and orderly learning environment in every school**
3. **To use resources effectively and efficiently**

To achieve these goals, schools in the system must provide a safe, orderly learning environment for every child and every school. The Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide provides protocols for crisis response situations so that schools and districts can quickly and adequately restore the school climate to optimal learning conditions. The restored strong, supportive environment will again promote high student achievement.
The Baltimore County Public Schools Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide was based on the Emergency Management Guide which was developed in response to a growing number of requests for technical assistance in crisis response training, planning for school safety, emergency management and response, and long-term recovery. The Guide is presented in four broad sections: Preparedness, Critical Incident Response, School Emergency Safety Plan, Protocols (Emergency and Health, Safety, and Risk Management). Each of these topics is introduced briefly over the next few pages and then explained and applied in detail in later sections of the guide.

Partnerships in Preparedness, Response, and Recovery
How to Use this Guide

The Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide is designed to assist schools and districts in the development of individually tailored Emergency Management Plans. It is presented in four main sections: Preparedness, Critical Incident Response, School Emergency Safety Plan, Protocols (Emergency and Health, Safety, Risk Management), and offers a method for creating an Emergency Management Plan to meet specific local needs. Since each school has unique resources and unique risks, each needs an Emergency Management Plan suited to its unique circumstances.

New “best practices” for handling emergency situations become available on an ongoing basis, and new emergency situations emerge over time. Therefore, this manual should always be a “working document,” and after initial completion, should be updated on a regular basis.

County Preparedness – A Support Team

County preparedness began with the County Executive making a firm decision to update the county's Emergency Management Plan, and communicating that decision to staff. The next step was forming an Interagency Team to begin planning and developing support for schools. This team was composed of Police, Fire, and School System personnel.

The Interagency Team reviewed the contents of the previous Emergency Management Guide and conducted a review. The Team then reviewed and modify each emergency protocol to reflect local needs and circumstances in order to mitigate the impact of an emergency situation should one arise.

School Planning

After the Interagency Team completed its revision of the guide, each school and support building should create a site-specific Emergency Management Plan. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis for schools. To do this, the school will need to establish a School Emergency Safety Management Team to review its site’s existing emergency plan, or to develop a new plan using this guide as a model. Using the outline, sample forms, and protocols provided in the system's updated guide, schools can create an emergency plan which includes a designated chain of command, specific roles for team members, and school specific procedures to implement in the event of an emergency.

Communication and Practice

The final step in the emergency management planning process is to communicate and practice the plan. The Interagency Team holds the responsibility to assist each school in conducting awareness trainings and in practicing various elements of emergency protocols. While most schools are adept at practicing techniques such as fire drills and severe
weather, most are not well rehearsed in planning for such events as chemical release, threats to self or others, intruders, and other possible emergencies.

This Guide represents an effort to bring together elements of emergency management for natural and man-made disasters, accidents and medical emergencies, interpersonal violence, and threats to self or others.

**Summary**

In summary, the process of using this guide involves the following three steps. Suggestions will be provided throughout the manual to assist districts in adapting the guide for local use.

1. An Interagency **Team**, in partnership with community agencies, creates a district model emergency plan, based on this manual, but tailored to local needs.

2. The System coordinates training for **School Emergency Management Teams** to adapt the system's guide for school-specific needs.

3. System and school teams **communicate** and **practice** the plan with staff in order to better prepare to respond to and recover from emergencies.

**Practical Tip - Pages as Handouts:** *Although it may seem repetitive at times, several of the concepts presented are featured in several places throughout this guide. This is done intentionally because many of the pages in this guide are designed to be useable as handouts. Depending on your circumstances (such as training and orientation needs) you may need detailed information on a specific topic, or broad summaries of a variety of topics. As you look through the guide you are encouraged to consider which pages may provide good overviews or details about a specific topic.*
Preparedness: A Brief Introduction

Preparedness is the process of deciding what you will do in the event of an emergency, before the emergency actually occurs. Preparedness involves the coordination of efforts between the local school district, individual schools, and the community at large.

School/District Safety Assessment
One way to begin planning is to form a System Support Team to conduct a school and district safety assessment, which calls for a self-appraisal of major areas which affect school safety. These areas include geographic location of buildings; proximity of potential hazards such as factories, mines, or waterways; district availability of buses for possible evacuation; etc. Resources include existing safety plans, security and safety related district policies, floor plans of buildings, maps of local evacuation routes, school crime reports, known safety and security concerns, logs of police calls for service, student and faculty handbooks, disciplinary files and input of safety concerns. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, describes this process as a “planning for all types of disasters.”

Comprehensive School Safety Planning
Once the school safety assessment is complete, a comprehensive planning process can be initiated. These efforts will be most successful when they involve the community’s “major stakeholders”; ideally, those included on a System Support Team and other community representatives.

Just as schools reflect their communities, so, too, must they work with those communities to proactively address the individual needs of their school. “Major stakeholders” could include superintendent, law enforcement, parents and students, health and welfare, business leaders, mental health providers, juvenile justice, city and county government, church leaders, corrections, emergency management, fire department, emergency medical services, and the media.

School Plans
Individual school safety plans should be preventative in nature. This would include addressing proactive solutions to mitigate identified safety concerns found as a result of a school assessment. School Emergency Safety Management Plans should include Incident Command Structure, roles and responsibilities of Emergency Management Team Members, and emergency protocols to follow for emergency situations. Each school’s plan should reflect the school’s unique characteristics and needs.

Interagency Plans
The Interagency Team should develop a district support plan to detail intervention strategies and the roles and functions of support personnel available to schools. The District Support Team would assist in the
coordination and allocation of additional resources designed to backup the school when the need exceeds its day-to-day resources. The Interagency Team should have a roster of district-level personnel who are available to assist schools in a variety of ways, including assisting with phone calls and parent notifications, status reporting, media briefings, etc., when an emergency situation occurs. Additional consultants and “resource” team members would be drawn from law enforcement, fire and rescue, disaster and emergency management, media liaison, etc.
Critical Incidents and School Emergency Safety Plans

Response: A Brief Introduction

Response is the process of implementing appropriate actions while an emergency situation is unfolding. In short, responding means “doing what you planned to do.” In this phase, school systems mobilize resources needed to handle the emergency at hand.

Mitigation
Mitigation refers to actions taken to reduce the adverse effect of an emergency. Mitigation measures can be implemented before an emergency, during an emergency, or in recovery from an emergency. Following a school safety assessment conducted in the preparedness phase, mitigation measures can be taken to eliminate hazards that have been identified. In the response phase, mitigation is the process of implementing the Emergency Management Protocols detailed later in this guide. In the recovery phase of an emergency, mitigation measures are those interventions designed to reduce the psychological or emotional impact of a traumatic event.

Emergency Management Protocols
A broad range of emergency situations is identified in the Emergency Management Protocols section of this guide. For each event listed there are specific actions to be taken to appropriately handle the given situation. Depending on the type of emergency, protocols may remain under the domain of the school, may require assistance from the District Support Team, or may necessitate a coordinated community-wide response. Additionally, as indicated, protocols use consistent language in implementation of Universal Emergency Procedures, as described below.

Universal Emergency Procedures
Universal Emergency Procedures refers to a set of clear directives that may be implemented across a number of situations. Evacuation is a procedure that may apply to such emergencies as fire, bomb threat, or interior gas leak. Personnel throughout the building would not necessarily need to know what is the emergency at hand; they simply need to know to evacuate once a decision has been made.

Other Universal Emergency Response Procedures include Shelter in Place, Drop, Cover and Hold, Severe Weather Safe Area, and Lockdown. The advantage of having a small set of universal procedures is its simplicity. With Universal Emergency Response Procedures in place, staff can learn to follow specific directions without having to learn extensive protocols for dozens of different emergency situations.
Recovery: A Brief Introduction

Recovery is the process of assisting people with the physical, psychological and emotional trauma associated with experiencing tragic events.

Understanding “Critical Incidents”
The term “critical incident” is used to describe events that overwhelm an individual’s capacity to cope. Traumatic events can cause psychological and emotional turmoil, cognitive problems, and behavioral changes. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM, Everly & Mitchell, 1999) is a comprehensive, integrated multi-component crisis intervention system. CISM services provide a framework for the application of education and crisis intervention during the acute stage following a critical incident. These services enhance and complement the delivery of traditional mental health services.

Immediate vs. Ongoing Recovery
It is essential to understand recovery at two distinct levels, immediate and ongoing. Immediate support is needed from the first moments of a traumatic event through the first few days following it. Frequently, recent victims of major trauma are in a state of shock, and at this time basic human needs of food, shelter, and clothing are often a primary focus. Long-term recovery needs may not be readily apparent, and for many, ongoing support will be needed. Ongoing recovery refers to support provided to some individuals for weeks, months, or years following a tragic event.

Assessment, Crisis Intervention and Support
Children and their parents, faculty, staff and administrators, public safety personnel and the larger community are all impacted by tragic events and will benefit from immediate and ongoing support. For some traumatic events the in-school Student Support Services Personnel may be adequate to provide immediate and ongoing recovery services. Emergencies that affect a small number of people, may be well served by crisis counseling and recovery from a Traumatic Loss Team, local community mental health providers, employee assistance programs and similar services.

For large-scale emergencies, however, services such as triage, assessment, outreach, and crisis intervention are best delivered on a system basis through a trained rapid response network. For large-scale disasters, site-based personnel normally assigned these functions are now victims/survivors themselves. The Trauma Teams' network professionals provide a structured, immediate first response system to support the system in need. Site-based personnel will be called on to provide the ongoing support services once the immediate crisis has passed. Their effectiveness will be strengthened if needed support is afforded to them.
during the early days of recovery. Recognizing the impact of critical incident stress on all school and district staff members while supporting outreach efforts will ensure that “quality care” of the school's most valuable resource, its personnel, is a priority.

The Baltimore County Public Schools are working throughout the county to assist in building regional capacity to support schools and their communities in Preparedness, Response, and Ongoing Recovery.
Levels of Emergencies

It is essential to understand and be prepared for a range of situations from school-based events such as an allergic reaction, to community-wide disasters such as tornados. The information below illustrates different levels of emergencies, and the following page describes in greater detail the possible impact of community-level disasters on individual schools.

**Level I**
A Level I emergency is a site-based event affecting only that site and most often requires no outside assistance at that site to manage the emergency. However, the site-based administrator may use some central office personnel or resources (for example, the school system’s Traumatic Loss Team). If the Level I emergency is extreme, (hostages, shots, biohazard) the site-based administrator should follow Level II directions.

**Level II**
A Level II emergency is a local event having an impact on more than one site or having a large-scale community impact, such as a major fire, civil disturbance, hostage situation, or widespread power outage. A Level II emergency may also be an event that only affects one site, but the magnitude of the emergency requires the support of the CIRT. Depending upon the magnitude of the event, the increased resources and expertise needed to manage the event, and its impact on individual sites, site emergency plans shall be implemented by the Site Administrator, as the BCPS CIRT’s key staff and section leaders are being assembled.

**Level III**
A Level III emergency is a community or region-wide event affecting multiple sites such as an earthquake, chemical/biological-related incidents, or any incident having a collateral impact on Baltimore County (e.g., mass exit from Baltimore City). Site emergency plans shall be implemented and the BCPS Critical Incident Response Plan shall be fully activated to coordinate system-wide response efforts.

**Note:** At the time that a Level II or III emergency is being declared in the school system, the County’s EOC may be activated to coordinate the response.

**Integration with Other Plans**
This plan supports and is integrated with all BCPS site plans and is also coordinated with the Baltimore County government EOC.
OFFICE OF SECURITY RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY REQUEST TO NOTIFY THE SUPERINTENDENT FROM A SCHOOL OR OFFICE, PRINCIPAL/OFFICE HEAD

Emergency Information:
1. Who is calling: (Name)  
   (Title)
2. Where is the emergency: (School/Office)
3. Telephone Number to reach person named above:
4. Level of Emergency: Level I _____ Level II _____ Level III _____
5. Description of Emergency:

6. Date of call: _______________  Time of Call: _______________

SECURITY OFFICE RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Steps to Follow:
1. Record all information required above.
2. If a Level I (non-extreme) emergency, refer the caller, principal or office head, to the appropriate Area Assistant Superintendent/Executive Director and do not continue with any other steps. If there are any questions regarding the level of the emergency, proceed by calling the Superintendent.
3. If a Level II or III (extreme Level I, hostage, shots, and bio-hazard) emergency, tell the caller, principal/office head, you will be contacting the Superintendent then follow steps, 4-10. If there are questions on the level of the emergency, proceed by calling the Superintendent.
4. Call the Office of the Superintendent. #4281
5. Give the person who answers the telephone all information given to you by the caller.
6. Follow all directions given to you on behalf of the Superintendent.
7. Do not make any other calls on the emergency unless directed to do so by the Superintendent or his designee.
8. Refer the principal/office head to the Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide if they have questions regarding how they are to respond to the emergency.
9. The principal/office head who reported the emergency will be called by an Area Assistant Superintendent or Executive Director (Level I), CIRT Manager (Level II or III or extreme Level I), or other support staff as directed by the Superintendent.
Understanding the Impact of Large-Scale Disasters

Schools must be prepared to rely on their own resources because assistance from others may be delayed, depending on the scope of an emergency. Remember, for a large-scale event such as an earthquake or tornado, the same disaster that affects your school will also affect the surrounding community. The list below offers insights into the possible effects of a large disaster (adapted from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s [FEMA’s] “Multi-Hazard Program for Schools,” 1999).

- Experts advise that schools (and everyone else) may be on their own for three days or more following a catastrophic disaster.

- A large disaster may result in:
  - Widespread telephone outage
  - Road blockages and damage to roads and bridges
  - Gridlock or congestion of roadways
  - Loss or damage to utility systems
  - Damage to local dams, especially earthfill dams
  - Chemical or electrical fires
  - Release of fuels and hazardous materials
  - Flash flooding

- Injuries and death may be caused by falling objects, fires/smoke inhalation, release of hazardous materials, flying debris, roof collapse, flooding, and landslides.

- The disaster that affects you also affects the community.

- Fires, spills, damaged buildings, and search and rescue operations will overwhelm normal emergency response forces including police departments, fire departments, and emergency medical services.

- It is important for school staff to develop personal and family emergency response plans because school personnel may have moral and legal responsibilities at school should a disaster occur. The family should anticipate that a staff member may be required to remain at school following a catastrophic event.
Elements of Emergency Management and Preparedness

Leadership: The importance of strong leadership cannot be overstated. Leadership ensures that emergency preparedness will be a priority and that adequate resources will be allocated to create and implement district and school-based plans. At the district level leadership should come directly from the superintendent; at the school level, from the principal.

Incident Command System: Is a nationally recognized organizational structure designed to handle Management, Operations, Logistics, Planning, and Administration & Finance. The ICS allows for appropriate utilization of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications. The Incident Commander is the highest-ranking official in charge of the emergency response operations.

Interagency Team: Initially, the Team directs the process of adapting this guide to reflect local conditions. Ongoing, the Critical Incident Team serves to assist the schools when an emergency occurs and the need exceeds the school’s resources.

School Emergency Safety Management Team: School-based teams of individuals with specific duties to perform in order to prepare for, and respond to, emergencies. The Team develops the plan to meet individual school needs, and implements the plan should the need arise.

School Emergency Safety Management Plan: The modified version of this guide, tailored and fine-tuned to meet the unique needs and resources of a given school. The plan includes Emergency Management Team assignments, emergency numbers, protocols, etc.

Communication: Plans should have established lines of internal communication (i.e., within the school), external communication (i.e., with the district office & community). Plans should include provisions for after-hours communication (telephone tree), and alternate means if telephone lines are disabled.


Universal Emergency Procedures: Universal Emergency Procedures are a set of clear directives that may be implemented across a number of emergency situations. These procedures include Evacuation, Shelter in Place, Drop, Cover, and Hold, and Lockdown.
Mitigation: Mitigation refers to any action taken to reduce the adverse effects of an emergency. These actions can be to eliminate existing hazards, to respond effectively when an emergency arises, or to assist in recovery in the aftermath of an emergency.

Preparedness: Preparedness is the process of district and school-based planning to prevent emergencies when possible, and to respond effectively when they occur.

Response: Response is the implementation of Universal Emergency Procedures and/or Emergency Management Protocols to maximize the health, safety, and well-being of individuals in the school community.

Recovery: Recovery is the process of assisting with physical, psychological, and emotional trauma associated with experiencing tragic events. Recovery during an emergency can address immediate short-term needs, while ongoing recovery can last for months or years.

Training: Training is important on at least three levels: 1) Team Training for general emergency preparedness; 2) Training to address specific emergency response or recovery activities (i.e., severe weather training, threat assessment training, or Critical Incident Stress Management training); and 3) awareness training for all staff (i.e., Universal Emergency Procedures).

Practice: Practicing the plan consists of drills, tabletop exercises, orientation for staff, etc. It is generally recommended that schools start with basic orientation and tabletop exercises prior to engaging in full-scale simulations or drills.
Moral/Legal Responsibilities for Emergency Preparedness

Adapted from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) “Multi-Hazard Program for Schools,” (1999)

Moral Responsibility

- Schools are a vital community resource.
  - School personnel have a moral and legal responsibility to all students in their care.
  - Your school is responsible for students during day-to-day operations.
  - After a disaster, your school may serve as the gathering place for hundreds of people who live or work nearby.

- In most cases, teachers and staff members will be required to remain at school until they are released by the principal or superintendent.
  - This responsibility to students in a disaster should be covered in each individual’s employment contract.
  - This policy recognizes the school’s obligation to keep students safe.
  - Just as school staff members will rely on other members of the community to open blocked roads, repair utilities, perform rescue work, etc., those members of the community will rely on schools to care for children in their care.

- Staff members should have a family emergency plan; that plan should anticipate that the school staff member must stay at school.
  - Knowing your family is prepared and can handle the situation will enable you to do your job professionally.
  - Remind your family that if the telephones are not working, you will be unable to call them.
  - If the telephones work, tell them you will wait an hour or two to keep the lines open.

- Ideally, the school plan should include a rough prioritization of which teacher and staff members might be released first (such as those with small children at home).

- Staff members who live alone or a long distance from school should be encouraged to make special preparations for remaining at school a longer time, such as arranging with a neighbor to check on their home and keeping extra supplies at school.
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Critical Incident Stress Management services (CISM, Everly & Mitchell, 1999) are designed to promote emotional and psychological resilience following a critical incident. Whether an event is an act of violence, a sudden death, or a large-scale disaster, those involved often experience stress reactions. These reactions can affect employees, students, parents, emergency responders, police, witnesses, and the families of these individuals.

**Impact**
The stress reactions experienced following a critical incident can include insomnia, depression, anger, headaches, ulcers, and a host of other manifestations. These conditions often translate into higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, as well as lower school and job performance.

**CISM**
Much of this suffering and loss can be reduced if the affected individuals receive CISM from experienced counselors in the hours, days, and weeks following a traumatic incident. CISM uses both crisis intervention and educational processes targeted toward mitigating or resolving the psychological distress associated with a critical incident. CISM services include pre-crisis consultation, briefings, individual consultation, group debriefings and defusings, organizational consultations, referrals, etc.

The purpose of CISM techniques is to provide students, school employees, and others affected by an event with the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about what happened and how it was handled.

Depending on their developmental level, children have different coping skills for dealing with traumatic events and memories of those events. Adolescents can often use discussion formats, while younger children may require involvement and use of nonverbal means of communication. Whether using verbal or nonverbal communications, the intent of CISM is to help activate and enhance an individual’s problem-solving and crisis-coping skills.

(Adapted from, "Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence," International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1999, used by permission)
Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)

Every complex job needs to be organized, and emergency management in schools is no exception. The Incident Command System (ICS), is becoming the nationwide standard for emergency management, preparedness, and response. The model is an expandable system of management which has proven to be workable for many emergencies, from small events to large disasters, and is currently in use by many agencies across the country.

A basic premise to ICS is that in an emergency situation staff will transition from their day-to-day job to a similar function in addressing that emergency. For example, in an emergency the principal will become the “Incident Commander.”

Division of Labor
The major concept behind ICS is that every emergency, no matter how large or small, requires that certain tasks, or functions, be performed. The organization can expand or contract according to the size of the emergency and the staff available. Main divisions of ICS are: Management, Operations, Logistics, Planning/Intelligence, and Administration/Finance.

In simple terms:
- **Management:** Is in charge
- **Operations:** Makes it happen (by “doing”)
- **Logistics:** Makes it possible (by “getting”)
- **Planning/Intelligence:** Makes it rational (by “thinking”)
- **Administration/Finance:** Makes it fiscally accountable (by “recording”)

Span of Control
Another concept of ICS is Span of Control. The structure dictates that no one person should be in charge of more than 7 other people. The optimum number is 5, unless a large number of people are all performing the same function; for example, 1 person might be in charge of 10 teachers, who are all caring for students.

Common Terminology
One of the most important reasons for schools to use ICS is the common terminology. Response agencies will communicate more effectively with schools if similar roles are described with similar wording.
Incident Command in Schools

In many ways, Incident Command has been in place since the formation of the first modern schools. In an emergency, the principal assumes control or management responsibility and activates others as needed. For relatively small incidents, the principal may perform all the roles of the ICS structure. If an incident grows, he/she may activate other personnel as needed. In turn, once activated, each individual below may activate others needed to complete necessary functions.

Incident Commander: Establishes command, works to protect life and property, directs overall management of emergency response activities.

Planning: In small emergencies, the Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for planning, but in a larger emergency, the IC establishes a Planning Section. Planning collects and evaluates information as related to the development of an incident and status of resources.

Operations: On a school campus, most staff will be assigned roles under Operations. Operations is responsible for care of students and carrying out response activities according to established Universal Emergency Procedures and Emergency Management Protocols.

Logistics: Is responsible for communications, as well as securing and providing needed materials, resources, services, and personnel. This section may take on a major role in extended emergency situations.

Administration/Finance: Sometimes overlooked, the Administration/Finance is critical for tracking incident costs and for reimbursement accounting. This is especially important in tracking costs where a state or federal “disaster area” may be declared.
“My Role in an Emergency”

The following is an outline of roles and responsibilities for staff during an emergency. The Emergency Management Team has specifically assigned roles during an emergency and will access the District Support Team in accordance with your school’s individualized plan.

**Personnel Guide**

**ALL STAFF**
All staff should prepare family members that they may be required to remain at school to assist in an emergency situation.

**CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM**
The Critical Incident Team’s role is to support the school when the need exceeds the resources of the school to handle a situation.

1. Provide guidance regarding questions which may arise.
2. Direct additional support personnel, including District Support Team members as needed.
3. Monitor the emergency situation and facilitate major decisions which need to be made.
4. Provide a district contact for release of information to the media.

**PRINCIPAL/FACILITY DIRECTOR**
The principal shall serve as Incident Commander and shall be responsible for the overall direction of the emergency procedures at the school or support building site. Responsibilities include:

1. Take steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other individuals in the implementation of Emergency Management Protocols.
2. Determine whether to implement Universal Emergency Procedures (evacuation; reverse evacuation; shelter in place; severe weather/safe area; drop, cover and hold; lockdown).
3. Activate the Emergency Management Team.
4. Arrange for transfer of students, staff, and other individuals when safety is threatened by a disaster.
5. Work with emergency service personnel (depending on the incident, community agencies such as police or fire...
department may have jurisdiction for investigations, rescue procedures, etc.). 

6. Maintain a line of communication with the Superintendent’s Office and/or District Support Team.

TEACHERS
Teachers shall be responsible for the supervision of students and shall remain with students until directed otherwise. They shall:

1. Take steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other individuals in the implementation of Emergency Management Protocols.

2. Direct students in their charge according to established Universal Emergency Procedures.

3. Render first aid if necessary. School backup staff should be trained and certified in first aid and CPR.

4. Teachers must have their roll book with them.

5. Take roll when the class relocates in assembly area.

6. Report missing students and staff to Student Accounting and Release.

7. Assist as directed by the principal.

COUNSELORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS
Counselors, social workers, psychologists shall be responsible for assisting the overall direction of the emergency procedures at the site. Responsibilities include:

1. Take steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other individuals in the implementation of Emergency Management Protocols.

2. Direct students in their charge according to established Universal Emergency Procedures.

3. Render first aid if necessary. (Under direction of nurse or designated first aid backup.)

4. Assist in the transfer of students, staff, and other individuals when their safety is threatened by a disaster.

5. Help coordinate the activities of emergency service personnel.

6. Maintain a line of communication with the Emergency Management Team leader.

7. Assist as directed by the principal.
SCHOOL NURSES
1. Provide first aid or emergency treatment as needed.
2. Communicate first aid and emergency treatment needs to emergency service personnel.
3. Assist as directed by the principal.

CUSTODIANS
1. Survey and report damage to principal.
3. Control main shut-off valves for gas, water, and electricity and assure that no hazard results from broken or downed lines.
4. Assist in the conservation, use, and disbursement of supplies and equipment.

SCHOOL SECRETARY
1. Answer phones and assist in receiving and providing consistent information to callers.
2. Provide for the safety of essential school records and documents.
3. Assist as directed by the principal.

FOOD SERVICE/CAFETERIA WORKERS
1. Use, prepare, and serve food and water on a rationed basis whenever the feeding of students and staff becomes necessary during an emergency.
2. Assist as directed by the principal.

BUS DRIVERS
1. Supervise the care of students if an emergency occurs while children are on the bus.
2. Transfer students to new location when directed by the dispatcher or authorized regulatory agency.
3. Follow procedures as directed by your transportation policy for emergency situations.
Communication: When an Emergency has Occurred

Communications is a critical part of emergency management. School staff members and students must be told what is happening and what to do. Parents of students and families of staff members must be informed about the situation, including the status of their child or family member. Timely contact with law enforcement and other emergency services is necessary for effective response. School Board members must be kept informed and updated by the superintendent or designee. Information must be transmitted to Central Office and to other affected schools. And finally, the media must be informed and kept updated through the Office of Communications.

After an Emergency
The principal will need to notify staff of an event or emergency and keep them informed as additional information becomes available and as plans for management of the situation evolve.

The Telephone Tree
A telephone tree is a simple, widely used system for notifying staff of an emergency event when they are not at school. Set up a telephone tree by listing the first in Building Chain of Command (Principal or Incident Commander). Then link him/her to several on the Emergency Management Team; then link to different staff groupings (teachers, support staff, etc.). In practice, the first person on the list calls several people, who in turn call others, etc., until everyone on the list has been notified of the situation. A carefully crafted statement, specifying what is and is not yet known, and what steps may need to be taken, should be drafted before the telephone tree is activated.
The Morning Faculty Meeting
An early, brief faculty meeting provides the opportunity to give accurate, updated information about an emergency event/situation itself and to review with staff procedures for the day, including the availability of intervention resources.

The End-of-Day-One Faculty Meeting
A brief, end-of-day-one meeting provides the opportunity to review day one of an emergency, to update information, and plan for day two. Misinformation or rumors can be addressed before staff members go home or into the community where they are likely to be asked about the situation.
Communication: Dealing with Rumors

Establishing reliable communication networks is critical for dealing effectively with a potentially detrimental phenomenon often present in emergencies: Rumors. People are going to talk about an emergency and, when accurate information is not available, rumors begin. Without facts people speculate. Rumors create a negative perception of the school’s ability to manage an emergency. The most effective strategy for combating rumors is to provide facts as soon as possible:

1. Identify and notify internal groups including administrators, teachers, students, custodians, secretaries, teaching assistants, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc. These are primary sources of information and are likely to be contacted in their neighborhoods, at grocery stores, etc. It is critical that they have accurate information because what they know (or are speculating about) will be passed on. A faculty/staff meeting should be held before staff members go home so that what is (and is not) known can be clearly communicated.

2. Clerical staff who answer the telephone at the school and at the Central Office must know which information can be shared and which information cannot be shared. They must be kept informed of inaccurate information which is circulating so they can help correct misinformation. Designating a few persons to answer calls helps control the circulating of misinformation.

3. Use of key communicators in the community will also combat rumors. A telephone tree or a briefing held especially for identified community representatives directly associated with the school will help convey accurate information.

4. The media can also help control rumors; ask them to provide frequent updates to the public, particularly providing accurate information where rumors need to be dispelled.

5. After an immediate emergency has passed, a public meeting may be helpful. It provides an opportunity for people to ask questions and to receive accurate information. A follow-up public meeting may also be helpful in restoring the community’s confidence in the school’s ability to manage emergencies and to provide a safe environment.
Communication: Technology

Technology can be a very effective tool for communication during an emergency. Common tools include the following:

1. **Telephone** - It is recommended that schools should have at least one unpublished number. Check with the phone company to see if there are unused lines in the school’s control panel which can be activated if needed. Use standard jacks and mark them clearly so emergency personnel can find them.

2. **Intercom systems** – Ideally, systems should include teacher-initiated communications with the office and use a handset rather than a wall-mounted speaker. Instructions for use of the intercom system should be posted near the controls in the office area.

3. **Bullhorns and megaphones** - Battery-powered megaphones can be effective for communication in an emergency. One should be part of the school’s emergency toolbox. Procedures governing storage and use will help ensure availability.

4. **Two-way radio** - Two-way radios provide a reliable method of communication between rooms and buildings at a single site. All staff should be trained to operate the 2-way radio.

5. **Computers** - Existing computers may be used for communication both within the school and to other sites. E-mail may be a useful tool for updating information for staff, Central Office, other schools in an affected area, and possibly for other agencies.

6. **Fax machines** – Possible uses include off-campus accidents where lists of students and staff members involved, their locations, and needed telephone numbers can be quickly and accurately communicated. Medical information, release forms, and authorizations can be faxed and returned in emergencies.

7. **Cellular telephones** – These phones may be the only tool working when electric service is out; they are useful to staff who may be en route to or from a site.

8. **Alarm systems** – Bells or buzzers which may be sounded in different ways to signal different types of emergencies - for example, fire, severe weather, or special alert (with instructions to follow).
Communication: Strategies with Parents and Community

An important aspect of managing emergencies is dealing effectively with parent reactions and community agencies. Communication with parents and the community is best begun before an emergency occurs. Some useful strategies include the following:

1. Inform parents about the school’s emergency plan, its objectives, and the need for it; such information can be included in a school newsletter or other informational materials prepared for parents.

2. Develop a relationship with parents so that they trust and feel comfortable calling school personnel in the event of emergency.

3. Develop materials that may be needed including:
   a. Drafts of letters to parents informing them of what happened.
   b. Information regarding possible reactions of their child and ways to talk with them.
   c. How the school and school district are handling the situation.

4. Develop a list of community resources which may be helpful to parents or helpful to the school in the event of an emergency.

5. Identify parents who are willing to volunteer in case of an emergency, include them in preparation efforts, and include them in training.
Communication: Sharing Information with Parents

In the event of an emergency parents have very specific information needs. First, parents want to know that their children are safe; then, parents want to know the details of the emergency situation, to know how it is being handled, and to know that the children will be safe in the future. The first reactions are likely to involve fear. Upon learning of an incident at the school, parents are likely to descend upon the school in search of their child or to telephone, frantically seeking information. Establishing a system for responding quickly to parent needs for information is an important part of pre-planning. Anger is another common reaction of parents, particularly in the case of senseless acts of violence. In the event of an emergency or disaster:

1. Tell parents exactly what is known to have happened. Do not embellish or speculate.

2. Implement the plan to manage phone calls and meet with parents who arrive at school.

3. Schedule and attend an open question-and-answer meeting for parents as soon after the incident as possible. The meeting will provide an opportunity for school officials to listen and respond to parent concerns (which is helpful in combating rumors and other misinformation) and to work on restoring parental trust in the school.

4. In the event of an incident which involved damage or destruction, an open house for parents and other members of the community to see the school restored to its “normal” state helps everyone get beyond the emergency.
Communication: With Media

Most news people are sensitive in reporting emergencies that occur in school settings and are interested in doing a reputable job. The following suggestions will promote clear communications with the media:

- Identify a single information source.
- Direct media representatives to one area (on or off campus) where briefings can take place.
- Instruct all employees to refer all information and questions to Media Liaison or Information Official.
- If the emergency is a death, consult with the deceased student/staff member’s family before making a statement.
- Insist that reporters respect the privacy rights of students and staff.
- Advise students of the school’s student media policy.
- The school should decide what to say, issue a statement, and answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.
- Remind employees that only designated spokesmen are authorized to talk with news media.
- Take initiative with news media and let them know what is or is not known about the situation.
- Emphasize school’s/district’s good record.
- Speak to reporters in plain English - not in “educationese.”
- If there is involvement with a criminal case, work in conjunction with law enforcement spokesperson.
- Don’t try to “kill” a story; don’t say “no comment”; don’t speculate; don’t try to blame anyone for anything.
- When communicating, maintain a unified position and message; keep messages concise, clear, and consistent.
- Contact District Support Team to regularly update.
- Delay releasing information until facts are verified and the school’s position is clear; prepare statements about the situation in advance to read (avoid ad-libbing).
- Assign sufficient staff to handle phones and keep a log of calls and personal contacts.
- Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the emergency.
Communication: Sample Statements to the Media

Example 1: Bus accident

Our third grade students were on a field trip when their school bus was involved in an accident on Interstate-75 (I-75). Emergency medical teams have arrived are transporting students to (NAME) community hospital. Our assistant principal is at the scene and our superintendent is at the hospital. We have established a hotline for parents (or, staff members are calling parents of students involved in the accident). The hotline number is (NUMBER). Our Emergency Management Team is implementing our emergency protocol for bus accidents, including providing support to students and staff.

Note: Important points made are: preparedness of the school; coordination of efforts with community agencies; access to information for parents; responsible immediate action taken by school representatives (including those in positions of authority); and support provided for students at the school.

Example 2: Fight/Death of Student (off campus, after hours)

A fight involving two eleventh-grade students occurred a block from campus at 7:00 p.m. last night. The incident resulted in the fatal shooting of one of our students. Police are investigating and no more is known at this time, but police are conducting an ongoing investigation.

Our school's Emergency Management Team went into action immediately following the incident and the following actions have been taken: 1) Our Emergency Team met last night and planned a staff meeting before the school day; 2) We notified staff of the meeting using our Telephone Tree; 3) Crisis counseling for students is being provided by Central Office and community resources; 4) A review of our school weapons policy is underway and school security is on alert for potential related violence.

Note: Important points are: Even though the incident occurred off campus, after hours, the school still has a responsibility to act; the incident is coupled with a re-statement of the district weapons policy; the school demonstrates it is able to handle emergencies by convening an Emergency Management Team meeting, by drawing on community resources, and by providing (or accessing) crisis counseling to the students.
Sample letter to parents

Dear parents,

As you may or may not be aware, our school (or district) has recently experienced (specify event, whether death, fire, etc.) which has deeply affected us. Let me briefly review the facts (give brief description of incident and known facts).

We have implemented our school's Emergency Management Plan to respond to the situation and to help our students and their families. Students and staff will react in different ways to emergencies of this nature, so it will be important to have support available to assist students in need. Counselors are available in the school setting to assist students as they express their feelings related to (the specific event). We have included a reference sheet to help you recognize possible reactions you may observe in your child. If you feel your child is in need of special assistance or is having a great deal of difficulty coping with (the loss, disaster, etc.), please do not hesitate to call.

While it is important to deal with grief, loss, anger, and fear reactions, we believe it is essential to resume as normal a routine as possible regarding school activities. The following modifications in our school's regular schedule will be in effect during (specify dates), and after that time all regular schedules and routines will resume. (Specify needed information such as memorial services, possible changes in classroom locations, alterations in school operating hours, etc.).

Thank you for your support of our school system as we work together to cope with (specify event). Please observe your child closely over the next several days and weeks to watch for signs of distress which may indicate a need for additional support and guidance. Please feel free to call if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child or steps being taken by the school to address this (loss, tragedy, etc.).

Sincerely,

(Principal Name)
(Phone)