



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GUIDE

for
SCHOOLS, DISTRICTS
+
AUTHORITIES



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The Ministry of Education is responsible for producing, revising and updating this Guide. As a matter of process, the **Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities** will be reviewed biennially or as needed, and amendments will be made at that time. Any amendments will be noted within the updated guide using a Revisions Table. The primary point of contact for any questions and comments, as well as any requests for further resources not included in this Guide, is EDUC.SafeSchool.Division@gov.bc.ca

This Guide and related templates will be available for download on the Ministry of Education web site. The online version of this publication is the official version.

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Ministry of
Education

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- BC Association of School Business Officials
 - BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
 - BC Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association
 - BC School Superintendents Association
 - BC School Trustees Association
 - BC Teachers' Federation
 - Canadian Union of Public Employees BC
 - Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Justice
 - Federation of Independent School Associations
 - First Nations Education Steering Committee
 - First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia
 - Safer Schools Together
 - School District 10 (Arrow Lakes)
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INTRODUCTION **AND** OVERVIEW

Emergencies are unpredictable. We usually have little warning that an event or series of events may cause a massive disruption in our lives and our communities. As one of the major areas in which people gather, schools are places where emergency preparedness is critically important to the well-being of students and employees and to the confidence that parents feel in entrusting their children to the care of educators in BC schools.

This Emergency Management Planning Guide is intended to provide support to public, independent and First Nations schools in upholding their responsibilities during an emergency. While some of the terms are used in the public system, such as board of education or school district, the intent of the guide is that public, independent and First Nations schools can make use of the information as it fits their structures and frameworks. The guide outlines a standardized provincial process for planning for, responding to and recovering from all types of emergencies.

Emergency: An event or circumstance that is caused by accident, fire, explosion, technical failure, human action or force of nature, that requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety or welfare and/of a person or to limit damage to property.

Adapted from the BC Emergency Program Act.

Disaster: An event, generally considered to have an even greater impact than an emergency, caused by an accident, fire, explosion or technical failure, or by the forces of nature, and has resulted in serious harm to the health, safety and/or welfare of people, or in widespread damage to property.

Adapted from section 1 of the Introduction to Emergency Management in British Columbia, 2007/BC Emergency Program Act.

Critical Incident: Any incident, whether natural or human-caused, that has a negative emotional impact on those affected resulting in a state of stress or discomfort and feelings of loss of control.

Adapted from the Justice Institute of BC Critical Incident Stress Management Program, CSMI 100.

Note: The above terms are often used interchangeably.

EMERGENCY
PLANS ARE
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DOCUMENTS



ALL HAZARDS APPROACH

Rather than focus on and try to provide detail relating to a large number of different events, this guide takes an **all-hazards approach**.

All-Hazard: Any incident or event, natural or human caused, that requires an organized response by a public, private, and/or governmental entity in order to protect life, public health and safety, and to minimize any disruption of governmental, social, and economic services.

An all-hazards approach focuses on planning that involves a small number of responses that can be used in different types of emergencies. This guide will discuss five basic all-hazard approaches – drop/cover/hold on, evacuate, lockdown, lockout and shelter in place. Further information is provided later in the guide.

School emergencies can be on a small scale, confined to one site, or on a larger scale, potentially impacting an entire school district or even many districts. A small, localized fire within a school, for example, will require a different response than a chemical leak from a train derailment, such as occurred at Lac Mégantic that affected a whole community. This guide will provide all-hazards protocols for both schools and districts as they plan for emergencies.

Being ready to address different scenarios, in collaboration with first responders and relevant community agencies, takes considerable preparation on the part of district staff. While district personnel are not necessarily trained as emergency services workers, they may be called upon to fulfil roles related to first aid, damage assessment, locating students and staff, and care and comfort for students over an extended period of time.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education (Ministry) provides leadership and funding to the K-12 education system through governance, legislation, policy and standards. The Ministry's role in helping to meet the purpose of the school system involves co-governing the K-12 education system as partners with boards of education. Specific roles and responsibilities are set out under the *School Act*, the *Independent School Act*, the *Teachers Act*, and accompanying regulations and agreements such as the *Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA)*.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

The Ministry of Health supports school districts through section 89 of the *School Act* that requires regional health boards under the *Health Authorities Act* to designate a school medical health officer for each school district. The medical health officer, under section 90 of the *School Act*, has the authority to inspect schools, report to boards of education regarding the results of an inspection and make recommendations. When the school medical health officer considers that student safety or health is at risk, he or she has the authority to require a Board to close the school.

BOARDS OF EDUCATION

In British Columbia, the provincial government and 60 school districts, each with a locally elected board of education, share responsibility for the public education system. The Ministry of Education develops high-level education legislation and policy, while boards are responsible for the overall operation and management of schools and have substantial autonomy to determine local policy. Under the *School Act*, boards of education may:

- **establish local policy for the effective and efficient operation of schools**
- **temporarily close schools if the health and safety of students is endangered**
- **install and operate video surveillance, and**
- **direct individuals to leave and remain off school property if they cause a disturbance and/or impact the climate and culture of the school.**

Board of education employees, including superintendents, secretary treasurers, school principals, vice-principals, directors of instruction and teachers, have specific responsibilities under the School Regulation for managing schools and caring for students.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Independent schools are each governed by an authority which acts as a board and is responsible for overseeing the operations of the school including funding, staffing, policies and major decisions of philosophy and vision. In this regard, an authority is akin to a public board of education but may have responsibility for only one school.

Independent schools are created pursuant to the Independent School Act, which sets out the governance and funding of BC independent schools. The Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools, which is a part of the Ministry, requires that independent schools comply with the enactments of British Columbia and the municipality or regional district where the schools are located. These include fire and building codes. The office of the Inspector also requires independent schools to have the following policies in place:

- **emergency drill and response,**
- **student safety, and**
- **student supervision.**

FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS

First Nations schools are administered by their respective First Nation bands, funded by the federal government, and located on reserve lands. They operate under the *Indian Act* and the majority are not subject to any provincial oversight. A subset of First Nations schools has applied to the Ministry and become BC-certified independent schools, making them subject to the *Independent School Act*. A third but very small group has contracted with local school districts to run their schools so the *School Act* applies.

Regardless of these differences, First Nations schools in BC are important partners in the emergency management and response process. The Ministry and First Nations schools, along with the federal government, have formalized a collaborative working relationship as a result of partnerships with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA). The TEFA commits government to “sharing expertise, learning resources, and bulk purchasing opportunities.”

Further information regarding emergency protocols on-reserve can be accessed through the First Nations Education Steering Committee or the First Nations Schools Association.

Best Practice: In districts with independent or First Nations schools that have little or no external support, and with regard to the provisions and goals of TEFA, districts could reach out to the principals of these schools with the goal of including them in discussions related to school and/or district planning.



DUTY OF CARE

Duty of Care: A well-established legal principle that educators are expected to use the same standard of care towards their students – both within the school and on school-sponsored field trips – as a prudent or careful parent would in the same circumstances.

Uzelac, J. and Krzus, S. Field Trips and the Duty of Care, TC Magazine, Fall 2007

In the event of an emergency, boards of education and educators – teachers, principals, and superintendents - must ensure that students are cared for until such time as they can be safely reunited with their parents. As employers, boards of education are also responsible, pursuant to the *Workers Compensation Act* and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, for the safety of employees.

The *Workers Compensation Act*, s. 115 (1) articulates that every employer must:

- (a) **ensure the health and safety of**
 - (i) **all workers working for that employer, and**
 - (ii) **any other workers present at a workplace at which that employer’s work is being carried out, and**
- (b) **comply with this part, the regulations and any applicable orders.**

Specific duties of teachers are articulated in s. 4 of the School Regulation. These include:

- **providing such assistance as the board or principal considers necessary for the supervision of students on school premises and at school functions, whenever and wherever held, and**
- **ensuring that students understand and comply with the code of conduct governing their behaviour and with the rules [and] policies governing the operation of the school.**

The principal is responsible, pursuant to s. 5.7 of the School Regulation, for

- **the general conduct of students, both on school premises and during activities that are off school premises and that are organized or sponsored by the school and shall, in accordance with the policies of the board, exercise paramount authority within the school in matters concerning the discipline of students.**

Specific duties of superintendents, pursuant to s. 22 of the *School Act*, include:

- **the general supervision and direction over the educational staff employed by the board of that school district, and**
- **the responsibility for the general organization, administration, supervision and evaluation of the operation of schools in the school district.**

Canadian courts have also established a body of common law that speaks to responsibilities of school personnel. The Supreme Court of Canada, in *Myers v Pell County Board of Education*, (1981), articulated that **“The standard of care to be exercised by school authorities in providing for the supervision and protection of students for whom they are responsible [is] that of a careful or prudent parent.”** Many court decisions over the intervening years across Canada have upheld this principle.

Under the auspices of the British Columbia Teachers' Council, the *Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia (Standards)* describe the important role that educators play in caring for their students. The first Standard articulates that **“educators value and care for all students and act in their best interests,”** and it further explains that this care must include the emotional and physical safety of students.

The statutory requirements, common law and Standards provide strong direction for educators with respect to the level of supervision and support required for the various types and severities of emergencies that are considered in this guide.



SAFETY TRUMPS PRIVACY

In a joint news release in May 2008, the Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario clarified an important principle for school staff. They wrote:

If there are compelling circumstances affecting health or safety, or if an individual is ill, BC's privacy laws allow disclosure to next of kin and others, including school officials and health care providers. Individual cases can be fuzzy, but if someone uses common sense and in good faith discloses information, my office is not going to come down on them. Privacy is important, but preserving life is more important.

Both Commissioners reiterated that such disclosure should not be considered routine but rather a necessary step to protect students in extraordinary circumstances.

The case that triggered the Ontario and BC Privacy Commissioners to issue their news release involved a Carlton University student, Nadia Kajouji, who committed suicide. University officials knew of her situation, but did not report it to her parents or others, citing privacy concerns.

The Supreme Court of Canada also ruled on the issue of the constitutionality of search and seizure in schools. In *R v. M (M.R.)* 1998, the court found that principals and school authorities, providing they were not acting as agents of the police, in other words, at the direction of the police, would be held to a different standard than exists in the criminal system. The court wrote:

Teachers and principals are placed in a position of trust that carries the onerous responsibilities of teaching and of caring for the children's safety and well-being. In order to teach, school officials must provide an atmosphere that encourages learning. The possession of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons at school challenges the ability of school officials to fulfil their responsibility. Current conditions require that teachers and school administrators be provided with the flexibility needed to deal with discipline problems in schools and to be able to act quickly and effectively. One of the ways in which school authorities may be required to react reasonably is by conducting searches of students and seizing prohibited items. Where the criminal law is involved, evidence found by a teacher or principal should not be excluded because the search would have been unreasonable if conducted by police.

The permissible extent of the search will vary with the gravity of the infraction that is suspected. The reasonableness of a search by teachers or principals in response to information received must be reviewed and considered in the context of the circumstances presented including their responsibility to students' safety.

Best Practice: As with all legal matters, school districts should seek legal advice regarding interpretations of law and court decisions.



GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) has developed operational goals for emergency response that:

- **provides for the safety and health of all responders,**
- **saves lives,**
- **reduces suffering,**
- **protects public health,**
- **protects government infrastructure,**
- **protects property,**
- **protects the environment, and**
- **reduces economic and social losses.**

These goals of emergency management can be reframed to reflect how schools, districts, and authorities are to respond. For the purpose of schools and the students and staff who work in them, these goals are to:

- **keep students and staff safe in the event of an emergency,**
- **make sure personnel have clear and consistent standards and procedures to follow in the event of an emergency,**
- **clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of personnel in our school system during an emergency,**
- **ensure that there are communications and protocols aligned to your community, and**
- **minimize disruption and ensure the continuity of education for all children.**

The following guiding principles are adapted from *An Emergency Management Framework for Canada, 2nd edition, 2011*, which establishes a common approach for the various federal, provincial and territorial emergency management initiatives.

Emergency management must be:

- 1 responsible,
- 2 comprehensive,
- 3 collaborative,
- 4 coherent,
- 5 risk-based,
- 6 resilient and flexible,
- 7 transparent,
- 8 continuously improving, and
- 9 ethical.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency, it is critical that the parties involved are aware of their particular areas of authority and responsibility, whether in a legal, professional or employment context. The following parties all play a part in ensuring the safety of children in our schools.

SUPERINTENDENTS

In the public school system superintendents act on behalf of boards of education to ensure that emergency management planning and implementation take place at the district and school levels. This includes the implementation of policy and standards; overseeing the development, maintenance and review of district and school plans; and reporting annually to the board of education on the status of district emergency preparedness. During a significant emergency event, the superintendent or designate will take control at the district level.

In the independent school system, a head of school, superintendent or school principal may carry out the superintendent's duties as well as the duties associated with an individual school. A head of school, for example, may actually be responsible for two or more schools operating within a single mandate – an elementary school at one location and a secondary school at another. A superintendent in the Catholic school system may be responsible for the operations of a large number of schools within one diocese.

Best Practice: Superintendents are expected to report emergencies, disasters and critical incidents to the Ministry as quickly as possible.



PRINCIPALS

The principal is responsible for the operation and management of the school including knowing what to do in an emergency to protect their students and staff. First Responders such as fire fighters and police will respond as available but it is incumbent on the principal to know how to communicate with and work with staff until such time as first responders arrive and the management of the event becomes a shared task.

Principals are responsible for the safety of their students in the event of an emergency or disaster. They must ensure a school-based plan is in place. Principals are expected to maintain order during an emergency and to ensure that students are able to return safely to parents or approved guardians. The principal, or designate, is the person-in-charge during an emergency at their school. The principal is also responsible for conducting drills on an annual basis. The Ministry endorses the following best practices.

- ✓ Six fire drills (BC Fire Code requirement)
- ✓ Three earthquake drills (BC Earthquake Alliance recommendation)
- ✓ Two lockdown drills (RCMP recommendation)

Best Practice: Practice drills with local First Responders and include them in debriefing sessions.



Best Practice: Incorporate and integrate emergency drills into learning experiences in ways that increase student understanding and capacity across the curriculum.



TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND STUDENTS

All school personnel, including principals, teachers, education assistants, clerical, maintenance staff and others, as well as students, are expected to be familiar with the emergency management plan and to understand their particular role(s) in carrying it out. Like the teaching staff, support staff will play a major role in an emergency response. Based on the skills that they bring to the endeavour, support staff are often best placed to take on the important roles outlined in the school emergency management plan (SEMP). Students also have a responsibility to understand the emergency routines to the best of their abilities and to follow instructions given by their teachers.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents are key partners in their children's learning and are often very involved in school activities. Parents play an important part in the support of the school's emergency plan by:

- **participating in the development of the emergency management plan,**
- **ensuring that they are aware of how such plans will unfold,**
- **providing vital and up-to-date information regarding contact, medical and student release information,**
- **participating in drills or exercises related to emergency preparedness, including student release drills, when invited to do so by the principal,**
- **encouraging their children to take drills seriously, and**
- **helping to acquire and organize emergency supplies on an ongoing basis.**

Best Practice: Conduct emergency drills to reflect realistic situations. For example, a fire drill may involve a situation where, rather than re-entering the school, the assumption would be that the school is uninhabitable and parents will need to pick up students, perhaps at an alternate location. The drill, which would be held at the end of the day, could then be extended to involve participation by parents so that the student release plan is practised along with the evacuation.



VOLUNTEERS

In any school in BC, you are likely to find volunteers working with students and staff in a variety of contexts. In some cases, these volunteers may be working with students in the school but they may also be off-site with students. It is incumbent on the school principal to ensure that volunteers are knowledgeable about emergency procedures and their responsibilities in the event that they are the primary person to provide care to their charges. It may be wise to have volunteers formally acknowledge this responsibility and encourage them to attend appropriate drills.

Best Practice: All adults in formal or volunteer roles in the school have a responsibility to:

- **report any incidents that may threaten the safety and security of students, staff or the school, and**
- **call 911 and ensure the appropriate authorities are informed.**



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC

The main provincial agency in British Columbia with responsibility during emergencies that broadly impact communities is Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC). This guide has been written to align with EMBC protocols.

EMBC was formed to be the lead coordinating agency in the provincial government for all emergency management activities. EMBC provides executive coordination, strategic planning, and multi-agency facilitation and strives to develop effective working relationships in an increasingly complex emergency management environment.

EMBC works with local governments, First Nations, federal departments, industry, non-government organizations and volunteers to support the emergency management phases of mitigation/ prevention, planning/preparedness, response and recovery. Additionally, EMBC engages provincial, national and international partners to enhance collective emergency preparedness.

EMBC activates a Provincial Regional Emergency Operation Centre (PREOC) and the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre (PECC) when an emergency or disaster challenges the capacity of local authorities or when extensive cross-ministry collaboration is required to address the impacts of an emergency.

For more information about EMBC visit www.embc.gov.bc.ca

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation requires that every local authority in British Columbia - municipal council, board of regional districts or park superintendent in the case of national parks - in British Columbia establish an emergency management organization and develop and maintain a current local emergency plan.

In the case of emergencies that require coordinated support to the site level, local authorities will activate emergency operations centres to manage the consequences of the event. In these events, local authorities will activate emergency plans and directly control the resources under their jurisdiction for the purpose of emergency response and recovery. Local authorities have capabilities, plans and procedures to provide for the safety of their citizens during emergencies. They will execute initial response activities using jurisdictional resources and if required ask for assistance from outside agencies such as Emergency Management BC.

Best Practice: School districts are encouraged to involve local authorities and first responders in their emergency management planning. School districts, if not invited to do so, should request to be included in emergency planning at the local authority level.



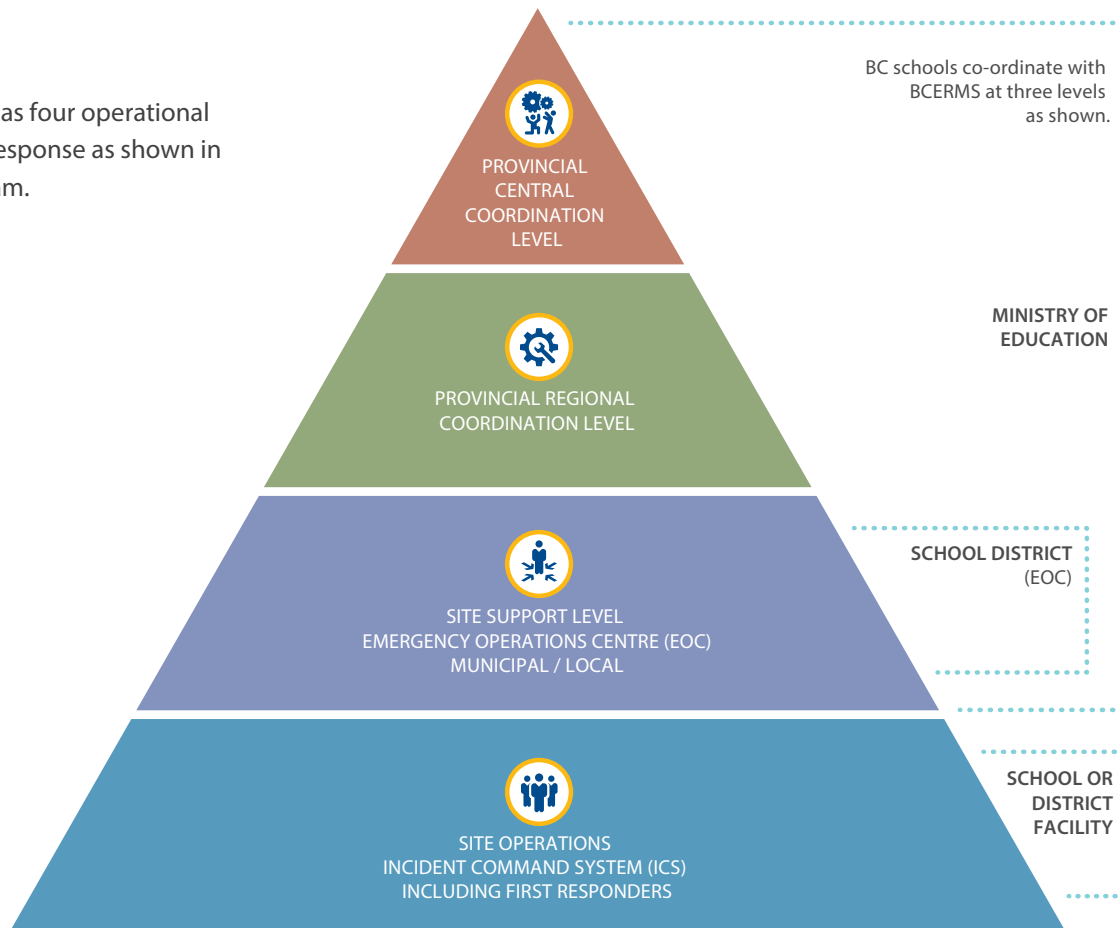
FIRST RESPONDERS

First responders work at the site level of an event and include police, fire, ambulance, and other municipal and regional agencies as required. Activities of first responders include securing the perimeter, medical response, firefighting and managing crowds or evacuation zones. First responders are also the group that schools will likely be working with most closely during emergencies and for that reason it is important to work with them as much as possible during planning and preparedness activities. Other public safety lifeline volunteers such as search and rescue organizations work with schools and school districts.

BRITISH COLUMBIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) is a comprehensive management system based upon the internationally recognized Incident Command System (ICS) that ensures a coordinated and organized response and recovery to all emergency incidents and disasters. It provides the framework for a standardized emergency response in British Columbia.

BCERMS has four operational levels of response as shown in the diagram.



Adapted from EMBC's Emergency Management BCERMS Orientation http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/em/bcerms/BCERMS_Orientation.pdf

This guide focuses on the Site Operations and Site Support levels as most emergencies will involve only these two levels.

[MINI CASES]

A small fire occurs in a classroom and is attended to by the local fire department. Students are safely evacuated and return to the building within a short timeframe. This emergency does not involve support levels beyond the site level, though the school may be required to report the incident to the school district head office.

An earthquake shakes the Lower Mainland during a weekday morning in November, causing differing levels of damage to buildings and knocking out many transportation and communications systems. Schools across the area are impacted. Support level EOCs, including school districts, municipal/local authorities, and higher levels of support are put into operation to provide support to the impacted sites.

THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The **Incident Command System** (ICS) is a standardized on-site management system designed to enable effective, efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. The ICS is used to manage an incident. . . and can be used equally well for both small and large situations.

ICS Canada, <http://www.icscanada.ca/>

The ICS uses a team approach to manage critical incidents and provides a framework that outlines what should be done and who should be doing it. School and district responses are managed following unified command structures which acknowledge the importance of collaborative control and decision-making. It provides a common language so that school district personnel and emergency responders are able to communicate and be understood during a critical incident. The ICS is designed to reduce the problems of miscommunication and to increase coordination during an emergency.

Unified Command is a team process, allowing agencies with primary responsibility for an incident to establish a common set of incident objectives or priorities at the site. The kind of incident and the location of the incident dictate the composition of the unified command. It is important to note that only the key agencies with primary jurisdiction should occupy unified command positions.

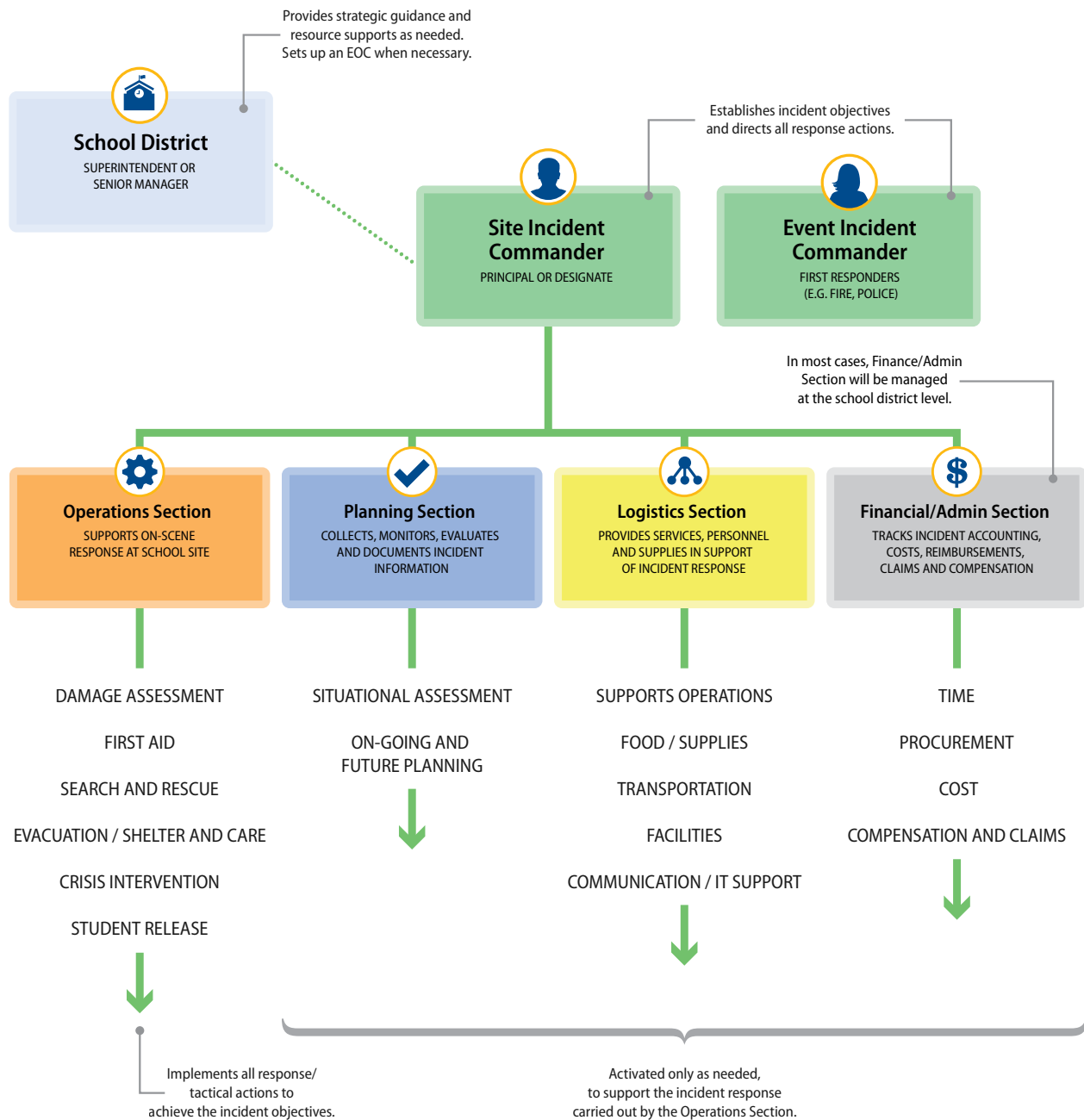
The ICS structure shown on the following page provides the hierarchy of command within a school or single district site such as a resource center, board office or maintenance building. The extent to which district level involvement is required will depend on the scope of the particular disaster or emergency, for example if multiple school sites are impacted.

The ICS structure is scalable and can be adapted to the situation. A small scale emergency may only require a site incident commander and operations section. These functional roles may be carried out by a single individual or several people. A large scale emergency may require all the functional roles depicted in the figure on the following page.

Best Practice: When unified command is established at a site, it should operate from only one command post and with only one set of objectives in which each agency plays its particular role.



THE INCIDENT COMMAND STRUCTURE



Graphic adapted from *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation* by Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz, Polimedia Publishing, 2013 and *Sample School Emergency Operations Plan*, FEMA, 2011 <https://www.preparingtexas.org/Resources/documents/TDEM%20Training/G-364%20Toolkit/SamplePlan.pdf>



Site Incident Commander

Typically the principal or his/her designate, this individual is in charge of all school responses during an emergency, working in concert with district/school staff and first responders to achieve the common goal of keeping students, staff and visitors safe.



Event Incident Commander

The Event Incident Commander is the lead first responder to an emergency event such as a fire or earthquake. This individual is responsible for assessing and responding to the situation from an expert's perspective and working closely with the Site Incident Commander to provide fast and efficient response. The Event Incident Commander advises the Site incident Commander on issues related to student and staff safety.



Operations Section

The Operations function lies at the heart of any response related to an event, supporting the on-scene response. This includes damage assessment, first aid, evacuation/shelter and care, crisis intervention, and student release.

The Operations Section oversees the safety and security of the building, such as shutting off gas, electricity and water to the school as required, establishes first aid stations and ensures that staff and supplies are deployed to aid in the safety and comfort of students.



Planning Section

The Planning Section collects, monitors, evaluates and documents incident information. This section is also responsible for on-going and future planning.



Logistics Section

The Logistics Section supports all response activities by supplying services, personnel, and supplies.. This includes food/supplies, transportation, facilities, deployment of staff teams and communication/IT support.



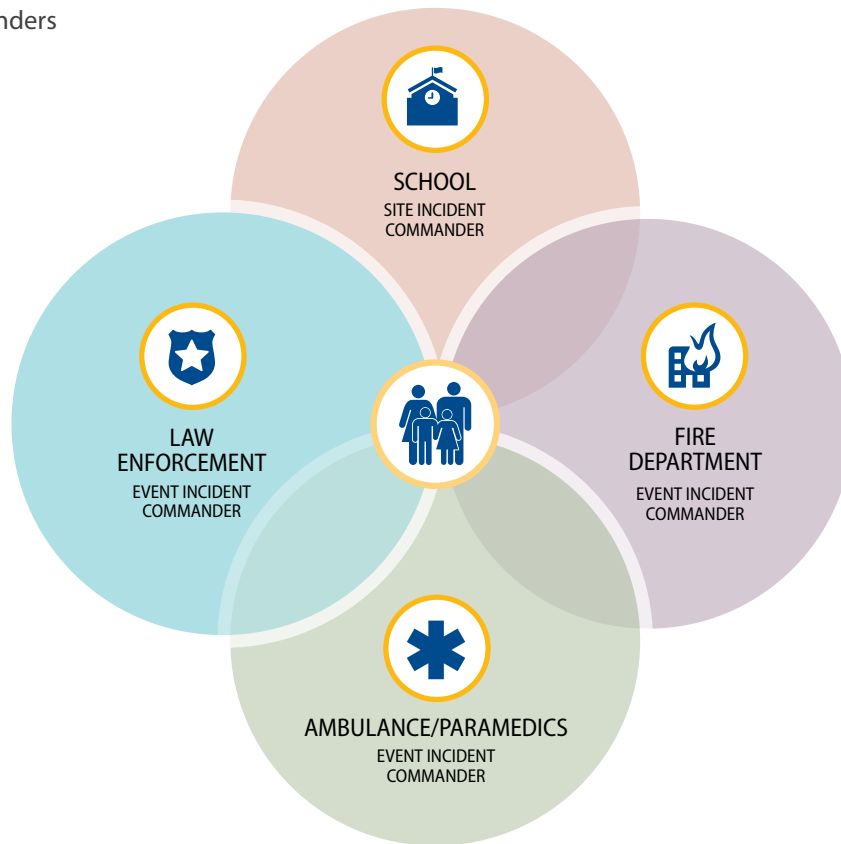
Finance Section

The Finance Section tracks incident accounting, costs, reimbursements, claims and compensations. In most cases, this function will be at the district level and will not need to be undertaken at the school level.

[MINI-CASE]

A fire breaks out in an automotive shop in a secondary school. In response to a 911 call, fire, ambulance and police arrive at the school. A single individual from each service will be designated as a commander in charge of their areas of expertise and responsibility. They will share command with the site incident commander (principal or designate).

The Four Commanders



The four commanders in this example will work together within their different legal and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan and interact effectively to meet the goals of saving lives and minimizing damage. Decisions are made in a consultative fashion, ensuring that each decision is made with the best and most information available at the time. Respect for each area of expertise is maintained so that the final decision pertaining to an area of expertise belongs to the commander in charge of that area.

[MINI-CASE]

Following a minor fire in a school, the Site Incident Commander (principal or designate) would consult with the Event Incident Commanders to decide whether the school is safe to re-occupy. The decision to allow students and staff back into a school is the principal's decision but it is made in consultation with first responders.

It is important to consider that during an emergency, first responders may not be able to reach the school and so schools need to be prepared to manage on their own for an indefinite amount of time. In this instance, there is no unified command and the principal, calling on any nearby aid, may be required to act as a single commander for the school.

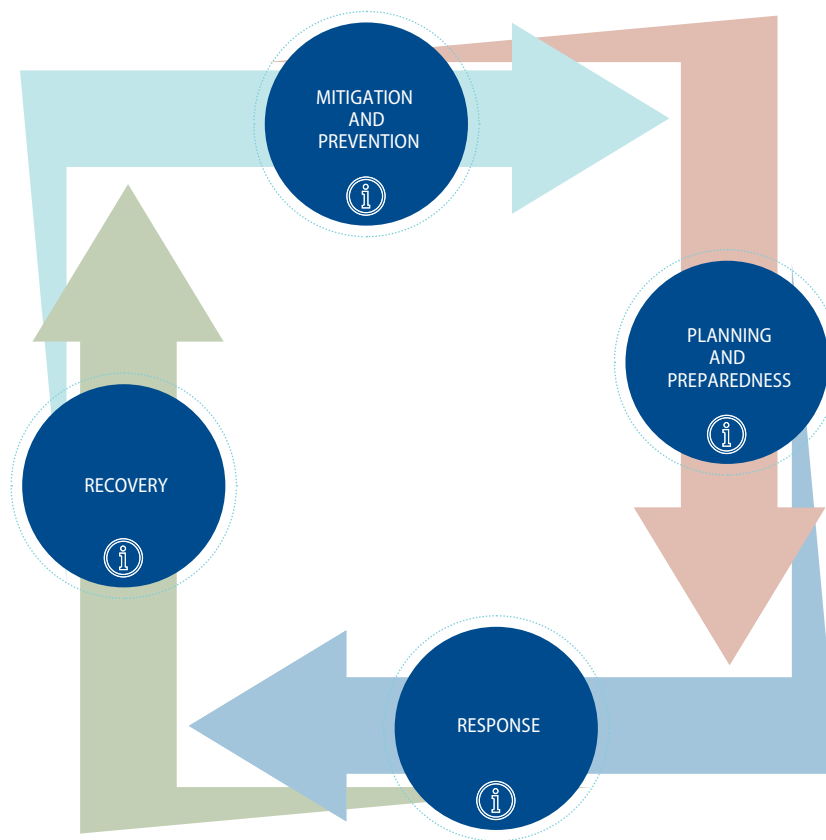
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Emergency management involves not only the actual response to an emergency, but also a continuous process of preparation, testing/practice and revision. The process can be imagined as an ongoing cycle involving four major aspects, each of which informs the others. In real terms, there may be response activities coinciding with recovery or mitigation activities taking place at the same time as planning. There is, therefore, no clear delineation between each phase, rather they are interconnected and fluid.

The following section of the guide provides an overview of the emergency management cycle and how each of the four phases (Mitigation and Prevention, Planning and Preparedness, Response, Recovery) applies to school emergency management.

Emergency Management — an ongoing process to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an incident.

Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Emergency and continuity management program (2014).



MITIGATION AND PREVENTION

Mitigation and prevention include actions to eliminate or reduce hazards and their impacts should an emergency occur. This is an ongoing process, needing constant monitoring and updating. Any school emergency management plan (SEMP) should include actions that need to be taken on an ongoing basis to ensure that schools and other district sites such as resource centres are as safe as possible and that supplies are kept current and in sufficient numbers. Schools should develop a hazard mitigation plan, which involves identifying hazards, and assessing and reducing risks. The *Templates* section of this guide provides some resources for this work. Schools should identify possible threats and hazards, assess the risk and vulnerabilities posed by those threats and hazards and then compare and prioritize them.

The US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in its publication, *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, page 36, has identified four categories of hazards including biological, natural, technological and human-caused events. The descriptions below are adapted from this publication.

Human-caused

Arising from a deliberate, intentional act to threaten or harm others including terrorist acts, armed violence or bomb threats

EXAMPLES:



Bomb Threat



Fire



Active Shooter



Dangerous Intruder

Natural

Arising from events such as severe weather, earthquakes or naturally-occurring floods

EXAMPLES:



Weather Events



Flood



Earthquake



Avalanche

Technological

Arising from the result of technological or industrial accidents, infrastructure failure or certain human activities which do not result from an intention to harm, including such events as mill explosions, train derailments, water contamination from pesticides or fertilizers.

EXAMPLES:



Power Failure



Explosion



Chemical Leak



Gas Leak

Biological

Arising from contaminated food or infectious diseases, including Salmonella, Botulism, Meningitis, Hepatitis A or Ebola.

EXAMPLES:



Communicable Disease



Infectious Animal



Contaminated Foods



Contaminated Water

Mitigation involves assessment of factors that might come into play with respect to these hazards and then working to lessen or remove the threat. There are four types of threat/hazard assessments that are relevant to the school setting in helping to identify areas that can be mitigated. They have been adapted from a US Department of Education publication, *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, June 2013.



Site assessment is largely related to anticipating natural disasters and ensuring that the site is as safe as possible in the event of an emergency. Examples of actions that can be taken include securing large pieces of furniture to the walls, securing hazardous chemicals in locked cabinets, seismic upgrades, flood-proofing protocols, installing CCV cameras, ensuring clear building access and egress for all, inspecting building integrity, ensuring emergency vehicle access, identifying natural or technological hazards, numbering entrances with large numbers or letters as identification for first responders.



Culture and climate assessment involves taking steps to reduce the probability of violent incidents that are instigated from within the school community. By determining the overall tone of the school through a student and staff survey you can, if improvement is needed, work to create an environment in which students are more likely to succeed, feel safe and report threats. By making the effort to ensure that every student has at least one adult in the school who knows them well and with whom they feel a connection, a school can build a strong, resilient and connected community which can go a long way to preventing the threat of, or actual acts, of violence. The Expect Respect And a Safe Education (ERASE) training provides more information on this subject.



Violence threat risk assessment (VTRA) is a multi-disciplinary process used by school and district staff to investigate specific behaviours, for example threats to harm self or others. Direct threats of harm or even information that someone may be exhibiting worrisome behaviours or could be a danger can lead to a VTRA being initiated. The school and district can activate a VTRA to determine the level of concern/threat and then respond accordingly. The use of VTRA in these situations is discussed more fully in the ERASE training sessions provided by the Ministry to districts, independent schools and First Nations schools.



Capacity assessment involves ensuring that staff roles and responsibilities have been appropriately assigned; that relevant documents are compiled and stored in both hard and soft copy; that sufficient and appropriate resources including food, medicines, water, blankets, etc. have been purchased, inventoried, and stored; that equipment is supplied and inventoried; and that first aid stations are sufficient for the size of the school.

Mitigation actions involve the structural and non-structural approaches taken to eliminate or limit a hazard's presence; people's exposure; or interactions with people, property, and the environment. The emphasis on sustained actions to reduce long-term risk differentiates mitigation from those tasks that are required to survive an emergency safely.

Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans, FEMA, 2010



Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

A threat maker may not actually pose a risk to a target or targets; instead the threat may be a cry for help. The question for school staff is how do we determine the intent of the threat maker?

No two cases are the same. Each incident must be treated as unique.

The strength of this model lies in the use of multi-disciplinary teams that investigate and evaluate all factors and contexts of the student's life and the specific incident of concern.





Stage 1: Data Collection and Immediate Risk-Reducing Intervention

Each school should establish a school-based VTRA team also known as a Stage 1 VTRA team, which includes, at a minimum, the principal, a school counselor and a member of the local police force. The principal will take the lead and is ultimately responsible for the safety of students. The team will work collaboratively to make the best decisions possible with the information gathered. When a principal activates a school-based VTRA team, she must inform the school district Safe School Coordinator and the superintendent. The district may not become directly involved at this stage but will be available for consultation and support should the situation warrant it.

Stage 2: Comprehensive Risk Assessment

After the initial level of risk is assessed and immediate risk-reducing interventions have occurred, a further risk assessment may be required. A district or Stage 2 VTRA team includes wider community representation. It is focused on collecting further data beyond the initial data collected by the school-based VTRA team. A district VTRA team includes members of the school-based VTRA team plus mental health professionals, child protection workers, probation workers and others as needed.

VTRA, whether Stage 1 or 2, has four basic steps.

-  1. Identify worrisome or threatening behaviour. The person making the observation initiates the VTRA process.
-  2. Immediately, the VTRA team conducts a violence threat risk assessment by collecting relevant data. The VTRA process does not use a profile or a checklist of behaviours to identify an individual who may be on the pathway to violence, but makes use of information gathered from social media, friends, parents, teachers, and others. Data to determine initial level of risk can often be collected in two hours or less, especially with the use of technology.
-  3. Using the data, determine if a threat maker actually poses a risk. This involves determining how credible the threat is and whether or not the threat maker has the resources and motivation to carry out the threat.
-  4. Intervene appropriately by implementing risk-reducing interventions. The interventions are designed to protect the threat maker as well as any potential targets.

Best Practice: School districts and authorities should work with their community partners to develop Community Threat Assessment Protocols. These protocols are essential to the successful implementation of VTRA. The protocols set out VTRA activation procedures, roles and responsibilities and communication protocols, including information sharing.



Fortunately, the majority of threat makers do not pose a risk to others. However, all threats must be taken seriously and assessed in a timely manner.

PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

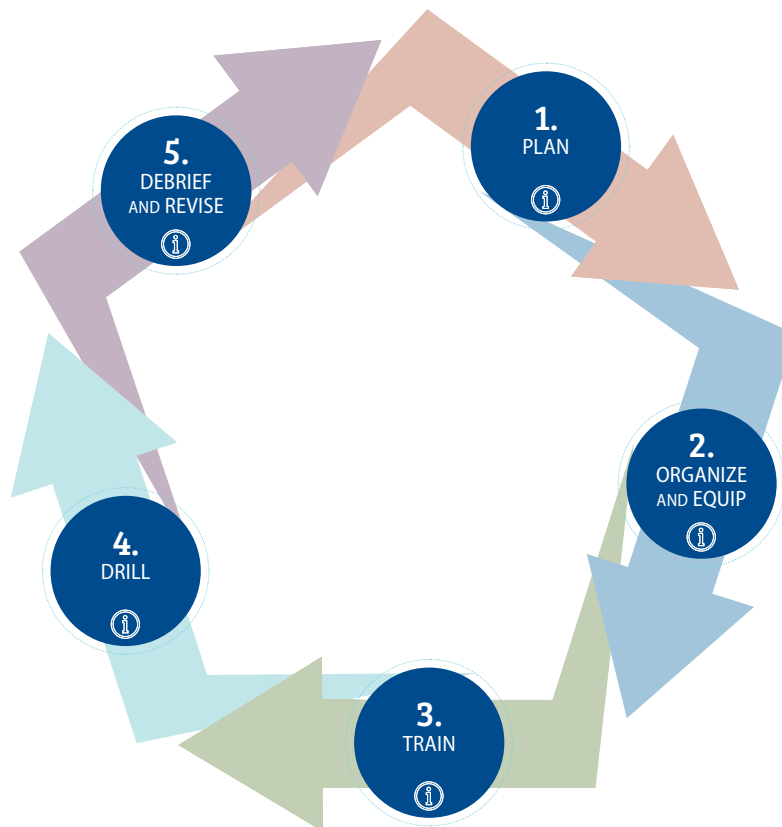
Preparedness and planning involve advanced measures to ensure that processes, agencies and individuals are ready to respond to an emergency. It is critical to analyse the risks and hazards that can impact a school and develop detailed plans to respond that involve working with representatives of all parties who will be impacted, including community first responders. Training and organizing staff and volunteers are critical.

While school and district site plans should align with the processes in this guide, they must also take into account the specific contexts of each school or site.

Schools in urban and rural settings, for example, will have quite different contexts within which they develop their plans. The distances that separate rural schools from student homes, other schools, and the district office or even from first responders may mean that consideration must be given to planning for a longer time during which the school alone will be responsible for students. Taking such considerations into account during the planning phase is vital.











Preparedness involves establishing authorities and responsibilities for emergency actions and garnering the resources to support them: a jurisdiction must assign or recruit staff for emergency management duties and designate or procure facilities, equipment, and other resources for carrying out assigned duties. This investment in emergency management requires upkeep: the staff must receive training and the facilities and equipment must be maintained in working order. To ensure that the jurisdiction's investment in emergency management personnel and resources can be relied upon when needed, there must be a program of tests, drills, and exercises.

The figure below has been adapted from *Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans*, CPG 101, FEMA, 2010. It illustrates how planning for emergency response is cyclical and evolving over time and in response to new information. The importance of each aspect of the cycle cannot be overstated.



Developing a School Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

The school planning process should include the following ten steps.

-  **1. Establish a School Planning Committee**
-  **2. Develop a school profile**
-  **3. Pre-assign roles according to the ICS structure**
-  **4. Develop response protocols**
-  **5. Develop a student release plan**
-  **6. Develop a communications plan**
-  **7. Develop a continuity of operations plan (COOP)**
-  **8. Identify and resource necessary equipment and supplies**
-  **9. Conduct training and drills**
-  **10. Debrief and revise**

1. Establish a School Planning Committee.

Preparing a School Emergency Management Plan is a big task and bringing representatives from all areas of school life and from the community to the planning process is beneficial. While all the members of the committee will add expertise and value to the planning process, the responsibility for the safety of students and staff in the school lies with the principal and ultimate responsibility belongs to the board of education and superintendent.

Membership on the planning committee should include:

- **principal/vice-principal,**
- **support staff representative from each relevant area – EAs, custodians, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, clerical staff,**
- **teaching staff representative,**
- **parent representatives,**
- **first responders (fire, police, ambulance),**
- **student representatives, as appropriate, and**
- **tenants as appropriate.**

The names and current contact information for each member should be included in the SEMP and should be kept up-to-date.



2. Develop a school profile.

- **School demographics (e.g. number of students, students with special needs, staff).**
- **Building tenants such as daycares and after school care, StrongStart BC Centres, after school activities including Scouts, fitness classes etc. Consider including these groups in your emergency planning committee. Include in your profile:**
 - ✓ names and contact information of tenants,
 - ✓ days and times of use,
 - ✓ identification of mobility-challenged tenants, and
 - ✓ additional appropriate information.
- **Contact information for key individuals with responsibilities under the incident command system, as well as other emergency personnel.**
- **Hazard analysis and risk assessment/mitigation.**
- **Floor plan of the school showing any potential hazards, evacuation routes, assembly areas, gas and water shut-off, eyewash stations, supply station, first aid stations, location and number/letter of entrances, etc.**
- **Map of the surrounding area (Google maps or other are useful tools) showing any potential risks, hazards, evacuation routes and assembly areas. This part of the plan pays attention to the particular surroundings of a school including student/parent reunification sites or designated community assembly areas.**

Best Practice: The school profile should be shared with first responders, however the information on the school floor plan and identification of hazards is proprietary and should not be a part of the publicly available emergency plan. Such information should be carefully guarded and password protected and shared on a need to know basis – staff and local first responders.

Best Practice: Work with your local first responders when planning for emergencies and provide them with information regarding: staging areas, pertinent building features, school contacts, floor plans, aerial photos, maps and lockdown procedures. For more information, visit <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cp-pc/safe-secur/index-eng.htm>

[MINI-CASE]

Schools near major ports and transportation corridors such as rail lines must take particular care to plan for industrial accidents. Schools located on a flood plain should pay attention to dangers associated with flooding or even tsunamis. All hazards should be anticipated but those that are most likely will be a particular focus.





3. Assign staff to roles according to the ICS command structure and establish a school-based VTRA team.

As part of a team approach, the Site Incident Commander should review the emergency response roles under the headings of Operations, Logistics, and Planning and identify staff members who are most suited to each role. A valuable exercise at the beginning of the year is to survey all staff regarding special skills that might be useful in an emergency.

- Staff are pre-assigned to emergency response roles as early as possible in the emergency planning process.
- Assignments are made based on the best use of staff talents and qualifications. A sample staff survey is included in the **Templates** section of this guide.
- Assignments are reviewed annually at the start of the school year to address changes in staffing and other adjustments.
- Staff members are cross-trained, so that each person is familiar with more than one role. This allows for individuals to fill multiple roles and to fill in for employees who may not be at the school during an emergency.
- Staff members should plan for the possibility that they may not be able to return to their home for some time following an emergency. If a situation arises in which a staff member is unable to make arrangements for dependents who may be left alone and vulnerable after a disaster, consideration must be given to how best to address the competing needs of the staff member and the school community.
- A school-based VTRA team is established to assess threats at the school level. The team should include the principal or designate, clinician (e.g. psychologist, counsellor) and police. Others may be assigned as deemed necessary.



4. Develop response protocols.

The most commonly used response protocols are drop/cover/hold on, evacuate, lockdown, lockout (hold and secure), and shelter in place. These will be described much more fully in the section on Response. It is important that the protocols be utilized in context. For example, in the event of an earthquake, it is generally expected that the response will first be “drop/cover/hold on” followed by evacuation. However, it may be that the situation is such that returning to or remaining in the building or one part of the building is safer than being outside. An evacuation following a mild earthquake that occurred during a blizzard may not be an appropriate action. Each plan should account for the best interests of the students and staff in the particular circumstance. Each plan should consider the unique hazards associated with that school, which may require specific responses.

Best Practice: Schools and school districts should post key elements of emergency plans on their websites and make school personnel, parents/guardians and students aware of the plans.



5. Develop a student release plan.

School plans must include a student release plan outlining how, when and to whom students will be released from the school during or after an emergency. This process includes sending information letters and student release forms home to parents at the beginning of the school year or when new students register in the school. This information should be kept in several locations, both in hard copy and electronically. For example, the student release form can be duplicated and a copy placed in student lanyards to help with triage and student release. See the *Templates* section of the guide for templates that can be used for student release purposes.

The student release plan should also consider how students will be reunited with their parents or guardians. Plans should include pre-assigned sites for reunification and parents should know the location of the primary and secondary sites. It is important for schools to be prepared for both small-scale and large-scale reunification. A “double-gated system” for reuni-

fication is effective. See the *Templates* section of the guide for a sample student release map/gated system. In this system, parents arrive at the check-in “gate” but do not enter. They then move to the release “gate” to pick up their child/ren.”

Staff with roles in the release of students should practice these procedures at least once each school year. This should include procedures to account for students and staff, to communicate with parents and to dismiss students to participating parents or alternate guardians. These drills could be tied into existing community emergency drills, such as the Great BC ShakeOut earthquake drill held each October.

Best Practices: Principals, school staff and parents should talk together about the need to have an orderly and regulated release process that protects students. This should occur prior to a drill. Understanding why certain processes are in place will, to the extent possible, allay fears.

Critically important is the need to keep current legal documentation regarding cases where the legal guardian or parent is assigned by the court.



6. Develop a communications plan.

Communication is a critical part of emergency response and coordination. A SEMP must describe how the school will communicate internally and externally during and after an emergency.

Internal communications refers to communication within the school site and school district and includes students, staff, tenants, board of education members, and school district senior management. The internal communications strategy should clearly outline what information will be communicated, when, how and by whom.

External communications refers to communication with any individuals or groups outside the school site/school district and includes parents, first responders, local authorities, business and community organizations, provincial agencies, and media. The external communications strategy should outline when and how information will be communicated.



First Responders. The Site Incident Commander will maintain communication with first responders during an incident. Transfer of command will occur when first responders arrive on the scene to assume management of the incident under their jurisdiction.



Parents/guardians. The plan should specifically outline when and how the school/school district will communicate with parents/guardians in the event of a critical incident.



Media. The communication plan should specifically outline how media requests will be handled and who will act as spokesperson for the school site. In smaller districts, the principal and/or the superintendent may be the spokesperson for a school incident. In larger districts, there may be a designated spokesperson or media relations manager who speaks on behalf of the school and district. It is important to understand your district’s protocols and practices with respect to media relations and to include this in your communications plan. It is equally important that, if a media relations specialist is not available, media training for the spokesperson be provided. The communications plan should also outline how social media will be used as a vehicle for communicating externally and who will assume this responsibility.

Communication tools should include text messaging, emails, phone trees, intranet, social media and other appropriate technologies. It should also consider how schools will communicate in the event of a power failure, loss of cell connectivity or wifi and/or a landline telephone failure. Finally, there should be someone on staff who is able to act as technology support.

Best Practice: Consider how MyEducationBC can be used to support emergency management, in particular student release protocols and internal/external communication in the event of an emergency. The new system offers a parent portal and student accounts and is accessible from mobile devices and tablets. It also supports customization and can be used in the following ways to support emergency management:

- **electronic record of student information,**
- **electronic communication with parents and students via e-mail and portal features.**

Best Practice: Your communications plan should clearly establish who will communicate with the media and who should not, as well as establish who will prepare and approve any external communications.



7. Develop a continuity of operations plan (COOP).

The objectives of a continuity of operations plan are to restore critical systems and the learning environment as soon as possible. Planning for the continuity of a school system in the aftermath of a disaster is a complex task. Information that is needed to continue the work of the staff and student learning, even if school resumes at an alternate site, should be available digitally, backed up, and stored on a remote server..



8. Identify and resource necessary equipment and supplies.

Part of the planning process includes identifying documentation, equipment and resources to provide first aid, shelter, comfort, basic rescue and care for students and staff for a period that could range from a few hours to a few days. Work with your parent committee and community partners in gathering and safely storing equipment and resources, which could include items listed in the *Templates* section.

All documentation should include current student, staff and volunteer lists with pertinent information – contact information, medical information, special considerations etc. This should also be included on an information card that is placed in a lanyard for each person in the school to wear in the event that it is necessary. All documents relating to the SEMP should be available in a number of modalities and at a number of sites. Hard copies should be filed in the school office, with the district and at one or two other sites that make sense for the context of each school. Electronic copies should be available on hard drives and online for access by handheld devices.

Best Practice: Produce an information card for each person who is regularly in the school, including staff. On this card, include vital information such as medical and special needs as well as student release data. Confidential information can be kept private by having it inside a folded card, which is placed inside a lanyard. Ensure that these lanyards are kept with the teacher who has closest contact with the student.



9. Conduct training and drills.

It is important that everyone directly affected, including staff, students and parents, knows about the plan and how they are to act during an emergency. Training for both students and staff before you carry out drills will ensure that responses during an actual emergency are implemented calmly and efficiently.

Prior to carrying out specific drills, all students and staff should be educated about the nature of emergencies and the need for implementing procedures to respond to them effectively. Classroom discussion should include knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of all parties as well as understanding the overarching goals of the process. Staff members should know the SEMP thoroughly enough to be able to make decisions, if necessary, to deviate from a typical response. Drills comprise the practical implementation of training – an opportunity to put theory into practice in a safe environment – with the result that understanding and capacity are improved and anxiety is reduced.

Training and drills are critical to successful emergency response. The time taken to educate all members of the school community and to practice responses will lessen anxiety for all participants. However, it is important to consider the timing and context of drills so that students and staff are best able to learn from the experiences.

For example, there is a critical period following a disaster in which emotions will be heightened and even a drill may cause distress to students and staff which can diminish learning. Your instinct may be to move immediately to a lockdown drill following media reports of a school shooting, yet this may create intense problems for students and staff. Delaying the drills to allow time to pass and emotions to heal may be the wiser decision.

Another consideration relates to the circumstances within the school itself. If the school plans to practice evacuation responses, the principal should ensure that any necessary equipment such as wheelchair lifts, are in good working order and that the staff, who have responsibility for its operation are prepared to use it. It is not sufficient that students in wheelchairs be wheeled to the top of the stairwell and left there when all others have successfully exited the building.

Finally, consult with local law enforcement when conducting lockdown drills and include them in ways that are sensitive to the ages of the students. Police arriving in full response gear may cause trauma to young children while it may impress upon older students the seriousness of the drill and the situations the response is intended to address.

Each situation must be considered in context.

Best Practice:

- **BC Fire Code regulations require that fire evacuations be exercised at schools at least six times each school year: three times in the fall and three times in the spring.**
- **The BC Earthquake Alliance recommends that, in addition to the fire drills, there should be three earthquake drills per school year.**
- **The RCMP recommends two lockdown drills per year.**
- **Drills should include variations such as taking alternate routes in the event that a usual route cannot be used. Other variations could include situations where students are not in the classroom, i.e., during lunch or class changes.**
- **Finally, schools and districts are encouraged to involve parents, volunteers and first responders in these practices, especially if they are to involve student release and a review of the exercise.**



The first and best line of defense in any emergency is a well-trained, highly alert school staff and student body.



10. Debrief and revise.

To close the emergency planning cycle, debriefing the event is important to inform the planners about how to improve mitigation, preparedness and response. Debriefing should become a routine part of emergency response drills as well as being an important aspect of recovery from an actual emergency. For schools and school districts, gathering information about what did and did not work well during a drill or response to an emergency ensures common understandings of how to improve.

- ✓ Debriefing after a drill should take place as quickly as possible to ensure that the experience is fresh in people's minds.
- ✓ Include all parties in a debrief session so that all perspectives are considered.
- ✓ Consult with first responders or local authorities, if necessary, to gather information related to best practice.
- ✓ Revise the plan or mitigate as necessary to improve the response for the next drill.

Best Practice: At the start of the school year:

- have the emergency planning committee review and update the emergency plan and site assessments,
- ensure that supplies and equipment are replenished as needed,
- ensure that staff assignments are updated to reflect changes,
- arrange for staff training,
- prepare parent information regarding emergency planning and student release, and
- ensure that new students or staff who may have special needs are accommodated.



Persons with Special Needs

Students and staff with special needs may require extra support in the event of an emergency. Schools should have plans in place to support these individuals, including their evacuation. In planning for emergency responses, schools must identify any students or staff who may have need for:

- specialized feeding devices,
- personalized management of toileting and any specialized care required (colostomy etc.),
- administration of medications (e.g. insulin),
- stocking medical supplies such as syringes or colostomy bags,
- caring for service animals,
- providing power for electrical devices such as respirators and wheelchairs, and
- other considerations specific to individual needs related to behavioural concerns.



Care must be taken to ensure that persons with special needs will be able to access the same level of care as others. It is important to adapt plans for each identified individual and to keep those plans current. If a staff member or student with special needs arrives at the school after the emergency planning has been completed and they require special consideration in the plan, then this must be done as soon as possible. These individualized plans may involve assigning one adult to each individual to act with and for them during the emergency response.

Off-Site Activities

Students and staff may not always be on school property when an emergency occurs. There may be times when school is in session but students and staff may be out of the building – recess, lunch breaks, PE classes, field trips or attending tournaments or other events. School plans should provide for guidance in the event of the need for response during school sponsored events that take place off school property.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- ✓ first aid kits in school buses or in cars if staff are driving students,
- ✓ first aid training for staff who are driving students or taking students on field trips, and
- ✓ providing for cell phones and portable chargers for staff who supervise students off-site.

Non-District Groups

Emergencies happen at all times of the night and day, on school days and weekends. Often, schools rent space to outside groups (e.g. community programs, child care). It is imperative that your school plan considers these outside groups and how they will respond to school incidents after hours.

Best Practice: Consider inviting members of these groups to join your planning committee or to develop their own plans that correspond with the school's plans. Include the groups in training and debriefing sessions and keep them informed of any matters relevant to their presence on school property.



RESPONSE

When an emergency occurs, it is too late to turn to this guide. Everyone should know their role and set the plan into motion. Response involves implementation of a SEMP, and includes the following actions:

It is important to note that some of these actions may occur simultaneously and may take place in a different order. These actions serve as a guide for initiating an emergency response.



Assess the situation

Scale, severity, resources needed etc.



Establish command

Site Incident Commander takes control.



Determine and activate appropriate emergency response

Consider the 5 key responses and the nature of the situation.



Activate school team

Pre-assigned ICS functions.



Execute the plan

Put plan into action. Liaise with the first responders.



Contact school district or authority

Alert school district staff as quickly as possible.



Manage the incident

Focus on student and staff safety/comfort, deploy human and other resources, manage student release etc.



Review

Review critical incident response and consider what worked and what could be improved.



The onset of an emergency creates a need for time-sensitive actions to save lives and property, as well as for action to begin stabilizing the situation so that the jurisdiction can regroup. Such response actions include notifying emergency management personnel of the crisis, warning and evacuating or sheltering the population if possible, keeping the population informed, rescuing individuals and providing medical treatment, maintaining the rule of law, assessing damage, addressing mitigation issues that arise from response activities, and even requesting help from outside the jurisdiction.

(Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning, FEMA, 9/96)

Emergencies happen along a continuum from mild to severe. A response to a minor emergency, such as a power outage, a storm or a localized flood due to a burst pipe, will require a low-level response which may very well be confined to one school or site, though reporting to the district and Ministry are still required. A major event such as a major earthquake or a chemical spill following a train derailment will require a massive response with support from the district level and may last days. How the district becomes involved will be considered in the next section of this guide.



Five All-Hazard Emergency Responses

In an all-hazards approach, there are five key responses that can be appropriately implemented in the event of most emergencies. It is important to know that the responses are context specific and flexible. A decision to evacuate a school following an earthquake is not automatic. The decision must be made in light of the circumstances – damage to the building, the weather and other considerations.

These five responses are:

1 Drop-Cover-Hold On

Most people are familiar with the drop-cover-hold on response as it is the recommended immediate response for earthquakes. Drop-Cover-Hold On may be followed by a second response such as evacuation or shelter-in-place. However, it is also appropriate in the event of an explosion that causes buildings to shake or materials to fall from structures. The result is that structures become unstable and materials can fall, explode or disintegrate.

EXAMPLES:



Earthquake



Explosion

2 Evacuate

When a building or area becomes unsafe, evacuation may be called for. The most common event requiring evacuation is fire, but other circumstances may also require evacuation. These include floods or a bomb threat within the school.

EXAMPLES:



Fire



Bomb threat



Chemical accident



Post-earthquake



Explosion or threat of explosion



Tsunami

3 Lockdown

Lockdown is used to prevent intruders from entering occupied areas of a building or when it is necessary to isolate students and staff from a danger outside or within the building. Situations include active shooters or dangerous intruders. Staff and students are restricted in their movements to a specific area which is then protected through locking of exterior and classroom doors and covering windows. There may be other areas of the school that are capable of being locked down and these may also be designated as lockdown locations.

EXAMPLES:



Dangerous intruder



Active shooter



Barricaded suspect

Do not use code words when ordering one of these responses. Use the correct terms – drop/cover/hold on, evacuate, lockdown, lockout or shelter in place.

4 Lockout (also known as Hold and Secure)

A lockout is used when it is necessary to secure a school because there is an emergency situation occurring outside the school. The exterior doors are locked and monitored to allow students and staff to enter but otherwise remain locked. Once inside, no one leaves the building. An active police incident in a neighbourhood would trigger a lockout. Confirm with local police when it is safe to lift the lockout.

EXAMPLE:



Police incident in area e.g. robbery or any serious criminal offence in close proximity to a school or where a suspect has been pursued by police and/or on foot near a school

5 Shelter in Place

A shelter in place order is used when personal safety is considered to be in danger if anyone leaves the school. It is usually associated with an environmental hazard where hazardous materials are released into the atmosphere. For example, a chemical spill or gas leak in the immediate vicinity of the school. Shelter in place might also be used in the case of a wild animal in the vicinity of the school (e.g. cougar or bear).

In the case of environmental hazards, steps may need to be taken to ensure the school is airtight – turning off furnaces, air conditioning, closing fume hoods and exhaust systems, covering and taping windows – and that the air is safe to breath.

EXAMPLES:



**Environmental events
e.g. chemical or hazardous
materials spill external
to the school**



**Weather events
e.g. sudden blizzard**



**Any situation where
evacuation may pose
a greater risk than
shelter in place**



**Dangerous wild animal
e.g. cougar, bear**



Dirty bombs



Missing child



Gas leaks

Not all emergencies require one of the five responses listed here. In fact, epidemics or outbreaks of highly communicable diseases will need a very different type of response, which may include closing schools if the situation is serious enough. Typically, less drastic measures are sufficient.

[MINI-CASE]

A small outbreak of Hepatitis A in a Lower Mainland elementary school precipitated a rapid response to prevent further spread of the highly contagious disease. The school district and local health authority worked together to address the issue by facilitating a voluntary vaccination clinic at the school for students and staff who may have been exposed. This collaborative effort involved appropriate information sharing as authorized by the *Public Health Act* to ensure staff, students and their families could be contacted by the local health authority.

RECOVERY

A return to normalcy is not only important for the school community, but also for the broader community as it encourages the re-establishment of routine (e.g. families taking children to school, going to work etc.). It cannot be overstated that schools and districts must have recovery plans in place prior to a catastrophic event taking place. These plans need to consider how the school and/or district will bring the system back to normalcy and address the following five areas of recovery.

Recovery, including debriefing, is the effort to restore infrastructure and the social and economic life of a community to normal, but it should incorporate mitigation as a goal. For the short term, recovery may mean bringing necessary lifeline systems (e.g., power, communication, water and sewage, and transportation) up to an acceptable standard while providing for basic human needs (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter) and ensuring that the societal needs of individuals and the community are met (e.g., maintain the rule of law, provide crisis counseling, demonstrate that people do care and that help is becoming available). Once some stability is achieved, the jurisdiction can begin recovery efforts for the long term, restoring economic activity and rebuilding community facilities and family housing with attention to long-term mitigation needs.

Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning, FEMA, 1996



Five Aspects Of Recovery

The first four aspects of recovery are adapted from *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation* by Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz.

1. Emotional and Psychological Recovery: Responding to Trauma

Emotional and psychological recovery involves caring for the mental health of those individuals in the system who experienced or witnessed trauma, whether as a result of an emergency, disaster or critical incident. A crisis response may be contained within the system where it occurs and there may be adequate resources within the system to respond to it, as there is a high level of predictability concerning who will most likely be impacted. On the other hand, a traumatic event is often not contained within the system where it occurs and affects multiple systems. There may be inadequate resources within the system to respond and it must rely upon outside resources to respond to the magnitude of the event.

Regardless of the type of emergency, the people involved will inevitably experience distress. In the field of crisis response, multiple terms are used, often interchangeably, to describe events that are traumatic. Terms such as crisis, tragic event, critical incident, traumatic event and trauma are just a few of the common expressions. These expressions indicate that something has happened that would cause a state of mental, emotional and physical stress to individuals exposed to the situation.

Districts will normally have critical incident teams that support schools, students and staff when a traumatic event occurs. For most events, the internal district supports will be adequate. Districts may also request assistance from neighbouring districts or schools to provide personnel so that local staff can attend more closely to the needs of the students and staff. However, there are times when the event is so wide-spread or so devastating that external support will be required.

The effects of trauma may not be immediately discernable in individuals yet can result in serious illness such as Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. District staff may not be qualified to address such conditions, or if there are qualified staff available within the district, there may not be sufficient numbers to meet the needs. The remedy is that districts and schools recognize the need for external professional intervention and school districts should develop trauma response plans that consider the broader and longer term impact of the emergency or disaster.

Another concern for schools and districts when planning for emergencies is consideration of the larger role that a school can play in a community. In many cases, the school is the center of the community and is seen by the community as a place of refuge and support. In devastating situations, a community can become paralyzed by the extent of trauma. At these times, the schools and district need to embrace the community and work alongside organizations and individuals to help move the situation in a positive direction.

Finally, recognition must be given to the fact that some school or district staff may themselves be suffering severe trauma. Caring for those inside the system is also a responsibility that must be addressed.

Best Practice: In response to serious trauma, recovery may be beyond the capacity of a school and a district to respond adequately. Plan for such an eventuality by seeking assistance from other community resources where you may find expertise in trauma recovery. Organizations that deal with trauma or loss on a regular basis can provide support. Advance arrangements will prevent confusion if and when such support is required.



[MINI-CASE]

On a Saturday night in May 2014, a canoe carrying four young people from School District #10 (Arrow Lakes) overturned. One student was pulled from the water and pronounced dead at the hospital. The remaining three bodies were not immediately located and a recovery mission was instigated. Immediately after the incident, district staff were informed and a command centre was set up in the school where the students attended. Four community meetings were held with the RCMP, the first of which was held on Sunday afternoon to provide factual information to school staff and community members. School staff also used the time on Sunday to plan for Monday morning.

The trauma that was experienced within the school and the community was severe. Support services at the district were insufficient to meet the needs of the students and the adults in the community. Connections were made with Child and Youth Mental Health BC, neighbouring school districts, the regional college, and private practice clinicians, all of whom pitched in to help with the recovery. Because the adult community was as traumatized as the student population, support was provided to feed students, and to invite community members into the school processes. The Ministry of Health, through EMBC, Sherri Mohoruk (Ministry) and Theresa Campbell and Kevin Cameron (Safer Schools Together) all provided services and advice to support the community.

Debriefing sessions with EMBC and the Ministry were held in July and August.

2. Physical and Structural Recovery

Following a disaster, it may be necessary to repair or rebuild various structures in the district. For many this can extend the trauma as the return to normalcy is delayed. While the technical details of repair or rebuilding are generally the responsibility of staff at the district level, staff at the school level need to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that student and school life is as normal as can be and that students are supported through the construction transition.

3. Continuity of Operations

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is implemented when schools are closed temporarily or inaccessible. The intent of the plan is to ensure the continuation of critical school district services for an extended duration of time following the initial emergency or threat. This duration of time may range from a few hours to many days or even months. The COOP outlines steps and actions necessary to resume essential academic, business and physical services after an incident as quickly as possible.

Communities that have suffered serious trauma have discovered that reopening schools is a critical part of community healing. Once schools are operating normally, the rest of the community can begin to return to normal as well.

4. Restoration of Academic Learning

The primary purpose of schools is the education of our students. The restoration of academic learning may involve temporary arrangements and special accommodations depending on the nature of the emergency. If schools cannot be opened in a timely manner, arrangements should be made to have students attend school at alternative sites or to meet with teachers once or twice a week to pick up and drop off homework. The intent is that learning will be disrupted for the least amount of time. This must be tempered, however, with a need to care for and attend to the emotional well-being of students and staff and this may delay a full return to routine.

[MINI-CASE] During a period of wild fires near Oliver, a school was damaged and unsafe. While it was being repaired, the younger students would meet their teachers in a nearby church to pick up learning packages. Later in the week, the students would return to hand in their work and pick up a new package.

5. Debrief

Debriefing after an actual emergency is on a very different scale than debriefing after a drill. Not only will the debrief provide vital information to the planners, it will also be an opportunity for those involved to talk about their experience. This means that emotions will be very close to the surface and care must be taken in how the debriefing sessions are characterized and facilitated. Employ the services of professionals if necessary.

Also recognize that a serious emergency such as is contemplated in this guide does not affect just the school. Trauma can be felt far beyond the school, creating ripples throughout an entire community. Debriefing with all those persons who were impacted by, or instrumental in carrying out the response, is critical and, while the school or district is not solely responsible, they can play an important role in helping to heal the community. When planning for debriefing, consider:

- **balancing the amount of time between the event and the debrief by caring for the emotional needs of the participants. While there is a need to ensure good, accurate recall, debriefing, especially when an event has been particularly traumatic, should not displace the need to ensure that the individuals who have been affected as victims or responders, have had sufficient time to begin to heal. In these cases, do not rush to debrief.**
- **including all those who were involved in or impacted by the situation – students, staff, first responders, volunteers, community members – in the debriefing/feedback process.**
- **using the feedback to improve mitigation, planning, response and recovery efforts and to communicate with community.**

Best Practice: The school or district may wish to hold a number of debriefing sessions with a variety of participants and objectives.











DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Districts have two responsibilities related to emergency planning. Each board office or site other than a school must have an emergency management plan, similar to a school plan, which is structured on ICS protocols. As well, districts should establish an emergency operations centre to coordinate and manage large-scale emergencies. Both processes are described below. Independent schools will not necessarily need to establish an emergency operations centre as the school, which is often a stand-alone entity, will be responsible for all aspects of emergency management. However, in independent systems such as the Catholic system, which has a well-defined structure beyond the school level, an emergency operations centre may be necessary to coordinate response and resources.

DISTRICT PLANNING PROCESS

Emergencies such as fires or bomb threats at a board office or maintenance building may not involve students but still require a response that is structured according to the information provided earlier in this guide. Establish a planning committee, which includes both district personnel and local authorities to:

-  **1. develop a site profile for the district office or other district sites, including maintenance buildings or resource centres,**
-  **2. pre-assign roles at each site according to the ICS structure and establish a district VTRA team,**
-  **3. develop response protocols,**
-  **4. develop a communications plan,**
-  **5. develop a continuity of operations plan (COOP),**
-  **6. identify and resource necessary equipment and supplies,**
-  **7. conduct training and drills, and**
-  **8. debrief and revise as needed.**

Best Practice: Boards of education should ensure they have appropriate emergency management policies in place to support the development of school and district level plans.

School district administrators should connect with the local emergency program coordinators in their municipalities to leverage planning expertise and resources.



DISTRICT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) – the physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central permanently established facility, perhaps at the district office or district education centre but likely not in a school.

(Adapted from the *All-Hazards Plan*, EMBC, 2012)

According to Jeff Kaye in his book, *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation*, (2013), school districts should activate an Emergency Operations Centre when:

- **there is a district-wide emergency involving multiple school sites,**
- **there is an emergency of such magnitude that resources are required beyond individual school site capacity,**
- **the emergency is of long duration (for example, lasting more than three days),**
- **major policy decisions will or may be needed,**
- **a state of local emergency is declared,**
- **terrorist threats are made to the community or region, or**
- **a decision is made that activation of an emergency plan is advantageous to the successful management of an emergency or school crisis.**

Best Practice: People who are assigned to the site roles should not also have responsibilities with the EOC functions. EOC staff should be free to concentrate on those activities while site-based personnel can focus on the site response.



[MINI-CASE]

A report is made to a principal of a cougar sighting and she initiates a shelter in place protocol. A further report within twenty minutes provides information that the cat has been captured. In this case, a district EOC is not activated.

An earthquake shakes most of the Lower Mainland with many schools and district buildings suffering minor to moderate damage. In this case, a district EOC should be activated.

A district EOC command structure is similar to that of the ICS structure that is used at individual school sites. It is important that the school district develops an EOC plan, which includes the basic elements of the school planning process and pre-assignment of EOC roles.



District Emergency Operations Centre

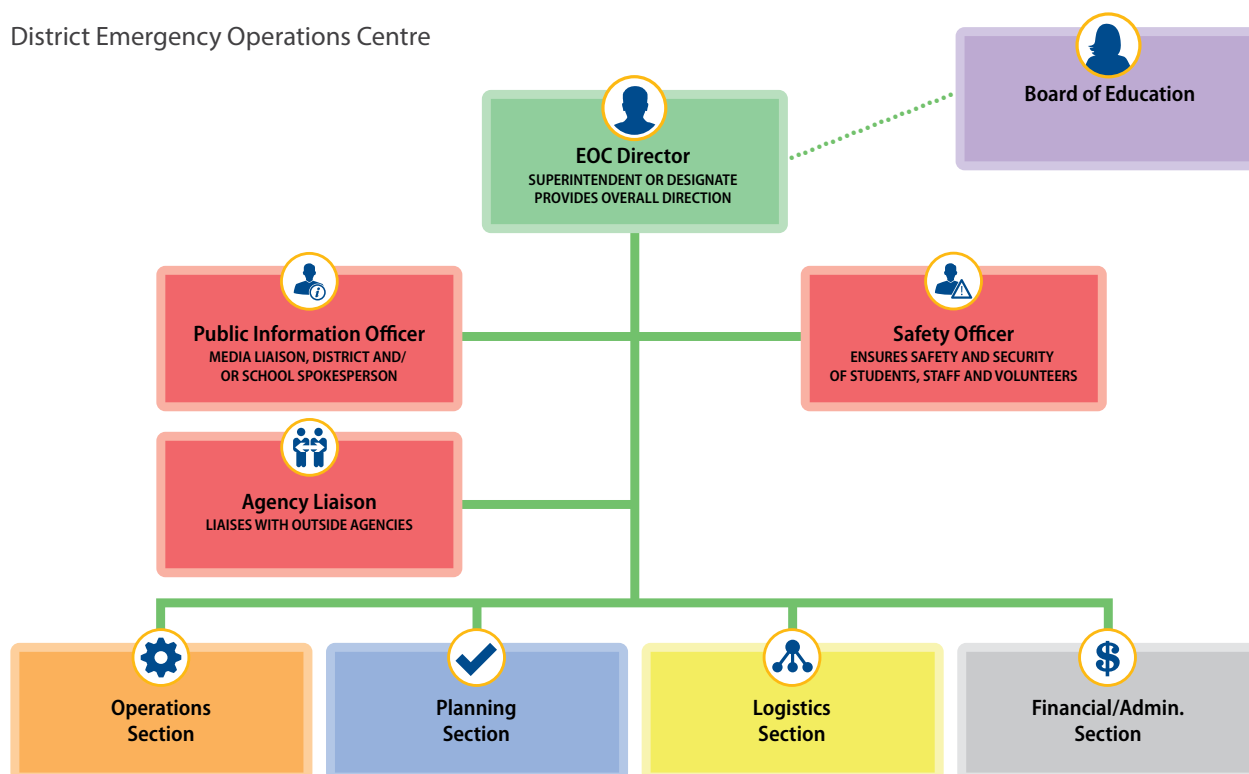


Figure adapted with permission, *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation*, Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz, Polimedia Publishing, 2013.

The district EOC should be staffed by district personnel, preferably with expertise in specific areas related to the management of the emergency, communications, media relations, and information technology.

The EOC Director is usually the Superintendent or a designate such as an Assistant Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer. The EOC Director is responsible for overall emergency policy and coordination through the joint efforts of the Ministry, government agencies such as local authority emergency operation centres, and EMBC regional offices.

In the event of an emergency, all schools/sites that are affected will immediately activate their SEMP procedures and the district will activate EOC procedures to the level needed to support the affected sites.

Normally, if an EOC is activated, the media relations function will be transferred from individual schools to the district media relations staff. Similarly, communicating with other agencies and stakeholders, as well as providing resources that schools might need, will be coordinated through the district EOC. As a result, individual schools are more able to focus on the immediate needs of their students and staff. However, it is essential that the level of involvement of a school in these circumstances is clearly understood so that districts and schools are not duplicating or omitting important functions.

Best Practice: The EOC, as a physical space, houses all the necessary IT equipment and information, both electronic and hard copy, needed to respond to an emergency at the district level. SEMP from individual schools and sites within the district, as well as corresponding materials that are developed at the district level, should be available at the EOC.

A district should identify and fully resource one location in the board office and at least one alternate location to serve as the EOC. It is here that large scale responses relating to serious or cross-district emergencies will be monitored and directed.



CONCLUSION

Parents entrust their children into the care of schools and educators every weekday for forty weeks a year for thirteen years. Educators place a strong emphasis on ensuring safe and caring school environments. However, we are all aware, through the power of instantaneous media, of the possible devastation that can fall upon our schools and communities. Our lexicon is now permeated with terms such as [Lac Mégantic](#), [911](#), [Fukushima](#) or [Sandy Hook School](#), which conjure up images of widespread devastation and heartbreak. Terms such as “active shooter” were not part of our vocabulary just a few years ago, now we all know what this means.

Most emergencies that happen are not as overwhelming as these events but in BC we have had our share of disasters and traumatic events. The 2015 Port Metro Vancouver container fire and events such as floods and wild fires that affect many BC communities bring home the immediacy of the threat. Scientists tell us that the BC coast should be prepared for a major earthquake and the aftermath of that event. Are we prepared?

It is easy to look around us and see the beauty of our province and think that we will never be in a situation that can kill or injure without warning. It is also human nature to argue that we are too busy or too cash-strapped to make the effort to plan effectively. The reality is that failure to plan, to train personnel, to involve parents and students in realistic drills can result in consequences that could destroy individuals and communities. Schools, school districts, boards of education, authorities and all those who work in them must be prepared for the sake of the children in their care and for themselves and the families they would like to go home to. The more we can prepare and mitigate in advance, the more likely we will all be to save lives, minimize damage and return home safely to our loved-ones.



RESOURCES

- **British Columbia Disaster Psychosocial (DPS) Services**
<http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/health-emergency-management-bc/disaster-psychosocial-program>
- **Emergency Management BC (EMBC) - Province of British Columbia**
<http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/index.htm>
- **Emergency Management - Government of Canada**
<http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/mrgnc-mngmnt/index-eng.aspx>
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – United States**
<http://www.fema.gov/>
- **Get Prepared – Government of Canada**
<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/index-en.aspx>
- **Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans**
http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/REMS%20K-12%20Guide%20508_0.pdf
- **Incident Command System Canada website**
<http://www.icscanada.ca/>
- **Ontario and B.C. Privacy Commissioners issue joint message: personal health information can be disclosed in emergencies and other urgent circumstances**
www.cpo.on.ca/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=790
- **SAFE Plan (School Action for Emergencies), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)**
<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cp-pc/safe-secur/index-eng.htm>
- **Schools Protection Program (SPP)**
<http://www.bcspp.org/>
- **Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in British Columbia**
<https://www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsOverview.aspx>
- **Standard Response Protocol (SRP)**
<http://iluvuguys.org/srp.html>



TEMPLATES

In this section you will find a number of forms and letters that you can adapt as needed. Downloadable versions of these forms will be available on the Ministry's web site.

Forms

FORMS FOR SUPPORTING MITIGATION AND PLANNING

- [CLASSROOM SAFETY AUDIT FORM](#)
- [SCHOOL HAZARDS ASSESSMENT](#)
- [EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SKILLS SURVEY](#)
- [STUDENT EMERGENCY RELEASE \(ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL\)](#)
- [STUDENT EMERGENCY RELEASE \(SPECIAL EDUCATION-GRADES 8-12\)](#)
- [STUDENT EMERGENCY IDENTIFICATION](#)
- [PARTNERING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT](#)
- [EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES](#)

FORMS FOR USE DURING AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

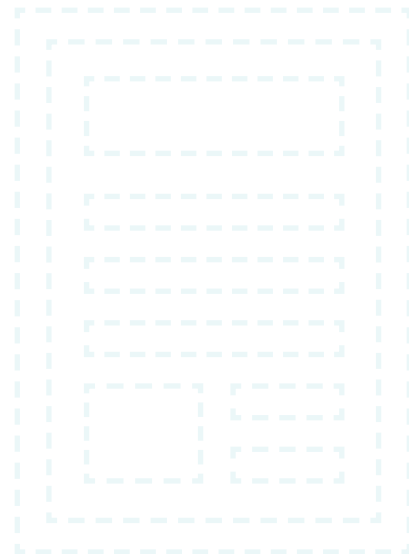
- [BOMB THREAT TELEPHONE CHECKLIST](#)
- [CLASS STATUS REPORT](#)
- [SCHOOL STUDENT RELEASE](#)

Letters and Memos

- [LETTER TO PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS](#)
- [LETTER TO PARENTS OF SECONDARY STUDENTS](#)
- [LETTER TO PARENTS OF RETURNING STUDENTS](#)
- [LETTER TO PARENTS OF NEW STUDENTS](#)
- [REMINDER TO STAFF](#)

Maps

- [STUDENT REUNIFICATION DOUBLE GATE SYSTEM](#)



Classroom Safety Audit Form

Room # _____ Date: _____ Assessed by: _____

NOTE: all desks should face away from the windows if possible

Hazard Code	How Many	Hazard	Priority*	Anchor ¹	Refit ²	Relocate ³	Remove	Be Aware
1		Unsecured bookcases						
2		Unsecured wall shelves						
3		Free-standing cabinets						
4		Hanging plants						
5		Unsecured light fixtures						
6		Unsecured ceiling fixtures						
7		Teacher's desk in front of or under hazard						
8		Students' desks under/near unstable fixtures/hazards						
9		Unsecured trolleys or equipment on wheels						
10		Heavy objects on high shelves						
11		Exits partially blocked						
12		Windows/glass						
13		Chemicals, paints, cleaning supplies etc stored insecurely						
14								
15								
16								

Comments

* Priorities

- A. **Immediate:** Altered ASAP
- B. **Short Term:** Altered during term
- C. **Long Term:** over a number of years
- D. **No Action:** Be advised of hazard

¹ **Anchor:** Secure, fasten

² **Refit:** Add or change for safety

³ **Relocate:** Move to safer spot



School Hazards Assessment

School or Site: _____

Hazard	Severity 0-4	Probability 0-4	Ranking Top 5
Earthquake			
Tsunamis			
Tornados			
Hurricanes			
Flood			
Landslide/ Mudslide			
Winter Weather (Ice/Snow)			
Wild Fires			
Insect Infestation			
Hazmat Incidents			
Electrical Blackouts			
Nuclear Accident			
Infectious Disease			
Weapons on Campus			
School Shooting			
Gang Violence			
Hostile School Climate			
Terrorism			
Bomb Threat			
Contaminated Food/Water			
Other			

Rating Scales				
Severity of Impact to School			Probability of Occurrences	
None	0		Never	0
Some	1		Some	1
Minor	2		Moderate	2
Moderate	3		Very High	3
Severe	4		Extremely Likely	4

This form is adapted from *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation* by Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz, Polimedia Publishing, 2013.



Employee Emergency Preparedness Skill Survey

School: _____

School Year: _____

Staff Name: _____ School Assignment: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

I HAVE HAD THE FOLLOWING TRAINING:

- ☐ Red Cross First Aid/ CPR/ AED
- ☐ Advanced First Aid
- ☐ Search and Rescue
- ☐ Military: _____
- ☐ Amateur Radio (HAM)
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Law Enforcement
- ☐ Fire Fighter/ Paramedic
- ☐ Crisis Counseling
- ☐ ICS/BCERMS

I HAVE HAD THE FOLLOWING SKILLS EXPERIENCE:

- ☐ Search and Rescue
- ☐ Hazardous Materials Recognition
- ☐ Bilingual: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Persons with Special Needs
- ☐ First Aid/Medical

I FEEL THAT MY SKILLS WOULD BE BEST USED IN THE FOLLOWING AREA(S):

- ☐ First Aid Team
- ☐ Security Team
- ☐ Student Assembly Area
- ☐ Communications (explain): _____
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Search and Rescue Team
- ☐ Psychological First Aid Team
- ☐ Student/Parent Reunification

Form adapted with permission of author from *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation* by Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz, Polimedia Publishing, 2013



STUDENT EMERGENCY RELEASE

(Elementary and Middle School)

School: _____

In the event of an earthquake or other serious incident resulting in school closure, where I am unable to collect my child(ren) from school, I _____, Parent/Legal Guardian of:

Name(s) of Child(ren): _____ Grade _____

_____ Grade _____

_____ Grade _____

_____ Grade _____

authorize the release of my above child(ren) into the custody of the following people:

(please provide at least two names)

	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
1			
2			
3			

I fully realize that during a natural disaster such as an earthquake, my child(ren) will not be released from school to another adult unless authorized by myself (as above); and that on the release of my child(ren) a record shall be kept at the school of the name of their guardian, time of release and expected destination.

(Signature)

(Date)

MEDIC ALERT

If your child requires medication or has a medical condition that requires special attention, please provide details below. It will be necessary for the school to have a 48-hour supply of any essential medication or supplies. Please note that a more detailed "Medical Alert" form should also be completed and on file at the school.



STUDENT EMERGENCY RELEASE

(Special Education, Grades 8-12)

School: _____

In the event of an earthquake or other serious incident resulting in school closure, where I am unable to collect my child(ren) from school, I _____, Parent/Legal Guardian of:

Name(s) of Child(ren): _____ Grade _____

_____ Grade _____

_____ Grade _____

_____ Grade _____

authorize the release of my above child(ren) into the custody of the following people:
(please provide at least two names)

	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
1			
2			
3			

I fully realize that during a natural disaster such as an earthquake, my child(ren) will not be released from school to another adult unless authorized by myself (as above); and that on the release of my child(ren) a record shall be kept at the school of the name of their guardian, time of release and expected destination.

(Signature)

(Date)

MEDIC ALERT

If your child requires medication or has a medical condition that requires special attention, please provide details below. It will be necessary for the school to have a 48-hour supply of any essential medication or supplies. Please note that a more detailed "Medical Alert" form should also be completed and on file at the school.



Photo
of Student

Student Emergency Identification

TEACHER: _____

STUDENT BIRTH DATE: _____ GRADE: _____ DIVISION: _____

FIRST NAME: _____ FAMILY NAME: _____

SIBLINGS IN SCHOOL: _____

MEDICAL ALERT: _____ (use red dot)

Health Card # _____ Doctor: _____ PH#: _____

List any medical conditions, severe allergies, medication information or any instructions (continue on back if necessary)

OUT OF PROVINCE CONTACT: _____

STUDENT ADDRESS: _____ PHONE #: _____

PARENTS (or guardians):

PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____ PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____

ADDRESS: _____ ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE #: _____ HOME PHONE #: _____

WORK PHONE #: _____ WORK PHONE #: _____

CELL PHONE #: _____ CELL PHONE #: _____

WORK ADDRESS: _____ WORK ADDRESS: _____

DAYS/HOURS AT WORK: _____ DAYS/HOURS AT WORK: _____

OUT OF PROVINCE CONTACT

NAME	CITY & PROV/STATE	AREA CODE & PHONE #

***ALTERNATE GUARDIAN** (Persons 19+ years old and preferably within walking distance of the school)

*Suggestion: If possible, list 2 or more adults, who have your permission to pick up your child/ren in the event that you are not able to do so. Cell phone numbers are preferred.

NAME	SIGNATURE	PHONE #

I hereby authorize any of the above listed alternate guardians to pick up my child from school in the event of a controlled student release. I also authorize the school or persons caring for my child to use any of the above information, as necessary, in the event of an emergency.

SIGNATURE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
(Parent/Guardian) (Parent/Guardian) (m/d/yr)



Partnering with Law Enforcement

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of involvement with law enforcement. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, provide details in the Actions column listing what needs to be done and who should be responsible for ensuring the work is done. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

CHECKLIST ELEMENT	YES	NO	N/A	Actions to implement or improve
1. The school reports incidents of crime and violence to law enforcement officials				
2. Law enforcement personnel are an integral part of the school's emergency management planning process				
3. The school has developed and maintained an effective relationship with law enforcement				
4. The school district and local law enforcement have developed a memorandum of agreement, (MOA) defining the roles and responsibilities of each party.				
5. Law enforcement personnel provide a visible and regular presence on campus during school events.				
6. Law enforcement provides after hours patrols of the schools site				

This checklist was modified from School Safety Assessment Protocol, Virginia Department of Education (www.sedl.org/secac/pdfs/safetyassessment.pdf). This checklist was re-adapted by the Province of British Columbia with permission of the author from *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation* by Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz, Polimedia Publishing, 2013.



Emergency Equipment and Resources

Main Office:

- ☐ School Emergency Management Plan
- ☐ Student data (name, phone number, address, emergency contact person, pertinent medical information, sign in/out sheet if applicable)
- ☐ Student release forms
- ☐ Staff data (name, phone number, address, emergency contact person, pertinent medical information, sign in/out sheet if applicable)
- ☐ List of staff with any emergency training/skills/ICS responsibilities
- ☐ School profile and building information
- ☐ Map of school area
- ☐ Map of relocation route (if not included in the school area map)
- ☐ Traffic safety vests
- ☐ Keys
- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ Charged cell phone
- ☐ Megaphone
- ☐ Portable radio(s) and batteries
- ☐ List of that day's class trips
- ☐ List of that day's substitute teachers
- ☐ Visitor sign-in sheet
- ☐ Staff sign-in/sign-out sheet, if pertinent
- ☐ Student medications (including epi-pens)

First Aid Supplies

- ☐ Adhesive bandages
- ☐ Elastic bandages – different sizes
- ☐ Sterile gauze pads, rolls
- ☐ Adhesive tape
- ☐ Triangular bandages
- ☐ Thermometers
- ☐ Heavy-duty scissors
- ☐ Forceps
- ☐ Pocket knife
- ☐ Non-aspirin pain tablets
- ☐ Anti-histamines
- ☐ Anti-nausea tablets
- ☐ Hydrogen peroxide
- ☐ Antibiotic skin ointment
- ☐ Splints
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Eye protectors



School Emergency Supplies

- ☐ Adjustable crescent wrench
- ☐ Hacksaw
- ☐ Axe
- ☐ Sledge hammer
- ☐ Nylon rope – 3/8 inch, 50 ft.
- ☐ Pliers
- ☐ Shovel
- ☐ Pipe wrench
- ☐ Tie wire
- ☐ Tool box
- ☐ Vice grips
- ☐ Large garbage bags and small barrels or canisters to act as latrines
- ☐ Personal hygiene items
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Matches/candles
- ☐ Flares
- ☐ Safety pins

Food and Water Supplies – must be regularly replenished for freshness

- ☐ As much water as can be stored , in both individual bottles and carboys
- ☐ Juices
- ☐ Non-perishable, compact foods that require no refrigeration
- ☐ Water treatment chemicals
- ☐ Manual can opener, bottle opener
- ☐ Evaporated or canned milk
- ☐ Soup base
- ☐ Cereals
- ☐ Paper cups, plates
- ☐ Utensils
- ☐ Aluminum foil/plastic wrap
- ☐ Sealed container for storage
- ☐ Plastic bags of various sizes and colours

Staff Comfort Kits

In case of a long-term emergency, each staff member needs to have personal supplies on hand. Remember that roads may be impassable for some time, so staying at the school may be the best alternative. In addition to a comfort kit, staff should have the following supplies on hand for personal use:

- ☐ Extra peanut-free food and water
- ☐ Sleeping bag
- ☐ Rubber boots and other comfortable footwear
- ☐ Extra clothes, for warmth and dryness
- ☐ Hygiene products, including toothbrush, contact lens supplies, medication and so on
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Plastic sheeting
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Garbage bags and twist ties
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Multi-tool
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Work or rubber gloves
- ☐ Flashlight, first aid kit, coins and map of area
- ☐ Lanyard with personal information related to identity, health and emergency contact



Emergency Grab and Go Kits

Each classroom, including rooms such as the gym, library and music rooms, should have a kit.

Use a tote bag, rolling suitcase or a backpack to store the following items:

- ☐ Small first aid kit (for minor injuries)
- ☐ Flashlight and batteries (or windup flashlight)
- ☐ Laminated class list and clipboard
- ☐ Pencils and notepad
- ☐ Indelible felt pen
- ☐ Identity vest or neon hat for teacher
- ☐ Card listing teacher's roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Crowbar
- ☐ Leather work gloves (several pairs)
- ☐ Dust masks (x 35)
- ☐ Goggles

In a separate container would be:

- ☐ Individual student comfort kits
- ☐ Reusable lanyards with student information and copy of student release forms

Student Comfort Kits

In most schools, the parents of each student are responsible for providing the contents of a comfort kit for their child. The kits are labeled and placed in the classroom kit containers.

The following items should be stored in a large-sized zip-lock bag:

- ☐ Foil emergency blanket
- ☐ Peanut-free granola or fruit bars (3 or 4)
- ☐ Family photo
- ☐ Personal comfort item (for example, small toy)
- ☐ Plastic poncho (for rain protection)
- ☐ Gum (sugarless)
- ☐ Band-Aids (2 or 3)
- ☐ Tissues



Bomb Threat Telephone Checklist

Date:		Time call received:		YOUR name:	
Phone number where call received:		Time caller hung up:		Phone number of caller, if known	<input type="checkbox"/> Local? <input type="checkbox"/> Long distance?
Ask the caller the following questions. You may not get direct answers but by keeping the person talking you may be able to gather valuable information. Listen carefully as the person speaks and try to make notes (below) on the speaker's voice and the background sounds.					
What will make the device explode?					
Did you place the bomb? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Why?		Where?	
What is your (caller's) name?		Are you alone? Who else is with you?		How old are you? Or estimated	Gender:
Is voice familiar		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If so, who does it sound like?	
Where are you right now?					
Describe caller's voice and language	<input type="checkbox"/> Accent	<input type="checkbox"/> Angry	<input type="checkbox"/> Calm	<input type="checkbox"/> Clearing throat	<input type="checkbox"/> Coughing
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cracking voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Crying	<input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Disguised/muffled	<input type="checkbox"/> Distinct/clear
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excited	<input type="checkbox"/> Intoxicated/incoherent	<input type="checkbox"/> Laughter	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisp	<input type="checkbox"/> Loud/shouting
	<input type="checkbox"/> whiny	<input type="checkbox"/> Nasal	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal	<input type="checkbox"/> Ragged	<input type="checkbox"/> Rapid
	<input type="checkbox"/> Raspy	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow	<input type="checkbox"/> Slurred	<input type="checkbox"/> Soft	<input type="checkbox"/> Stutter
	<input type="checkbox"/> Read from a script	<input type="checkbox"/> Taped message	<input type="checkbox"/> Educated, well-spoken	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronically distorted	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)
Describe back-ground sounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal noises	<input type="checkbox"/> Household noises	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial noises	<input type="checkbox"/> Street noises	<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle noise
	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet	<input type="checkbox"/> Office machinery	<input type="checkbox"/> Factory machinery	<input type="checkbox"/> Partying

Adapted from
 Safer Schools Together
www.saferschoolstogether.com



Class Status Report

Please provide information to the command centre regarding the number of students who may be injured or unaccounted for.

TEACHER/STAFF MEMBER REPORTING: _____ DIV: _____ GRADE: _____

ROOM #: _____ DATE AND TIME COMPLETED: _____

All students are present or accounted for: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Number of students missing or unaccounted for _____

Please list students who are absent from school today.	
1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

Are any students in your class injured? If yes, please indicate what measures have been taken – what has been done, where they are.	No _____	Yes _____
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Are any students missing? Please indicate where you think they might be, if known.	No _____	Yes _____
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Message for incident commander (if any): _____



School Student Release

PLEASE PRINT

Student's Name: _____

Date & Time Of Authorization: _____

Student Released To: _____

If the student is being released to an alternate guardian, record the relevant ID and, if possible, attach a copy of the authorization signed by the parent or legal guardian.

Destination: _____

Authorized By (Staff): _____

X _____

(Signature of Parent/Guardian or authorized alternate)

Notes: _____



Letter to Parents of Elementary and Middle School Students

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Student Release after an Emergency.

To enhance our students' safety and well-being, we are expanding our school's efforts to prepare for an emergency. It is important that you become familiar with the school's emergency procedures and what you should do in the event of an emergency at the school. We encourage you to discuss how you expect your child to behave and respond during an emergency or disaster situation.

The school is prepared to care for your child in the event of an emergency until you or an authorized alternate are able to pick him or her up. In order to make your child as comfortable and safe as possible until you arrive, we ask for your help in the following areas.

- Complete and return the attached forms:
 - Student Emergency Identification Form, and
 - Student Release Form. (NOTE: Authorized persons as listed on your form, must be 19+ years old.).
- Please **do not phone the school following a disaster**. We must keep the lines open for outgoing emergency calls.
- Please, **in the event of a lockdown, do not phone your child's cell phone**. A ringing phone can call attention to students.
- Please **do not drive to the school**. Streets and access to the school must remain clear for emergency vehicles. Park as close as you safely can and walk to the school.
- Listen and watch for updates - both the school and District will use a variety of communication tools including phone trees, e-mail, traditional and social media to alert parents of the current situation and next steps.
- As soon as school officials indicate it is safe to pick up your child, we request you or your alternate guardian travel to the school or identified student-parent reunification site to reunite with your child.
- No student will be released from the school unless a previously authorized parent/guardian or alternate comes for the student.
- All parents/alternates who come to pick up children must sign the students out at a designated student release area.
- Please familiarize yourself with the school's emergency preparedness plans and procedures available on the school's website.
- Prepare and/or update your child's comfort kit which will be kept in the classroom.

One of the most important areas of school emergency planning is gathering accurate information so the school can contact you or someone authorized to act on your behalf. The information on the two attached forms will be used only in case of emergency or disaster. This information is kept strictly confidential at the school unless it is necessary to share the information in the event your child's health and/or safety is at risk. Please return all forms by: _____ (Date).

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. This process helps to ensure a speedy reunion for you and your child and contributes to the safety and well-being of your child in an emergency.

Thank you,

Emergency Management Planning Committee



Letter to Parents of Secondary Students

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Student Release after an Emergency.

To enhance our students' safety and well-being, we are expanding our school's efforts to prepare for an emergency. We encourage you to become familiar with the school's emergency procedures and what you and your child should do in the event of an emergency at the school. It is also important for you to discuss how you expect your child to behave and respond during an emergency or disaster situation.

The school is prepared to care for your child in the event of an emergency until such time as it is safe for students to be dismissed. We ask for your help in the following areas.

- Complete and return the attached forms:
 - Student Emergency Identification Form, and
 - Student Release Form (for those students who have special needs). (NOTE: Authorized persons as listed on your form must be 19+ years old.).
- Please **do not phone the school following a disaster**. We must keep the lines open for outgoing emergency calls.
- Please **in the event of a lockdown, do not call your child on their cell phone**. A ringing phone can call unwanted attention to students.
- Please **do not drive to the school**. Streets and access to the school must remain clear for emergency vehicles.
- Listen and watch for updates - both the school and district will use a variety of communication tools including phone trees, e-mail, traditional and social media to alert parents of the current situation and next steps.
- Talk with your child about what is expected of them and how to respond appropriately and effectively to an emergency or disaster situation at the school, including the importance of remaining at the school unless released by school officials. The school principal will determine when it is safe to either return to classes or dismiss students. In some cases, it will not be possible to dismiss students as the area surrounding the school may be unsafe. Talk about the potential risks students could face, such as gas leaks, downed 'live' power lines, debris, etc.
- Discuss with your child what they should do in the event that they are released and you are not available – go home, go to a friend or a neighbor's home, or contact a relative.
- All parents/alternates who come to pick up special needs students, must sign the students out at a designated student release area. Only those alternates who have been authorized by the parents or guardians will be able to pick up a student.
- Familiarize yourself with the school's emergency preparedness plans and procedures [insert web link].

One of the most important areas of school emergency planning is gathering accurate information so the school can contact you or someone authorized to act on your behalf. The information on the two attached forms will be used only in case of emergency or disaster. This information is kept strictly confidential at the school unless it is necessary to share the information in the event your child's health and/or safety is at risk. Please return all forms by: _____ (Date)

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. This process helps to ensure a speedy reunion for you and your children and contributes to the safety and well-being of your children in an emergency.

Emergency Management Planning Committee



Letter to Parents of Returning Students

(September Date)

Re: Comfort Kits

Welcome back students and families!

Last year, we asked you to assemble a comfort kit for you child/ren to have with them in the event of an emergency happening while they are in school. Your child's teacher has returned his or her **individual comfort kit** so that you may update any information, add a new photo, and put in fresh gum and peanut-free granola or fruit bars. Also, if the plastic bag has been damaged in any way, please replace it with a new large-sized zip-lock freezer bag. Write your child's name on the plastic bag.

Remember, everything must fit back into this bag!

Please return the completed kit to your child's classroom by (date).

Thank you,

Emergency Management Planning Committee



Letter to Parents of New Students

(Date)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: Comfort Kits

As part of this school's emergency management plan, each class has a Grab & Go kit (in a carry bag). These kits are kept in the classroom and are taken by teachers in case the school is evacuated in an emergency or disaster.

In addition to the Grab & Go kits, each class has first aid supplies, flashlights, a radio, class lists, and so on, as well as a separate bag containing individual comfort kits for each child and staff member. We need your help to complete these kits.

Comfort Kits:

1. Label the attached zip-lock bag with your child's name.
2. Add a family photo. On the back of the photo, please print child's name, parent's contact phone numbers, care card number and out of area contact person and phone number. List any allergies, if applicable. (NOTE: if your child requires an Epi-pen™ or special medications, it is parent's responsibility to supply the school office with required Rx for your child (including renewals).
3. In addition to the photo, include the following in this bag:
 - chewing gum (optional) sugarless
 - two peanut-free granola or fruit bars, or other non-perishable, high-energy snack
 - two Band-Aids (suggest with cartoon characters)
 - tissues
 - small personal item (optional)—for example, cards, toy
 - \$ _____ cash to pay for a solar/ foil blanket and poncho (which the emergency preparedness committee will purchase on your behalf) and insert into your child's kit

Everything must fit into *this* zip-lock bag, including the solar/foil blanket and poncho, so please ensure that you have left room for them.

Please return your child's comfort kit to the classroom teacher no later than (date), so that we may include it in the class carry bags. Remember, this small personal kit can make a difference to the well-being of your child in an emergency. If you have any questions or comments, or wish to join this committee, please call the school office or Parents Advisory Committee.

Thank you,

Emergency Management Planning Committee



Memo to School Staff

(September Date)

Re: Comfort Kits

Welcome back staff!

Today please remember to return to each child his or her individual comfort kit from your emergency kit class bags. With the kit each child will receive a letter to remind parents to update their child's kit. New students should receive a different letter and an empty kit zip lock bag.

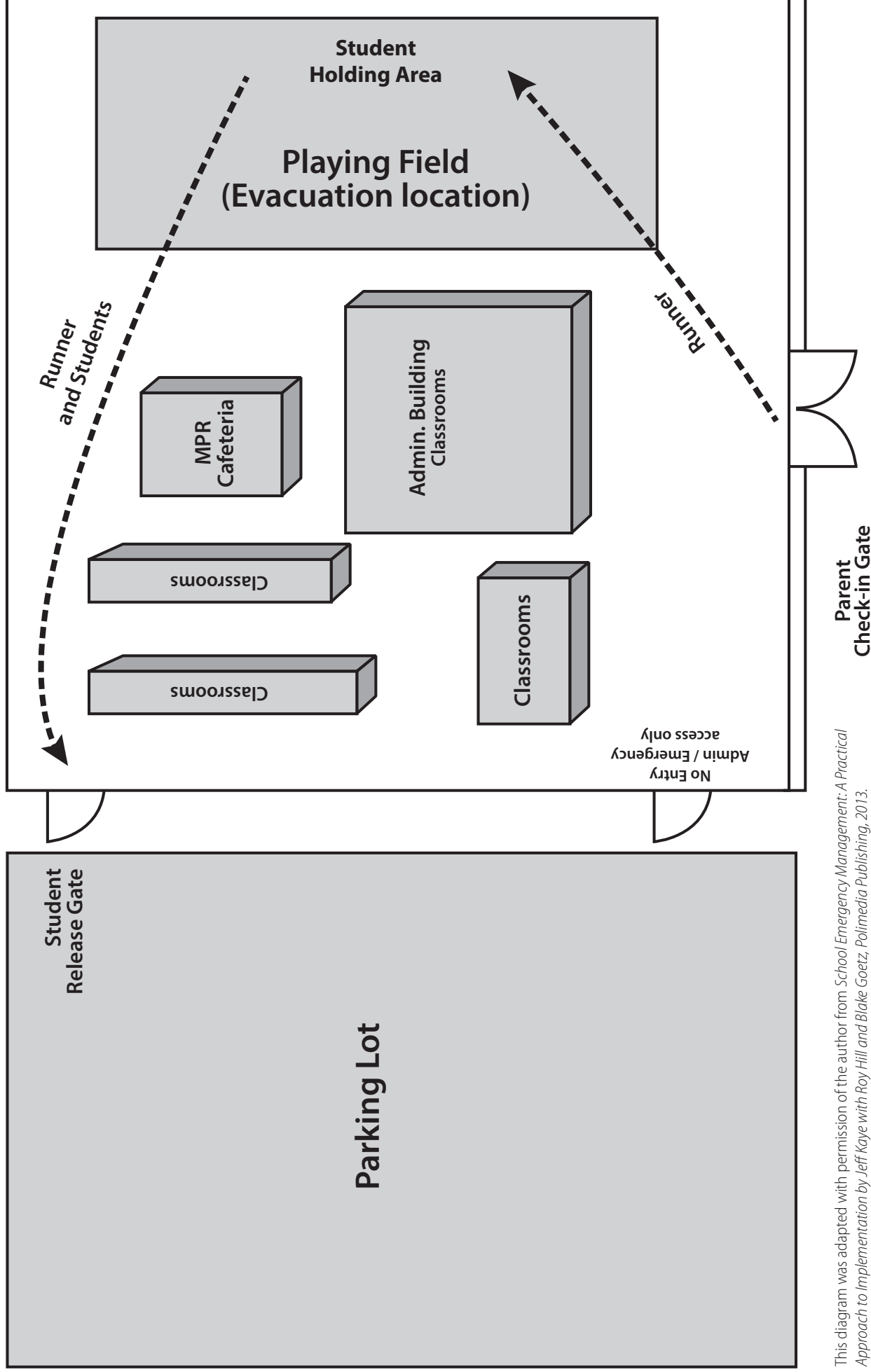
Also remember to provision or refresh your own Staff Comfort Kit which is to be kept in your classroom or office.

Thank you,

Emergency Management Planning Committee



Student Reunification Double Gate System



This diagram was adapted with permission of the author from *School Emergency Management: A Practical Approach to Implementation* by Jeff Kaye with Roy Hill and Blake Goetz, Polimedia Publishing, 2013.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GUIDE

{ FOR SCHOOLS, DISTRICTS
+
AUTHORITIES }

