

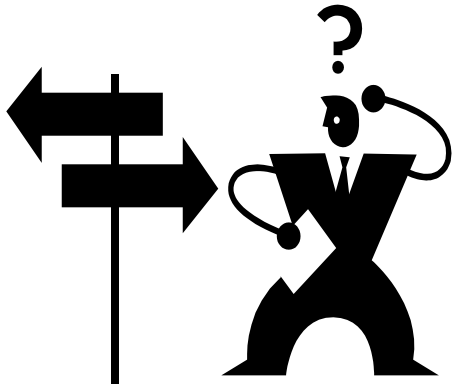
Section 1

Preparedness

"Nothing beats being prepared and trained for the job at hand."

(Dennis L. Rubin, DC Fire Chief)





Unit 1

Preparedness

New Challenges . . . New Plan

Historically, schools have been relatively well prepared for emergency situations such as fires and severe weather. For example, school personnel understand that buildings should be evacuated when a fire alarm sounds and they know procedures for calling 911 to report a fire. They also know to seek shelter during severe weather warnings.

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

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

Partnerships in Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

The likelihood of effectively managing an emergency is increased with an established district-level plan and individual emergency response plans tailored to the conditions and resources of each school or facility. These guidelines contained herein provide a step-by-step model for Local Education Agencies (LEA) and individual schools to develop their own School Emergency Response Plan.

In this Guide, we define an *emergency* as:

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

As envisioned, the school system has formed an Interagency Team, formally known as the DC Emergency and Safety Alliance, which is a collaboration and partnership with District emergency service agencies. The Interagency Team developed and adopted guidelines to create this *School Emergency Response Plan and Management Guide*. The Guide includes appropriate local terminology, response procedures, phone numbers, contacts, etc. The Emergency and Safety Alliance provides this Guide to schools in the District of Columbia for adaptation by each School System.

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

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

A Broad Perspective

Each school must provide a safe, orderly learning environment for every child. The *School Emergency Response Plan and Management Guide* provides protocols for crisis response situations so that schools and their LEA's can quickly and adequately restore the school climate to optimal learning conditions. The restored strong, supportive environment will again promote high student achievement.

The Guide is presented in seven broad Sections:

- Preparedness;
- Executive Support;
- Emergency Response Plan;
- Response Protocols;
- Recovery;
- Prevention Protocols; and
- Appendices.

Each of these topics is introduced briefly over the next few pages and then explained in greater detail in subsequent sections.

Each Emergency Management Plan is to be written with the explicit intent to protect and sustain life, reduce emotional trauma, assist in emotional recovery from trauma, and minimize personal injury and/or damage to property.

How To Use This Guide

The *School Emergency Response Plan and Management Guide* is designed to assist schools in the development of individually tailored Emergency Response Plans. Since each school has unique resources and unique risks, each needs its own emergency response plan suited to its unique circumstances.

New best practices for handling emergency situations become available on an ongoing basis, and new emergency situations emerge over time. Therefore, this Guide is a working document. The DC Emergency and Safety Alliance will review and evaluate the plans and the contents of this Guide on an annual maintenance cycle.

District Preparedness–DC Emergency and Safety Alliance

The Mayor has made a firm commitment to updating the District’s Emergency Management Plan, forming an Interagency Team to plan and provide support for schools. This team, of police, fire, health, homeland security and emergency management, and school system personnel assessed best practices and conducted a rigorous evaluation of existing emergency response plans to ensure that this Guide accurately reflects local needs and circumstances.

School Planning

With this Guide, personnel from each school and support building are charged with creating a site-specific School Emergency Response Plan. Routine training will be provided to assure personnel are familiar and engaged in the planning process. Each school will establish a School Emergency Response Team (SERT) to develop their School Emergency Response Plan, using this Guide as a model. Each school will create an emergency plan which includes:

- A designated chain of command;
- Specific roles for team members; and
- School-specific emergency procedures, referencing the outline, sample forms, and protocols provided in this Guide.

Communication and Practice

The final step in the emergency management planning process is to communicate and practice the plan. The Emergency and Safety Alliance is responsible for formulating a multi-year training and exercise schedule; and assisting each school in conducting awareness trainings. While most schools are adept at practicing emergency procedures for fire drills and severe weather exercises, most are not well rehearsed in planning for such events as chemical release, threats to self or others, intruders, school violence and other possible emergencies.

Summary

Implementation of this plan involves the following three steps. We offer suggestions throughout the Guide to assist you in adapting it to your use.

1. The Emergency and Safety Alliance, a partnership with District Government agencies, updates this Guide as necessary.
2. Training is coordinated for School Emergency Response Teams to adopt this guide for school-specific needs
3. School teams, with assistance from the Emergency and Safety Alliance, communicate and practice the plan with staff and students in order to better respond to emergencies

Practical Tip: Pages as handouts—Although it may seem repetitive, several key concepts are featured throughout this Guide. We intend for many of the pages to be used as worksheets and handouts. Depending on your circumstances (such as training and orientation needs), you may need detailed information on a specific topic, or broad summaries on a variety of topics. As you examine the Guide, we encourage you to consider which pages best meet your school's planning or training needs.

Preparedness: *A Brief Introduction*

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

School/District Safety Assessment

One way to begin planning is to conduct a school safety assessment, which calls for a self-appraisal of major areas affecting school safety. These areas include geographic location of buildings; proximity of potential hazards such as factories, railroads, or waterways; the availability of school and/or public transportation buses for possible evacuation, etc. Resources include:

- Existing safety plans;
- Security and safety-related district policies;
- Buildings floor plans;
- Local evacuation route maps;
- Community and school crime reports;
- Known safety and security concerns;
- Logs of police calls for service;
- Student and faculty handbooks;
- Disciplinary files; and
- Input of safety concerns.

Comprehensive School Response Planning

The comprehensive planning process is initiated upon completion of the school safety assessment. These efforts will be most successful when they involve the community's major stakeholders.

Typically, schools reflect their communities. We must work closely with our communities to proactively address the individual needs of the school. Major stakeholders can include:

- School executives,
- Health, welfare, business and civic leaders,
- Law enforcement officials
- Parents and students, Mental health providers,
- Juvenile justice, city and county government,
- Church leaders,
- Corrections, emergency management, fire department, and emergency medical services; and
- The media.

Other partners include private and chartered school districts, local universities and colleges, and private corporations having an interest in school safety.

***Planning tools
and resources
are available at
the Emergency
and Safety
Alliance
Website
<http://esa.dc.gov>***

School Plans

Individual school response plans are preventive by nature. Preventative approaches include proactive solutions to mitigate identified safety concerns found as a result of a school assessment. School Emergency Response Plans will complement the District Response Plan (DRP), the National Incident Management Structure (NIMS), and school emergency response protocols and responsibilities. Each school plan should reflect unique site-specific characteristics.

Executive Support Teams (EST)

The EST provides intervention strategies and available support personnel to schools. The EST will assist in coordinating and allocating additional resources designed to backup a school when the need exceeds its day-to-day resources.

The District of Columbia Response Plan (DRP)

The DRP structures the response organizations functionally—grouping capabilities, skills, resources, and authorities across the District Government into specific functional areas. Using this functional framework, the DRP outlines the circumstances under which resources will be leveraged and implemented across Federal and regional partners, District agencies/departments, nongovernmental and voluntary organizations and schools.

Response: *A Brief Introduction*

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

Mitigation

Mitigation refers to actions taken to reduce the adverse affects of an emergency. Mitigation measures can be implemented before an emergency, during an emergency, or in recovery from an emergency. Following a school safety assessment conducted in the preparedness phase, mitigation measures can be taken to eliminate the identified hazards. In the response phase, mitigation is the process of implementing the Emergency Response Protocols detailed later in this Guide. In the recovery phase of an emergency, mitigation measures are those interventions designed to reduce the psychological or emotional impact of a traumatic event. Also, long-term mitigation measures are used to complete structural enhancements or engineering retrofits to protect against future damages or injuries.

Emergency Response Protocols

A broad range of emergency situations are identified in the Emergency Response Protocols section of this Guide. For each event listed, there are specific actions to address the given situation. Depending on the type of emergency, protocols may remain under the domain of the school, may require assistance from the EST, or may necessitate a coordinated community/District-wide response or intervention.

Universal Emergency Procedures

Universal Emergency Procedures refers to a set of clear directives that may be implemented across a number of situations. For example, **Evacuation** is a procedure that may apply in emergencies such as a fire, a bomb threat, or an interior gas leak. Building occupants would not necessarily need to know the specifics of the emergency; they simply need to know to *evacuate* immediately upon issuance of an administrative decision.

Other Universal Emergency Response Procedures include: **Alert Status; Shelter in Place; Drop, Cover, and Hold; Severe Weather Safe Area; and Lockdown**. Utilization of Universal Emergency Response Procedures enables staff and students to learn and to follow specific directions without having to be familiar with extensive protocols for multiple emergency situations.

Recovery: *A Brief Introduction*

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

Schools and the community are confronted with putting the pieces back together following sudden, tragic events such as death or serious injury to students and staff, bus accidents, fires, natural or man-made disasters and violence. The aftermath of tragedies on individual children and adults is not simple to predict.

Recovery during an emergency can address immediate short-term needs, while *long-term* recovery can last for months or years. The scope of recovery operations will be determined by the size and nature of the events, at times relying on a chain-reaction of school, LEA and Government responses.

Immediate Vs. Ongoing Recovery

It is essential to understand recovery at two distinct levels: immediate and ongoing. Immediate support is needed from the first moments of a traumatic event through the first few days following it. Frequently, recent victims of major trauma are in a state of shock, and at this time basic human needs of food, shelter, and clothing are often a primary focus. Long-term recovery needs may not be readily apparent, and many will require ongoing support. Ongoing recovery assistance provides for individuals weeks, months, or years following a tragic event. Schools should recognize that people recover at different rates and should take this variance into consideration when conducting all recovery operations.

The goal after an emergency is to return to the business of learning and to restore the infrastructure of the school as quickly as possible. There are four key components of recovery that need to be addressed in order to achieve a relative state of normalcy:

- Physical/Structural Recovery;
- Business/Fiscal Recovery;
- Academic Recovery; and
- Emotional Recovery.

Levels of Emergencies

We must understand and be prepared for a range of emergencies (from school-based incidents such as a student's allergic reaction, to community-wide disasters such as a hurricane or terrorist attack). The information below illustrates three levels of emergencies, and the following page describes in greater detail the possible impacts of community-level disasters on individual schools.

Level I–School Emergency

A Level I emergency is a site-based event affecting only that location and does not require the activation of the EST. However, the Incident Commander (IC) may use EST personnel or resources (for example, the Central Crisis Team).

Level II–System Emergency¹

A Level II emergency is a local event having an impact on more than one site *or* having a large-scale community impact, such as a major fire, civil disturbance, hostage situation, or widespread power outage. Also, a Level II emergency may be an event that only affects one location, but the magnitude of the emergency requires the support of the EST, who determines what additional resources and expertise may be needed to manage the event. School Emergency Response Plans are implemented by the IC, as the EST assembles key staff and section leaders.

Level III–District Emergency¹

A Level III emergency is a community or region-wide event affecting multiple sites such as an earthquake, chemical/biological-related incidents, terrorism, or any incident having a collateral impact on the District of Columbia and the National Capital Region (NCR). An example of this event would be a mass evacuation from Maryland or Virginia. In the event of a Level III emergency, the District of Columbia Response Plan would be fully activated to coordinate system-wide response efforts and site emergency plans are implemented along with the EST.

Integration With Other Plans

This plan supports and is integrated with all participating school site plans. Also, this Guide complements the District of Columbia Response Plan and activities within the HSEMA EOC.

¹ Note: Declaration of a Level II or III emergency may require activation of the EST Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to coordinate internal response, and coordination with the EOC Liaison in the HSEMA EOC, which provides overall emergency management coordination for the District of Columbia.

Understanding the Impact of Large-Scale Disasters

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

- Experts advise that schools (and everyone else) may be on their own for three days (72 hours) or more following a catastrophic disaster.
- A large disaster may result in:
 - Widespread telephone outages;
 - Road blockages and damage to roads and bridges or other infrastructure;
 - Gridlock or congestion of roadways;
 - Loss or damage to utility systems;
 - Chemical or electrical fires;
 - Release of fuels and hazardous materials;
 - Flash flooding; and
 - Disruption of routine school operations, including the possibility of long-term relocation to alternate facilities.
- Injuries and death may be caused by falling objects, fires/smoke inhalation, release of hazardous materials, flying debris, roof collapse, flooding, and/or landslides.
- Fires, spills, damaged buildings, and search and rescue operations may overwhelm normal emergency response forces including police departments, fire departments, and emergency medical services.
- In anticipation of a disaster, it is important for school staff to develop personal and family emergency response plans because they may have moral and legal responsibilities at school. This is especially a concern for staff specifically identified as essential personnel in school-specific plans. Family should anticipate that a staff member will be required to remain at school following a catastrophic event.

The same disaster that affects your school will also affect the surrounding community.

Elements of Emergency Management and Preparedness

Leadership: We cannot overstate the importance of strong leadership. Leadership ensures that emergency preparedness will be a priority and that adequate resources will be allocated to create and implement district and school-based plans.

National Incident Management System (NIMS): A nationwide system (mandated by Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5), that provides a consistent approach to emergencies for State, local, and tribal governments. This system allows the private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents regardless of cause, size, or complexity. To provide for interoperability and compatibility among state, local, and tribal capabilities, NIMS includes a core set of concepts, principles, and terminology. HSPD-5 identifies these components as the Incident Command System:

- Multi-agency coordination systems;
- Training;
- Identification and management of resources (including systems for classifying types of resources);
- Qualification and certification; and
- Collection, tracking, and report of incident information and incident resources.

Incident Command System (ICS): Is a nationally recognized organizational structure designed to handle management, operations, logistics, planning, and administration and finance. The ICS allows for appropriate utilization of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications. ICS is an integral component of NIMS. The IC is the highest-ranking official in charge of emergency response operations.

Interagency Team: Also known as the DC Emergency and Safety Alliance, is a partnership of District Government agencies which created and updates this model emergency plan tailored to District needs. The Alliance also conducts debriefings of incidents and assists individual sites with planning support

Executive Support Team (EST): Provides intervention strategies and available support personnel to schools. The EST assists in coordinating and allocating additional resources designed to backup a school when its need exceeds its day-to-day resources and implements the Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP).

School Emergency Response Team: This Team is school-based and comprised of individuals with specific duties to perform in order to mitigate,

prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies. The Team develops the individual school plan and, in the event of an emergency, implements it.

Crisis Team: Each school develops a School Crisis Team which includes the Principal, school nurse, counselors, etc. to deal with the immediate impact of a traumatic loss and decides if additional support is needed from the Central Crisis Team. The Central Crisis Team is comprised of social workers and psychologists from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and in some cases schools. The Team provides prevention information, intervention, and support to school staff, students, and parents during and in the aftermath of a crisis or traumatic event.

School Emergency Response Plan: The modified version of this Guide, tailored and fine-tuned to meet the unique needs and resources of a given school. The plan includes team assignments, emergency numbers, protocols, etc, and is developed by the individual SERT.

Communication: Plans should have established lines of internal communication (i.e., within the school), and external communication (i.e., with the district office, other district agencies, and the community). Plans should include provisions for after-hours communication (telephone tree), and address alternatives for disruptions of the telephone service.

Emergency Management Protocols: Emergency Management Protocols are step-by-step procedures for schools to implement in the event of an emergency.

Universal Emergency Procedures: a set of clear directives applicable to a number of emergency situations. These procedures include:

- Evacuation;
- Alert Status;
- Lockdown;
- Shelter in Place;
- Severe Weather Safe Area; and
- Drop, Cover, and Hold.

Mitigation: refers to any action taken to reduce the adverse effects of an emergency. These actions can eliminate existing hazards, help schools respond effectively when emergencies arise, or assist in the aftermath of an emergency during the recovery phase.

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

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

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

Training: There are three types of training: 1) Team training for general emergency preparedness; 2) Training to address specific emergency response or recovery activities (i.e., severe weather training, threat assessment training, or CISM training; and 3) Awareness training for all staff (i.e., Universal Emergency Procedures).

Practice: Practicing the plan consists of conducting internal drills, tabletop exercises, orientation for staff, etc. We generally recommend that schools start with basic internal orientation and tabletop exercises prior to engaging in full-scale simulations or drills. Also, administrators must examine options for coordinating internal exercises with external exercises. HSEMA coordinates the District's comprehensive exercise program which involves multi-agency simulations that integrate with Federal, District and private sector exercise initiatives.

Moral Responsibilities and Legal Aspects for Emergency Preparedness

Adopted from *Multi-Hazard Program for Schools*, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

Moral Responsibilities

- Schools are a vital community resource.
 - School personnel have moral and legal responsibilities to all students in their care.
 - Each school is responsible for students during day-to-day operations.
 - After a disaster, schools may serve as the gathering place for hundreds of people who live or work nearby.
- In most cases, teachers and staff members will be required to remain at school until they are released by the Principal, Superintendent, Chancellor, or LEA specific leader.
 - This responsibility to students in a disaster should be covered in each individual's employment contract.
 - This policy recognizes the school's obligation to keep students safe.
 - Just as school personnel will rely on other members of the community to open blocked roads, repair utilities, and perform rescue work, etc., community members will rely on schools to care for children in their care.
- School personnel are urged to prepare a family emergency plan, which includes contingencies for addressing family needs when emergencies prevent the employee from leaving the school campus.
 - Knowing your family is prepared and equipped to handle the situation will enable you to do your job professionally.
 - Remind your family that emergency circumstances may disrupt telephone service, preventing you from establishing contact.
 - Prepare Go-Kits for use in the car, office/classroom, and at home.
- Ideally, the school plan should include a rough prioritization of which teachers and staff members might be released first (such as those with small children at home or those having to travel the farthest distance home).
- Staff members who live alone or a long distance from school should be encouraged to make special preparations for remaining at school a longer time, such as arranging with a neighbor to check on their home and keeping extra supplies at school.

Legal Aspects

LEA's and school administrators are responsible for compliance with applicable District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) and standards.

The International Fire Code (IFC), Chapter 4 – Emergency Planning and Preparedness, is adopted by DCMR 12H – Fire Code, and is the single source currently used by the DC Fire Marshall to approve the Emergency Response Plans.

School officials with decision-making authority that neglect or avoid taking disaster safety precautions, may be found personally and financially liable for damages, injuries and deaths

Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)

Every complex job needs to be organized, and emergency management in schools is no exception. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is founded on principles of the ICS as the nationwide standard for emergency management, preparedness, and response. The NIMS organizational structure is an expandable and collapsible system of management, which has proven to be effective and efficient for most emergencies, by integrating facilities, equipment, personnel, communications and procedural requirements. At present, ICS is in use by many governments and agencies across the country.

A basic premise to ICS is that during an incident staff will transition from their day-to-day job to a similar function in addressing that emergency. For example, in an emergency the principal will become the first Incident Commander (IC) on site. One of the first responsibilities may be for the IC to order student evacuations. There may only be one IC at any given time during an incident response and that IC may change. As an example, during a hazardous materials incident, Fire and Emergency Medical Service (FEMS) will assume the role as IC, upon arrival. Management of the situation transfers from the principal to the highest ranking fire official. Similarly, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) assumes incident command during school violence events. Similarly, it assumes incident command during school criminal events, and the Department of Health (DOH) assumes command during health related emergencies, etc.

A basic premise to ICS is that in an emergency situation, staff will transition from their day-to-day jobs to a similar function in addressing that emergency.

Division of Labor

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

In the most simplistic terms:

- Management is in charge.
- Operations makes it happen (by “doing”).
- Logistics makes it possible (by “getting”).
- Planning/Intelligence makes it rational (by “thinking”).
- Administration/Finance makes it fiscally accountable (by “recording”).

Span of Control

Another concept of ICS is *span of control*. ICS structure dictates that no one person should be in charge of more than seven other people. The optimum number is five, unless a large number of people are all performing the same function: for example, one person might be in charge of ten teachers, who are all caring for students.

Common Terminology

One of the most important reasons for schools to use ICS is the common terminology and the use of plain English, not codes. Response agencies will communicate more effectively with schools if similar words are used to describe roles, functions and activates.

ICS Training for Schools

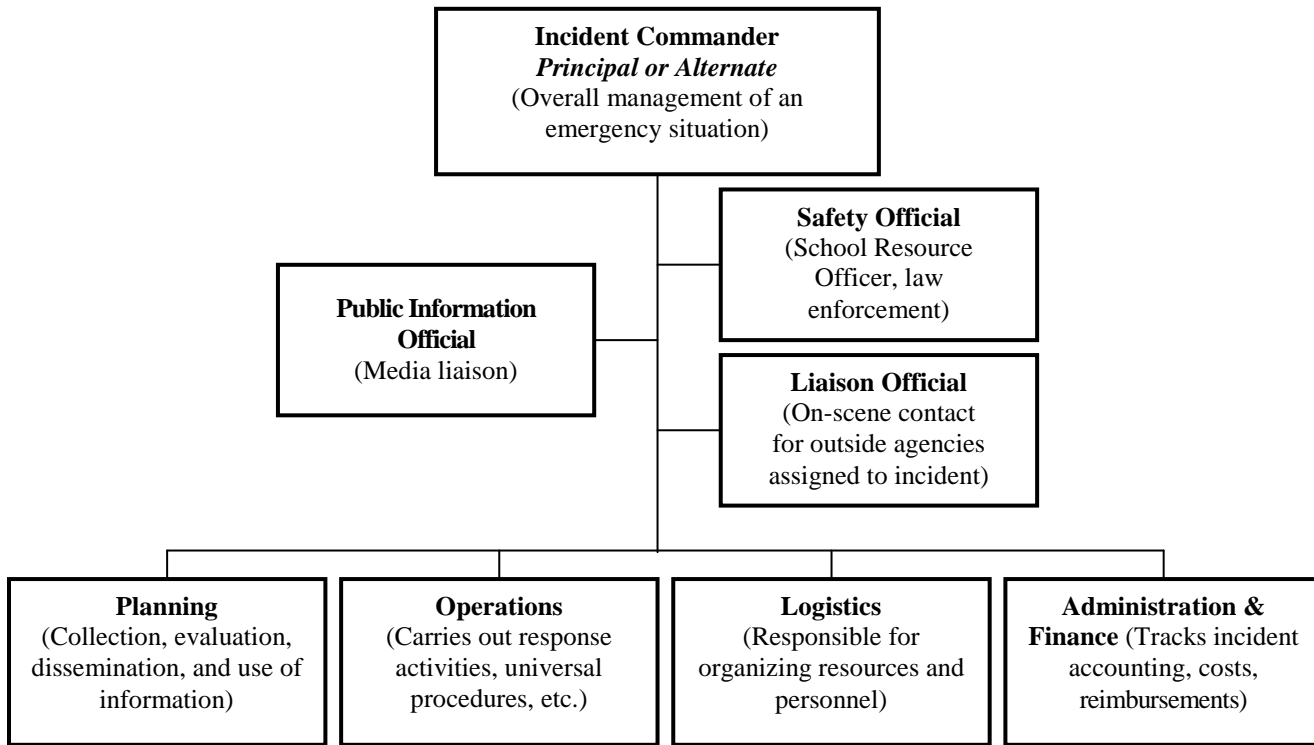
REQUIRED TRAINING²	
GENERAL ROLE	CRITICAL ROLE³
<p>Personnel with <i>any</i> role in emergency preparedness, incident management, or response should complete the following TWO courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IS-/ICS-100 An Introduction to ICS ▪ IS-/ICS-700 NIMS: An Introduction 	<p>Emergency management personnel with a <i>critical</i> role in response should complete the following four courses, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IS-/ICS-100 <i>An Introduction to ICS</i> ▪ IS-/ICS-700 <i>NIMS, An Introduction</i> ▪ IS-/ICS-800.B <i>National Response Framework, An Introduction</i> ▪ IS-/ICS-200 <i>ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents</i>
<p>NOTE: Depending on the school and campus, general incident personnel <i>may</i> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nurses and Health Officials ▪ School Security Officers ▪ Counselors, Psychologists, Psychiatrists ▪ Technology Specialists ▪ Facilities Staff ▪ Food Preparation Staff ▪ Administrators ▪ Educators/Faculty ▪ Coaches and Athletic Staff ▪ Resource staff, paraprofessionals, and support personnel 	<p>NOTE: Depending on the school and campus, this <i>may</i> include the following personnel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Emergency Response Team members ▪ Institution President ▪ Superintendents ▪ Senior Security Staff ▪ Public Relations ▪ Principals and Asst. Principals ▪ Facilities Staff

² NIMS/ICS training will be provided online and through occasional staff development sessions.

³ Critical role personnel include the Incident Commander and members of the School Emergency Response Team including alternates.

Incident Command in Schools

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



Incident Commander

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

Planning

In small emergencies, the IC is responsible for planning, but in a larger emergency, the IC establishes a Planning Section in the diagram above. Planning collects and evaluates information regarding incident development and status of resources.

Operations

On a school campus, most staff will be assigned roles in the Emergency Response Plan under the Operations Section in the diagram above. Functions performed under this area include responsibilities for student care, performance

of response activities according to established Universal Emergency Procedures and Emergency Response Protocols.

Logistics

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

Administration/Finance

Sometimes overlooked, the Administration/Finance is critical for tracking incident costs and for reimbursement accounting. This is especially important in tracking costs for a declared State or Federal disaster area.

“My Role in an Emergency”

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

Personnel Guide

All Staff

All staff should prepare their family members so they will be safe during all types of emergencies. Inform them that you, as a key school official, may be required to remain on campus to assist when an emergency situation arises.

Executive Support Team

The Executive Support Team’s role is to support the school when the need exceeds the internal resources of the school to handle a situation.

- Provide guidance when questions arise
- Direct additional support personnel, including Executive Support Team members, as needed
- Monitor the emergency situation and facilitate major decisions which need to be made
- Provide a contact for release of information to the media

Principal/Facility Director

The principal will serve as IC and be responsible for the overall direction of the emergency procedures at the school or support building site.

Responsibilities include:

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

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

Teachers

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

- Take steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other individuals in the implementation of Emergency Response Protocols
- Direct students in their charge according to established Universal Emergency Procedures
- Render first aid if necessary. School backup staff should be trained and certified in first aid and CPR
- Have their student roster and the School Emergency Procedures Guide with them
- Take roll when the class relocates or as procedures dictate.
- Report missing students and staff to the Student Accounting Coordinator
- Assist as directed by the Incident Commander

Counselors, Social Workers, and Psychologists

Counselors, social workers, psychologists will be responsible for assisting the overall direction of the emergency procedures at the site. Responsibilities include:

- Take steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other individuals in the implementation of Emergency Response Protocols
- Direct students in their charge according to established Universal Emergency Procedures
- Render first aid if necessary (under direction of nurse or designated first aid backup)
- Assist in the transfer of students, staff, and other individuals when their safety is threatened by a disaster
- Help coordinate the activities of emergency service personnel
- Maintain a line of communication with the School Emergency Response Team
- Assist as directed by the IC

School Nurses

- Provide first aid or emergency treatment as needed
- Communicate first aid and emergency treatment needs to emergency service personnel
- Be familiar with special medical needs of the school population and prepare to provide information to the school principal and/or medical responders. This is especially important, as some students may require follow up by medical personnel.
- Assist as directed by the IC

Custodians

- Survey, document, and report damage to IC. This action is important. The school may be requested to provide documentation regarding the extent or history of damages to support reimbursement from the Federal Government.
- Assist with the implementation of Universal Emergency Response Procedures and Emergency Response Protocols as directed
- Control main shutoff valves for gas, water, and electricity. Assure that no hazard is caused by broken or downed lines by restricting access to potentially dangerous areas.
- Assist in the conservation, use, and disbursement of supplies and equipment

School Secretary

- Answer phones and assist in receiving and providing consistent information to callers
- Provide for the safety of essential school records and documents
- Assist as directed by the IC

Food Service/Cafeteria Workers

- Use, prepare, and serve food and water on a rationed basis when feeding of students and staff becomes necessary during an emergency
- Assist as directed by the IC

Bus Drivers (when applicable)

- Supervise the care of students if an emergency occurs while children are on the bus
- Transfer students to new location when directed by the dispatcher or authorized regulatory agency
- Follow procedures as directed by your transportation policy for emergency situation

Practicing the Plan—Levels of Practice and Exercises

Training

Once the School Emergency Response Plan is completed, all personnel need to be trained. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that this training be:

- Informal;
- Not a simulation;
- Includes a discussion of roles and responsibilities; and
- Introduces related policies, procedures, plans, and responsibilities.

Conducting Drills

It is essential to practice the Plan periodically to make sure that it works, and that all personnel understand their roles. There are typically four ways to accomplish this goal:

1. Drill

- An informal discussion of simulated emergencies;
- May test a single component or function of the School Emergency Response Plan (e.g., a lockdown drill); and
- May only involve one or more supporting agency.

2. Tabletop Exercise

- An informal discussion of simulated emergencies;
- No time pressures;
- Low stress;
- Useful for evaluating plans and procedures; and
- Helpful to resolve questions of coordination and responsibility.

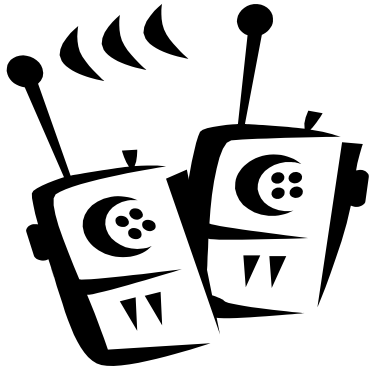
3. Functional Exercise

- An informal discussion of simulated emergencies;
- Policy and coordination personnel will practice all or part of the School Emergency Response Plan;
- More stressful and realistic simulation of real life situations;
- Usually takes place in real time;
- Emphasizes the emergency functions of the School Emergency Response Plan (e.g., perimeter security [secure all doors], utility shutdowns, and accounting for all the people who should be in school at the time [to include students and staff]); and
- SERT is activated.

4. Full-Scale Exercise

- Takes place in real time;
- Employs real people and equipment, some from the district and some from community resources anticipated to support the school in crisis;

- Coordinates many agencies and functions, both internal and external to the district;
- Intended to test several emergency functions, either concurrently or in sequence;
- Could involve activating Emergency Operations Center (EOC); and
- Produces high stress.



Unit 2

Communication

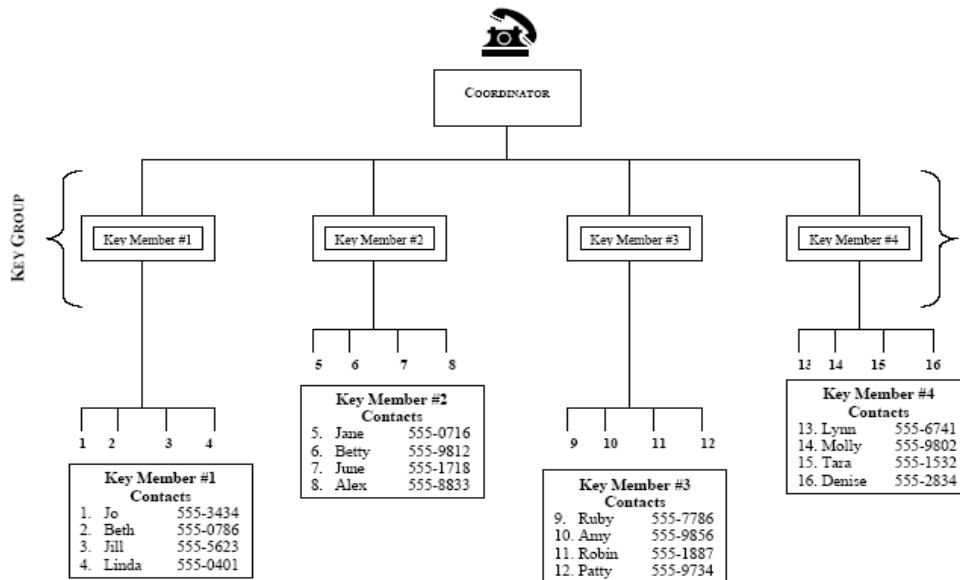
When an Emergency Occurs

Communication is a critical part of emergency management. School staff and students need to know what is happening and what to do. Parents of students and families of staff members must be informed about the situation, including the status of their child or family member. Timely contact with law enforcement and other emergency services is necessary for effective response. The Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) must be kept informed and updated by the Executive Support Team or a designee. Information must be transmitted to the EST and to other affected schools. Finally, the Office of Communications must provide media with regular updates. The principal will notify staff of an event or emergency and keep them informed as additional information becomes available and as plans for management of the situation evolve.

The Telephone Tree

A telephone tree is a simple, widely used system for notifying staff of an emergency event when they are not at school. A telephone tree is set up by listing the first in the Chain of Command (principal or IC); link him/her to several on the School Emergency Response Team; and link to different staff groupings (teachers, support staff, etc.). In practice, the first person on the list calls several people, who in turn call others, etc., until everyone on the list has been notified of the situation (in the event that you cannot reach the next person on the list you would proceed to the next person and so forth). A carefully crafted statement, specifying what is and is not yet known, and what steps may need to be taken, should be drafted before activating this important communication process.

EXAMPLE PHONE TREE LAYOUT



The End-of-Day-One Faculty Meeting

A brief, end-of-day-one meeting provides an opportunity to review day one of an emergency, to update information, and plan for day two.

Misinformation or rumors can be addressed before staff members go home or into the community where they are likely to be asked about the situation.

The Morning-After Faculty Meeting

The day following an emergency, an early faculty meeting provides an opportunity to give accurate, updated information about the emergency/event/situation. The forum provides an opportunity to review the procedures for the day with staff, including the availability of intervention resources.

Connect-ED and Written Notices

Connect-ED is an effective tool that can be used to communicate information and news to students and parents, if it's available.

Written notices are vetted through the Executive Support Team and should be provided to staff and parents. Don't forget to consider those individuals who are absent on the day of the emergency.

Alert DC

The Alert DC system provides rapid text notification and update information during a major crisis or emergency. This system delivers important emergency alerts, notifications and updates on a range of devices including your:

- E-mail account (work, home, other)
- Cell phone
- Pager, BlackBerry
- Wireless PDA

When an incident or emergency occurs, authorized DC Homeland Security & Emergency Management personnel can rapidly notify you using this community alert system. Alert DC is your personal connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do or what not to do, who to contact, and other important information.

Alert DC is available to citizens of the District of Columbia as well as individuals traveling to or working in the District. Sign up for an account to receive alerts and emergency notifications today at <https://textalert.ema.dc.gov>.

Emergency and Safety Alliance Website – <http://esa.dc.gov>

The Emergency and Safety Alliance Website serves as the login portal to the web-based application which provides emergency responders and building administrators with a quick and easy way to find emergency response plans, drill logs, reports, news, information, and resources on emergency management. Available at <http://esa.dc.gov>.

Dealing With Rumors

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

- Identify and notify internal groups with the most up-to-date facts (including administrators, teachers, students, custodians, secretaries, teaching assistants, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc). These are primary sources of information and are likely to be contacted in their neighborhoods, at grocery stores, etc. It is critical that they have accurate information because what they know (or speculate about) will be passed on. A faculty/staff meeting should be held before staff members leave so that what is (and is not) known can be clearly communicated.
- Ensure clerical staff answering phones at the school and at the Central Office is aware what information can and cannot be shared with the general public. Some information may be sensitive in nature, or the unintentional release of information may compromise effective response efforts. Clerical personnel must be kept informed of inaccurate information which is circulating so they can help correct it. Designating a few persons to answer calls helps control the circulating of misinformation.
- Use of key communicators in the community will help combat rumors. A telephone tree or a briefing held especially for identified community representatives directly associated with the school will help convey accurate information.
- The media can help control rumors; ask them to provide frequent updates to the public, particularly providing accurate information so that rumors can be dispelled.
- After the immediate emergency has passed, a public meeting may be helpful. It provides an opportunity for people to ask questions and to receive accurate information. Also, a follow-up public meeting may assist in restoring community confidence in the ability of the school and city officials to manage emergencies and provide a safe environment.

Technology

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

Telephone

Schools should have at least one unpublished number. Check with the phone company to see if there are unused lines in the school's control panel which can be activated if needed. Use standard jacks and mark them clearly so emergency personnel can find them.

Intercom Systems

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

Bullhorns and Megaphones

Battery-powered megaphones can be effective for communication in an emergency. One could be part of the SERT Go-kit. Procedures governing storage and use will help ensure availability.

Two-Way Radio

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

Computers

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

Fax Machines

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

Cellular Telephones

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

Store emergency planning references, media messages, and parental/student correspondence templates, important listings, etc., on computer flash-drives for easy transport and usage during emergencies

Alarm Systems

Bells or buzzers which may be sounded in different ways to signal different types of emergencies - for example, fire, severe weather, or special alert (with instructions to follow).

Text Alert System

The DC Emergency Text Alert is a text notification system powered by Roam Secure Alert Network that allows citizens to receive emergency text messages on any text-capable device, including computer e-mail, cell phones, and pagers. DC Text alert provides personal connection to real-time updates and instructions on evacuation routes and shelter information, preparedness and protection measures, and appropriate information contacts. It is available to residents, commuters, and tourists. When an incident or emergency occurs, authorized HSEMA personnel issue rapid notifications using this community alert system. School personnel can register for a free account at <https://textalert.ema.dc.gov>. Participation assures dissemination of timely, factual, and accurate information on incidents internal to the school district and external incidents which threaten the school community.

Emergency and Safety Alliance Website – <http://esa.dc.gov>

The Emergency and Safety Alliance Website serves as the login portal to the web-based application which provides emergency responders and building administrators with a quick and easy way to find emergency response plans, drill logs, reports, news, information, and resources on emergency management. Available at <http://esa.dc.gov>.

Strategies With Parents and Community

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

- Inform parents about the school emergency plan. Explain the objectives, the purpose and need for the guide; such information can be disseminated through a school newsletter or other informational materials prepared for parents.
 - Schools may consider adopting a partnership with parents to prepare a personal Go-Kit for each child to keep in their school locker. An old backpack can be filled with tissues, a change of clothes, blanket/throw, a toy and/or book that provides comfort, a list of medication and emergency contact information. It is beneficial if the child is involved in putting the kit together with their parent/guardian. Refer the HSEMA Family Preparedness Guide for additional information ([http://hsema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view,a,1226,Q,609437,dcemaNav,\[31810\].asp](http://hsema.dc.gov/dcema/cwp/view,a,1226,Q,609437,dcemaNav,[31810].asp)).
- Develop a relationship with parents so that they trust and feel comfortable calling school personnel in the event of emergency.
- Develop materials that may be needed including:
 - Drafts of letters to parents informing them of what happened;
 - Information regarding possible reactions of their child and ways to talk with them, helping them to cope with the emergency. (examples included in the *School Crisis Response Handbook* available in Section 7);
 - How the school and school district are handling the situation; and
 - Utilize Connect-ED and DC Alerts where applicable.
- Develop a list of community resources which may be helpful to parents or to the school in the event of an emergency.
- Identify and maintain a list of parents who are willing to volunteer in case of an emergency, include them in preparation efforts, exercises and training activities.

Sharing Information With Parents

In the event of an emergency, parents have very specific information needs. First, parents want to know their children are safe; they want details on the emergency situation; they want information on how the school is handling the incident; and they must be assured their children will be safe in the future.

First reactions are likely to involve *fear*. Upon learning of an incident at the school, parents are likely to rush to the school in search of their child or to telephone, frantically seeking information. Establishing a system for responding quickly to parent needs for information is an important part of preplanning. *Anger* is another common reaction of parents, particularly in the case of senseless acts of violence. In the event of an emergency or disaster:

- Tell parents exactly what is known to have happened. Do not embellish, speculate, or downplay the seriousness of the event.
- Implement the plan to manage phone calls and establish protocols for receiving and meeting with parents who arrive at school.
 - Schools should designate a parent reunification area where counselors/faculty can present the situation, address parental emotional distress, and provide guidance for parents to assist their children in coping with the incident (parents will leave this initial meeting area to be reunited with the child/children).
- Schedule and attend an open question-and-answer meeting for parents as soon after the incident as possible. The meeting will provide an opportunity for school officials to listen and respond to parent concerns (which are helpful in combating rumors and other misinformation) and to work on restoring parental trust in the school.
- In the event of an incident which involved damage or destruction, an open house for parents and other members of the community to see the school restored to its normal state helps everyone move beyond the emergency.

In the event of an emergency, parents have very specific information needs.

Communication With the Media

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

- Familiarize the media with school policies by establishing a rapport in advance of disasters. Involve the media in practice drills and exercises to help them understand and communicate the policies and procedures schools will use during an emergency.
- Identify a single information source
- Direct media representatives to one area (on or off campus) where briefings can take place. Pre-designate a staging area (on or off site) for media personnel to park their vehicles and/or communications equipment.
- Instruct all employees to refer all information and questions to the Media Liaison or Information Official
- If the emergency is a death, consult with the deceased student/staff member's family before making a statement. Be prepared to explain measures the school has undertaken to address student and faculty grief counseling needs. Also, address actions taken to avoid loss of life in future incidents.
- Insist that reporters respect the privacy rights of students and staff
- Advise students of the media policy
- The Media Liaison or Information Official should decide what to say, issue a statement, and answer questions within the limits of confidentiality.
- Remind employees that only designated spokespersons are authorized to talk with news media
- Take the initiative with news media, and let them know what is or is not known about the situation
- Emphasize the good history of the school/district
- Speak to reporters in plain English—not in *educationese*
- If there is involvement with a criminal case, work in conjunction with the law enforcement spokesperson.
- Don't try to kill a story; don't say "no comment"; don't speculate; don't try to blame anyone for anything
- When communicating, maintain a unified position and message; keep messages concise, clear, and consistent.
- Contact Executive Support Team to regularly update
- Delay releasing information until facts are verified and the school's position is clear; prepare statements about the situation in advance to read (avoid ad-libbing).
- Assign sufficient staff to handle phones, and keep a log of calls and personal contacts
- Express appreciation to all persons who helped handle the emergency

- For complex incidents, consider utilizing expertise of a multi-disciplinary team of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to address specific emergency functions such as law enforcement or health emergency response strategies

Sample Statements to the Media

Sample 1: Bus Accident

Our third-grade students were on a field trip when their school bus was involved in an accident on Interstate-95 (I-95). Emergency medical teams have arrived and are transporting students to (NAME) community hospital. Our Assistant Principal is at the scene, and our Instructional Superintendent is at the hospital. We have established a hotline for parents (or, staff members are calling parents of students involved in the accident). The hotline number is (NUMBER). Our School Emergency Response Team (SERT) is implementing our emergency protocol for bus accidents, including providing support to students and staff.

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

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

A fight involving two 11th-grade students occurred a block from campus at 7:00 p.m. last night. The incident resulted in the fatal shooting of one of our students. Police are investigating, and no additional information is known at this time, but police are conducting an ongoing investigation.

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

Note: Important points are: Even though the incident occurred off campus after hours, the school still has a responsibility to act; the incident is coupled with a restatement of the District weapons policy; the school demonstrates it is able to handle emergencies by convening a SERT meeting; by drawing on District resources; and by providing (or accessing) crisis counseling to the students.

Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you that the (Name of School or District) has recently experienced (specify event, whether death, fire, etc.), which has deeply affected us. Let me briefly review the facts (give brief description of incident and known facts).

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

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

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

Sincerely,

(Principal Name)
(Phone)