



YOUR SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANNING GUIDE

There is an ever-growing need for schools to have an Emergency Operations Plan prepared and set in place. To help your school(s) meet this goal, BearCom used multiple sources (including the K-12 School Security Checklist issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2013), to compile many of the topics a strong Emergency Operations Plan should address.

Goals/Objectives for an Emergency Response Plan

The purpose of this Guide is to:

- Reduce response time in an emergency.
- Ensure that teachers, administrators, and staff are trained and ready for critical situations.
- Help keep students and staff safer, while offering parents peace of mind.
- Address additional safety and security issues like bullying, hate crimes, and weather emergencies.



Topics for Discussion and Consideration

Building Interior

- 1 Are surveillance cameras strategically located in stairwells, hallways, and doorways?
- 2 Is there a place to go if dangerous weather hits, like a room without windows or a weather shelter?
- 3 Are panic buttons/call boxes/alarms installed and functional, and is your staff aware of them?
- 4 Are stairs, hallways, and restrooms sufficiently lit and free of safety hazards?
- 5 Do you have smoke detectors with vandal-resistant features like tamper alarms or protective cages?
- 6 Is there adequate access to fire extinguishers and first aid supplies (such as automated external defibrillators, or AEDs)?

Building Exterior

- 1 Are windows and doors securely locked? Is there a "zero tolerance" for non-compliance?
- 2 Are window hardware and frames regularly inspected for security weaknesses?
- 3 Does the building have hurricane glass to prevent bullets from penetrating through the windows?
- 4 Is ballistic-resistant film installed on front doors and glass?
- 5 Are there appropriate entry barriers and gates installed (and secured when not in use)?
- 6 Are fences and gates in place and in good working order?
- 7 Are outlying structures included in all safety and security considerations?

Access Control

- 1 Do ingress/egress doors have access control features?
- 2 Is there a continuously monitored, single point of entry into the facility?
- 3 Are there restricted and no-access areas that are secured and monitored?
- 4 Is access to the roof restricted?
- 5 Are visitors required to log in with the front office upon arrival and departure?
- 6 Are staff and visitor ID badges required and enforced at all times?



7 Are vendors and contractors escorted throughout your facility?

8 Do you have a key control program that monitors keys and entry cards?

9 Is your key control program audited annually?

Classroom Security

1 Have you established safe zones or protection areas in the classroom?

2 Do classrooms have designated “hard corners”—an area where students and teachers can stay out of sight if there is an intruder?

3 Do your classrooms have access to two-way communication systems?

4 Are all areas of the classroom visible from the classroom door?

5 Can the doors be locked from the inside?

6 If the doors have windows, can they be covered?

7 Do the classrooms have sufficient aisle space for quick exits?

8 Are hazardous materials like chemicals and poisons properly secured and stored?

9 Are valuable items like computers and video equipment secured?

Emergency Response

1 Is there a formal Emergency Response Team with the proper training and resources, along with scheduled meetings?
Has everyone had hands-on experience with the technology and media tools they may be expected to use?

2 Are you prepared for critical conditions like an active shooter, hostage situation, bomb threat, tornado/hurricane/flood?

3 Are you prepared for multiple threats and hazards in one location (such as a football stadium)?

4 Have you considered worst-case scenarios, such as places or situations where endangered staff or students may be isolated or difficult to reach?

5 Has every thought and approach been explored to speed response time?

6 Can teachers communicate with security and administrators throughout the facility, with strong enough signals in places like stairwells and bathrooms?

7 Is there a clear Chain of Command protocol established for emergency communications in both interior and exterior areas?

8 Is there a contingency Chain of Command process in case the primary plan cannot be executed?

9 Is there an established Chain of Command between public safety agencies that the school or district needs to know?

10 Do your personnel and school(s) have wireless connectivity plans and technologies in place to reach the right public safety agencies in case of emergency?

11 Do you have someone in charge of communicating with first responders? Have you established procedures for how communications will be handled?

12 Are staff members trained to communicate clearly and briefly in an emergency, stating the most important information first?

13 Are staff members trained to issue things like a Code Red?

14 Has your school recently conducted an assessment of your facility's ability to support first responder radio coverage throughout your buildings?

15 Is your facility compliant with all Public Safety and AHJ (Authority Having Jurisdiction) radio signal requirement codes?



Effective Crises Management

- 1 Have you pulled or prepared tools for graphic situational awareness such as in-building GIS, building and campus maps, schematics, and blueprints? Are these items centralized and accessible? Are they secure and accessible if/when needed? Are there backups in case the area where they are stored is compromised or inaccessible in an emergency?
- 2 Are there plans in place to have a Command and Control Center?
- 3 Have you studied and implemented best practices and lessons learned from other institutions?
- 4 Are evacuation plans worked out and documented for multiple scenarios, including on-premise/off-premise; as well as centralized gathering areas/de-centralized gathering areas? Is bus transportation needed for off-premise evacuation?
- 5 Have reunification plans been considered and prepared?
- 6 Are there communication plans to notify parents and the community (since you cannot rely on cell phones during wide-scale emergencies)?

Addressing Threats

- 1 Is there a formal Threat Assessment Team with the proper training, resources, and scheduled meetings?
- 2 Does your school have a well-defined lockdown process in place? Does everyone know their roles and who has authority to institute?
- 3 If a potential threat arises, can anyone initiate a lockdown (including groundskeepers, maintenance personnel, janitorial/custodial staff, crossing guards, and bus drivers)?
- 4 Do response procedures differentiate between an active shooter or intruder, a fire, and other threats (for instance, do students/faculty members know to hide in a classroom and not file out into the hallway)?
- 5 Do you have an administrative staff member who monitors the weather on a daily basis and will notify faculty, parents, and students if there is a threat for severe weather conditions?
- 6 Do you have a school-based radio system that, in an emergency, can gather information from educators while bypassing commercial cellular networks that will be swamped by worried parents and students?
- 7 Are all potential resources identified across the district, including the superintendent's office, SROs, and other shared assets that may be located elsewhere?
- 8 Are student representatives and leaders included in planning, implementation, and communication?
- 9 Are citizens, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders involved?

Cybersecurity

- 1 Does your school have a well-trained computer security staff?
- 2 Do faculty, staff members, and students use passwords and unique login information to access electronic files?
- 3 Have you established security plans for computer and information systems?
- 4 Are faculty, staff, and students trained in safe and secure computer use?
- 5 Do the computers in your school have filters to monitor internet activity?
- 6 Is there a video security system in place to adequately protect against hackers?



School Culture

- 1 Has your administration maximized efforts to maintain and sustain a positive school culture?
- 2 Are there regular and effective safety-related campaigns?
- 3 Do faculty and staff members monitor the hallways, stairways, and restrooms during school hours?
- 4 Have staff members been trained to properly respond to and report suspicious behavior?
- 5 Is there a program in place to monitor social media?
- 6 Is there a way to anonymously report concerns—for instance, if a student hears or believes there may be an imminent threat?
- 7 Do you have a safety plan that includes training and interaction with school personnel, first responders, and other community partners?
- 8 Are there programs aimed at preventing harmful behaviors (e.g., social problem-solving, life skills, and anti-bullying)?

Continuous Improvement on an Emergency Preparedness Plan

- 1 Does an aggressive safe school program remain a key area of focus?
- 2 Are emergency preparedness and school safety/security topics promoted and reinforced regularly to increase buy-in and effectiveness?
- 3 Are staff members included in regular training and drills?
- 4 Are there effective drills at inconvenient times to ensure everyone knows their roles?
- 5 Are there observers monitoring behavior and efficiency during these drills to identify gaps and areas for improvement?
- 6 Is the existing safety and security equipment well-maintained, tested thoroughly, and inspected regularly?
- 7 Are new technologies and tools like automated access control solutions, surveillance systems, communication devices, gunshot detection software, and more on your school's radar?

Getting Started

Whether you already have a School Emergency Operations Plan in place or not, there are many effective approaches to help achieve success, such as:

- Use a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to gather information and brainstorm about your school's safety and security.
- Use a GAP analysis to identify improvement areas that need to be addressed.
- Rely on subject matter experts to help articulate trends and best practices.
- Use effective strategies from other districts in your area or state.
- Reference online resources for information and ideas (task forces, grants, long-term vision, and incremental wins).

You will also want to have a budget in mind, plus get connected with others in your district with safety and security responsibilities, and meet with first responder agency representatives.

Additionally, implementing technology tools and solutions can provide enormous benefits to increase safety and security in emergencies. In fact, BearCom has prepared a separate School Safety Scorecard to share with your school or district to provide additional safety and security ideas.

Create an Effective Safety Operations Plan Today

If you need help developing or improving your school's emergency operations with additional safety and security solutions, contact your BearCom representative or find our nearest branch at www.bearcom.com/locations. Or, call **800.527.1670** for a free consultation.