



# HELPFULHINTS

## FOR SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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### Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools

This short, Web-based course is part of FEMA's Independent Study Program, a component of its Emergency Management Institute. The one-day class specifically addresses hazard assessment, plan development, emergency management operations and the roles and responsibilities of school crisis team members. School-based professionals with emergency management responsibilities, as well as individuals with an interest in school preparedness, are encouraged to take the course.

Additional information is accessible at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp>.

To ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff, schools and school districts nationwide should create comprehensive, multi-hazard management plans that focus on the four phases of emergency management—prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. This plan is a school and school district's most powerful tool for dealing with crises, ensuring the security of the school community and addressing the safety needs of all students, staff and visitors, including those with disabilities and special needs. To begin the process of developing and maintaining an emergency management plan, a district crisis response team should be assembled that includes a variety of professionals with expertise in emergency management (e.g., police, fire and emergency services personnel), and include community partners (e.g., public and mental health professionals) and school-based staff (e.g., facilities and

cafeteria managers, nurses, disability specialists, counselors, teachers and administrators). The district teams should work closely with school-based crisis response teams to develop districtwide and building-specific emergency management plans. Partner agreements, or memoranda of understanding, should also be created by the school and school district crisis response teams to clearly delineate team members' and community partners' roles and responsibilities.

The following checklist, Components of School and School District Emergency Management Plans, can assist schools and school districts in developing a new emergency management plan or refreshing their current one. To use the checklist, individuals should consider the extent to which the school or school district's emergency management plan does each of the activities listed and check the appropriate box.

The contents of this document are not prescriptive best practices for every school or school district, but rather suggestions to consider in a school or district's emergency management efforts.

## COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

COMPONENT	Extent of Development			
	Fully In Place	Partially In Place	Not Yet In Place	Estimated Date To Be In Place
<b>General</b>				
Establishes school and school district crisis response teams based on the National Incident Management System's (NIMS), Incident Command System (ICS). (For more information on the NIMS, visit <a href="http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm">http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/index.shtm</a> .)				
Demonstrates meaningful collaboration with community partners (e.g., local public health, mental health, public safety, local government, law enforcement and emergency services personnel) and establishes memoranda of understanding among team members and partners.				
Outlines an all-hazards approach to emergency management planning.				
Documents school board approval of the plan.				
Shows alignment and integration with federal, state, community and district emergency management plans (e.g., supports the implementation of NIMS).				
Specifies accommodations and modifications for people with disabilities and special needs.				
Provides a time line for maintaining and updating plan components.				
<b>Prevention-Mitigation</b>				
Provides or is based on an assessment protocol that outlines: an assessment schedule; the persons responsible for conducting the assessments; the corrective actions to take place; or the support programs to be installed.				
Assesses physical and environmental risks (e.g., regional, buildings).				
Assesses the social and emotional well-being of students, faculty and staff.				

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Components (continued)

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Assesses school culture and climate.				
Lists mitigation activities.				
Prioritizes ongoing risks that cannot be mitigated.				
Other				
<b>Preparedness</b>				
Institutionalizes the NIMS' ICS and assigns roles and responsibilities to individuals.				
Outlines crisis teams' and community partners' duties as detailed in the memoranda of understanding.				
Incorporates pre-negotiated contracts for services that may be needed in case of an emergency (e.g., transportation, construction work, food, etc.).				
Outlines steps for transferring command from school administrators to the incident commander as the crisis unfolds.				
Provides criteria for response (e.g., evacuation, lock-down or shelter-in-place).				
Lists emergency supplies and go-kit components tailored to the:				
■ Classroom				
■ Main office				
■ Cafeteria				
■ Gymnasium				
■ Other nonclassroom locations				
Lists available emergency medical supplies.				
Lists available emergency sanitation supplies.				

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Components (continued)

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Provides information about the school's facilities (e.g., maps, floor plans and location of utility cutoffs).				
Details individual communications plans during an emergency with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Faculty and staff</li> <li>■ Students</li> <li>■ District administrators</li> <li>■ First responders</li> <li>■ Parents or guardians</li> <li>■ Media</li> </ul>				
Lists schoolwide and classroom-specific communication devices and how to use them in different emergencies.				
Incorporates plans for communicating emergency management procedures to parents and guardians.				
Ensures communication equipment interoperability with those of first responders.				
Provides guidance on family reunification plans and procedures.				
Specifies transportation and traffic procedures during and after a crisis.				
Outlines training to be provided to crisis response teams, faculty, staff, students and parents.				
Outlines a schedule of drills and exercises.				
Details maintenance and enhancement activities for the continual revision of the school emergency management plan.				
<b>Response</b>				
Outlines the process for activating the ICS.				

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Assigns a public information officer (PIO) to communicate with the media and the public during an emergency.				
Assigns an incident commander to manage the Command function of the ICS.				
Assigns crisis response team members to manage the four other functions of the ICS: Logistics, Operations, Planning, and Finance-Administration.				
Assigns a member of the crisis response team to take detailed notes on practice drills, specific events and actions taken during an emergency.				
Incorporates structure for conducting after-action debriefings.				
Outlines procedures for revising the plan based on lessons learned.				
<b>Recovery</b>				
Provides a damage-assessment protocol for physical assets.				
Outlines procedures and strategies for physical and structural recovery.				
Outlines financial and logistical protocols and resources for recovery.				
Establishes procedures for making decisions about school closures.				
Incorporates a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).				
Provides criteria for reopening schools.				
Provides protocols for activating memoranda of understanding with mental health agencies.				
Identifies types of support (e.g., extracurricula activities and mental health interventions) for students and staff exhibiting symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.				

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Offers strategies for providing follow up and ongoing mental-emotional recovery interventions.				
Addresses parental or guardian consent for mental health services for students.				
Incorporates sample templates (e.g., a letter notifying parents or guardians of a student's death) to notify members of the school community about crisis events.				
Provides guidelines for standing and temporary memorials, and the observance of anniversaries.				
Provides the PIO with protocols and templates for ongoing communication with the media, parents or guardians and the local community.				
Provides guidelines for screening potential volunteers.				
Provides guidelines for accepting donations.				



The Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERC) Technical Assistance (TA) Center was established in October 2004 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS). The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency and crisis response plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications and individualized responses to requests. *Helpful Hints* provides a quick overview of school emergency preparedness topics that are frequently the subject of inquiries. For additional information about the National Incident Management System (NIMS) or any other emergency management-related topic, visit the ERC TA Center at <http://www.ercm.org> or call 1-888-991-3726.

For information about the Emergency Response and Crisis Management grant program, contact Tara Hill ([tara.hill@ed.gov](mailto:tara.hill@ed.gov)), Michelle Sinkgraven ([michelle.sinkgraven@ed.gov](mailto:michelle.sinkgraven@ed.gov)) or Sara Strizzi ([sara.strizzi@ed.gov](mailto:sara.strizzi@ed.gov)).

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