CRISIS RESPONSE BOX

Partnering for Safe Schools

A Guide to Help Every School Assemble the Tools and Resources Needed for a Critical Incident Response.

BILL LOCKYER
California Attorney General

DELAINE EASTIN
California Superintendent of Public Instruction

Foreword

Recent tragedies on school campuses in Mount Morris Township, Michigan; Littleton, Colorado; and Conyers, Georgia raise serious concerns about school safety. School and law enforcement officials involved in these tragedies reinforce one resounding message: It can happen to you.

*The **Crisis Response Box** is a guide to assist schools in crisis prevention planning. A strong crisis response strategy is designed to contain a crisis and thereby reduce the risk of violence or trauma to students and school personnel. "The box" is a unique product of the California Attorney General and State Superintendent of Public Instruction's Safe Schools Task Force, developed to help schools, local law enforcement and emergency services personnel prepare for a school emergency.*

The Crisis Response Box is an invaluable resource if a critical incident ever arises at your school. It walks you through the steps necessary to assemble a school emergency response plan adapted for your school and community before an event occurs.

School and law enforcement officials involved in most of the recent major school shooting incidents across the nation helped design this tool based on the lessons they learned. It includes what they wished they had had at their fingertips when crisis hit their schools. With this powerful tool, you will have at hand the information you need if an emergency strikes – for maximum protection of students and staff and a swift recovery of the entire school community.

Comprehensive school crisis prevention planning includes assembling the box, coordinating with all those who will be involved if a crisis occurs, conducting practice drills and identifying security needs. The box, therefore, is designed to be both a process and a result. It consists of bringing together school officials, law enforcement officers and emergency services personnel in the collaborative process required to meet your school's disaster planning needs. And, it will result in a tangible aid to gaining control of any school critical incident.

We hope you never need to use the contents in a Crisis Response Box – but we also hope you have one if you ever do face a crisis.

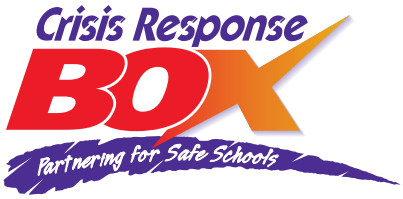
BILL LOCKYER

Attorney General

DELAINE EASTIN

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Background



In February 1999, the Attorney General and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction formed a 23-person Safe Schools Task Force, representing education, law enforcement, community groups and youth. The State Superintendent and Attorney General asked the Task Force members to identify ways to further address crime in our schools and create a more powerful partnership between schools and law enforcement to keep schools safe and free from violence. The Task Force members stressed, among other recommendations, that effective crisis response procedures are critical to enhanced school safety. The Crisis Response Box is a product of the Safe Schools Task Force, designed to help you establish effective emergency procedures.

In response to the concerns of parents, students, school administrators and teachers, and spurred by incidents of violence on school campuses, the California Legislature enacted Senate Bill 187 (Chapter 736, Hughes, Statutes of 1997) that requires all California schools to develop and implement comprehensive Safe School Plans. (Education Code section 35294.2) In addition, California requires that school principals formulate and submit to the district superintendent for approval a civil defense and disaster preparedness plan for that school. Principals must test that plan at least two times during the school year. (Education Code section 33031) The law also deems public employees to be disaster service workers subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them, and that school districts have a responsibility to be as prepared as possible to meet emergencies. (California Government Code, Title 1, Division 4, Chapter 8, section 3100)

The California Department of Education provides schools with guidelines and a planning process for safe school planning that meet the requirements of SB 187. This seven-step process is detailed in the Department's publication, *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*.[1] The sixth step in the planning process directs schools to identify the strategies they will use to implement their plan. Among those strategies required by the law is the development of disaster and emergency response procedures. Assembling the contents of the Crisis Response Box will augment what schools may have done in fulfilling this very important requirement. It does not, however, constitute a comprehensive Safe School Plan required by Section 35294.2.

The President's National School Safety Council also recommends that schools develop a crisis management plan, including a contingency plan, for intervention during a crisis and in response to a tragedy.

The Crisis Response Box has one simple goal: school administrators will immediately have the information essential for effective management of a major critical incident.

The Purpose of the Crisis Response Box

The Crisis Response Box has one simple goal: school administrators will immediately have the information essential for effective management of a major critical incident. A crisis is not the time to collect information – it is the time to act upon information. Precious minutes need not be lost gathering life-saving intelligence. Knowing what information to collect ahead of time, how to organize it and how to use it during a crisis are all addressed through assembling the contents of the box.

Research Behind the Crisis Response Box

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Attorney General's Safe Schools Task Force commissioned a study of the current best practices used throughout California and the country in preventing and responding to critical incidents in schools. This project drew upon a number of valuable resources:

- Personal interviews with law enforcement officials who have responded to major school shooting incidents throughout the country
- Interviews with school superintendents and local law enforcement officials who have developed mutual crisis or disaster procedures
- The results of a School Violence Summit called by the FBI Academy and the Arkansas State Police that brought together law enforcement officers who had been engaged in tragic critical incidents involving homicides at their local schools
- Existing crisis response procedures developed in partnership between schools, law enforcement and community response agencies
- *From Chaos to Control: School Crisis Response*[2]

Those involved in such incidents were asked to answer these questions: "Knowing what you know today, what information would you have liked to have had to help you better manage the crisis?" "From your experience, what information should school administrators and police officials have at their finger tips in a crisis?"

Answers to these questions helped Safe Schools Task Force members to recommend a crisis response information inventory. Twenty critical pieces of information have been identified along with the procedures to gather the material, the rationale behind collecting it and instructions on how to use it during a critical incident. All this information is stored in the box. Thus, school administrators who use this tool will benefit directly from the lessons learned by other schools who faced critical incidents and from the insights of law enforcement officers who responded to such crises.

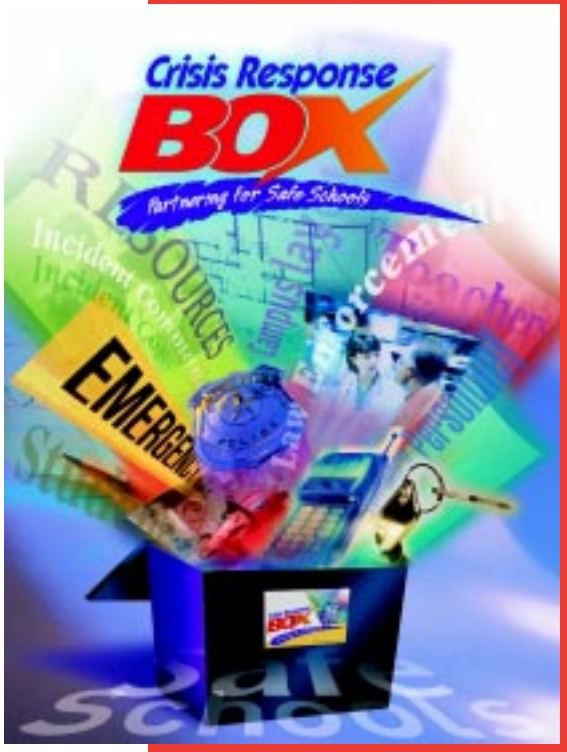
All participants in this project made it clear: the information needed in a critical incident should be assembled ahead of time and contained in one place; the information needs to be portable and easily accessible in a crisis. It should be in a format enabling it to be quickly shared with first responders. School and community officials who have reviewed the Crisis Response Box School Critical Incident Information Inventory welcome its simplicity as an organizing tool.

The Information You Need – In One Place

"We found that organizing a box . . . that contains crucial information we would need to respond to a critical incident was a great way for both the schools and the police to think through how they would work together in an actual crisis. The principal, local police and local fire department have the same kit. Every summer we meet and review the contents and update them."

Captain Terry Rammell
La Habra Police Department
La Habra, California

Joan Mallard
Director of Special Programs
La Habra City School District
La Habra, California



[1] *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action* (1995 Edition) was developed jointly by the California Department of Education and the California Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center. An Addendum to the Guide was published in 1998 in response to the passage of SB 187. Copies can be ordered by calling the California Department of Education at (916) 445-1260.

[2] *From Chaos to Control: School Crisis Response* (1994), training materials produced by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association in collaboration with the School/Law Enforcement Partnership and modeled after materials developed by crisis response trainer, Mary Schoenfeldt.

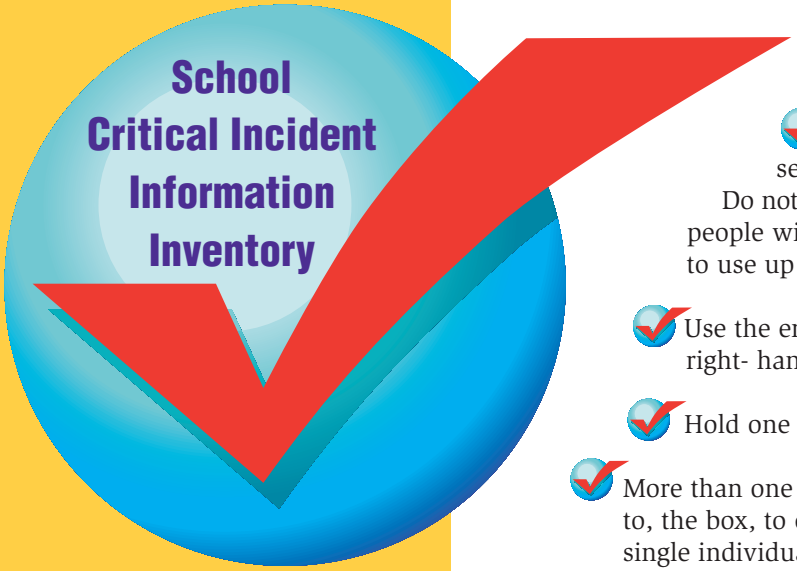
Creating, Maintaining and Using Your Own Crisis Response Box

"Open-ended communication with school administrators and law enforcement officials must take place while planning. Each must know what his or her individual responsibility is and be comfortable with it. A tragedy is not the place to start debating assignments or responsibilities or whose turf it is."

Bill Slade, Chief of Police
Pearl Police Department
Pearl, Mississippi

Schools should bring together the appropriate staff to review the School Critical Incident Information Inventory (see p. 14 and 15) and identify who in the school or community will be responsible for gathering each specific item. The purpose of the Crisis Response Box is to quickly locate and provide relevant information to the right people so they may begin responding. Each item on the Information Inventory is explained below. Following are overall suggestions to help you create your own Crisis Response Box.

- Bring together an interdisciplinary team to review the School Critical Incident Information Inventory checklist – including maintenance and grounds staff, local law enforcement, medical emergency response and fire officials. Be sure to coordinate the planning process with your local emergency response system. (See Integrating with your local Incident Command System, p. 11.)
- A School Critical Incident Information Inventory is provided at the back of this guide. Begin by making copies of it to use as your work sheet for organizing the critical data you will need to complete your box.
- As indicated on the Information Inventory checklist at the end of this guide, identify one individual as the responsible party for each listed item.
- Under the date column on the checklist, enter the most recent date that the information has been reviewed and/or updated.



- Place the Information Inventory checklist on the inside cover of the box and update it at least twice a year.
- Keep each information item within the Crisis Response Box separate. It is a good idea to place each in a clear plastic folder. Do not bind the various information items together. In a crisis, specific people will need information relevant to their tasks – you do not want to use up time sorting through a notebook.
- Use the enclosed contents decals to clearly mark each item on the upper right- hand corner of the first page for quick identification and retrieval.
- Hold one individual accountable for maintenance of the box.
- More than one person should have knowledge of the location of, and access to, the box, to ensure its prompt retrieval and implementation in a crisis. A single individual may not be at school when a crisis hits or may be sidelined by events. At the same time, strict security of the contents must be maintained at all times.

Creating, Maintaining and Using Your Own Crisis Response Box

- Store the information in a box or container clearly marked with the enclosed Crisis Response Box decals. Duplicates of the box can also be given to the local school district office; local law enforcement agency; the local fire department; and other local emergency services personnel. Be sure to have more than one box – one in the office area and one or two in other locations in case the office is not accessible.
- After the incident, the entire critical response team should meet to debrief. Recommendations for improvement of future planning, performance and response will be based on this debriefing.
- Schools need to be prepared to provide activities for their school community even after the initial incident is resolved. Students and staff alike may need support as they struggle to return to a sense of normalcy. A mental health support team should be established to deal with the immediate and ongoing aftermath activities.

"One of the major problems we faced at Columbine was the gridlock. With the crisis being covered live on CNN and local television, parents, relatives and news crews rushed to the scene. The roads couldn't handle the traffic. Even the ambulances had a hard time getting through."

Officer Joe Schallmoser
Director of Security Services
Jefferson County Public Schools
Littleton, Colorado

Planning for an Emergency with an Interdisciplinary Team

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is a nationally recognized emergency operations plan that is adapted for large critical incidents where multi-agency response is required. Schools are mandated to use SEMS and the Incident Command System (ICS) as the organizing structure for their Crisis Response Plan. SEMS facilitates priority-setting, interagency cooperation and the efficient flow of resources and information.

SEMS establishes common standards of organization, procedures, communications and terminology among agencies. This unified command structure functions under the direction of the ICS and all agencies and organizations work together under this system to more effectively respond to any major critical incident. By adopting and utilizing this system, schools will respond to any critical incident with better communication and coordination with other responding agencies and organizations. (See Integrating with your local Incident Command System, p. 11.)

Components of the Crisis Response Box

The Crisis Response Box contains more than directions to use in the event of an emergency. The following components make possible a thorough school and community response to a crisis:

Aerial Photos of Campus

An aerial perspective of the campus and the surrounding area is very helpful to all agencies involved in a critical incident, including police, fire and paramedic personnel. Your local municipality may be able to provide you with an aerial photo of your school and surrounding campus.

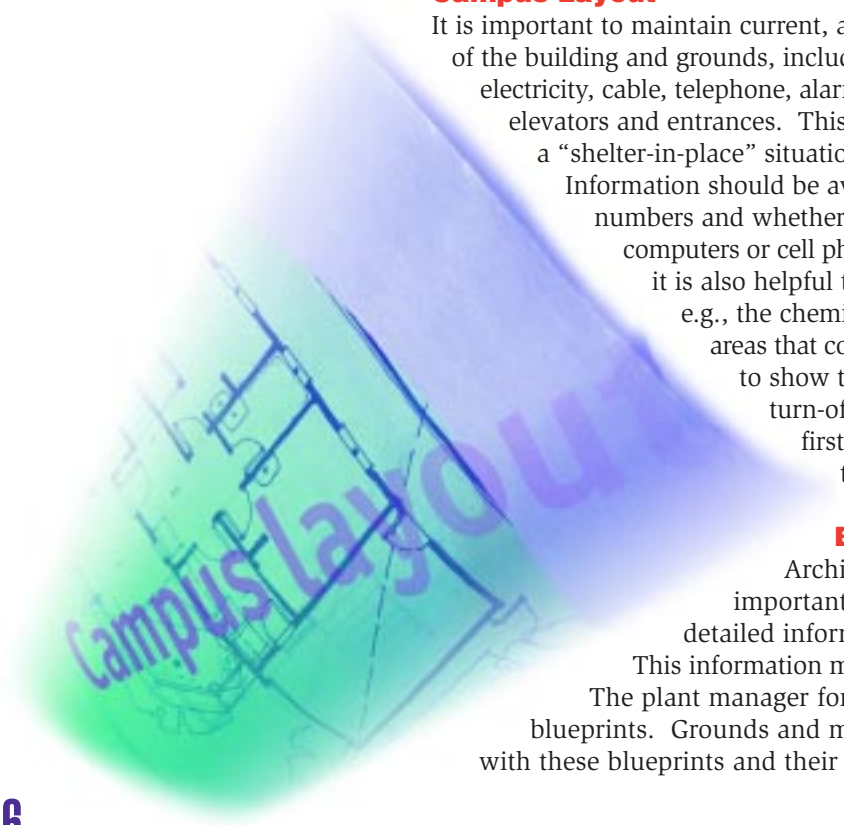
Map

Crisis response planners need to review the traffic patterns and intersections that will be affected in a major crisis. Through this process, you can identify locations where parents or guardians can retrieve their children after an incident and determine traffic safety issues your school and law enforcement will have to consider when directing youth to safe areas. Keep as many as 20 copies of the map available, preferably laminated, for emergency personnel. Establish an emergency traffic plan capable of protecting emergency response routes and accommodating traffic and parking needs for parents, students and the media. The map should illustrate these planned routes as well as:

- The streets surrounding the school
- Intersections near the school
- Vacant lots near the school
- Location of major utilities

Campus Layout

It is important to maintain current, accurate blueprints, classroom layouts and floor plans of the building and grounds, including information about main leads for water, gas, electricity, cable, telephone, alarm and sprinkler systems, hazardous materials location, elevators and entrances. This information is extremely helpful, especially during a "shelter-in-place" situation when students are safely locked in a classroom. Information should be available on the layout of the building, including room numbers and whether or not there is a phone, cable television, e-mail, computers or cell phones in the classroom. On the campus layout diagram, it is also helpful to highlight areas that could pose a possible threat, e.g., the chemistry lab, biology lab or any welding and wood shop areas that could also become a haven for weapons. It is also helpful to show the location of the fire alarm turn-off, sprinkler system turn-off, utility shut-off valves, cable television shut-off and first aid supply boxes. These items can be color-coded on the campus layout.



Blueprint of School Buildings

Architectural blueprints of the school building(s) are important to a SWAT team, and provide additional – and more detailed information – than the simple classroom layout diagram. This information may be critical, especially in the event of a bomb threat. The plant manager for the school site should be the custodian for the blueprints. Grounds and maintenance staff of the school should be familiar with these blueprints and their location.

Teacher/Employee Roster

A teacher/employee roster should go into the Crisis Response Box. If you can enter teachers' names on the classroom layout diagram, all the better. If not, be sure to match up each teacher's name with his or her classroom – and identify whether or not each teacher has a cell or landphone. This roster should identify any teacher/employee with special medical needs (e.g., diabetes) who will require medications during a prolonged period and those with a disability who may require assistance in an evacuation. In a critical incident, someone in the front office should pick up the visitor/volunteer/substitute teacher list.

Keys

The Crisis Response Box should also contain a master key and an extra set of keys for those rooms for which a master key cannot be used. The keys must be clearly tagged. Consider placing the keys in a locked container within the box to assure added security in case the box should end up in the wrong hands. Some schools have found it advantageous to keep the master key in a Knox box outside of the school. This is a secured metal box that can easily be accessed by a code or a key without having to enter the building. This can prove especially helpful when it is not safe to enter the school. Further information on a Knox box can be obtained from your local fire department.

Fire Alarm Turn-off Procedures

One of the lessons learned from Columbine was to make it easier to turn off the alarm. The loud alarm made it very difficult for responders to hear directions. It took considerable time before someone who knew how to turn it off was able to do so. School officials learned that you can't assume that the person who knows how to turn off the alarm will be logistically able to do so. If that person is inside the building he or she might not be able to get to the shut-off valve; if that person is outside, it is possible that he or she might not be able to safely re-enter the school. As a result, a number of people need to know how to shut off the alarm. Providing such information on where shut-off valves are located in the building and the procedures for shut-off in the box could prove vital. In addition, though somewhat costly, some schools have installed a secure alarm shut-off system outside the school that can control the fire alarm and sprinklers.

Sprinkler System Turn-off Procedures

Sprinkler systems may go on during an emergency. During the incident at Columbine, no one was readily available who knew how to immediately turn off the sprinkler system. As a result, hallways quickly filled with water, making it difficult to escape. In some places, the water reached dangerous levels in proximity to the electrical outlets – water reaching such outlets could have caused many more injuries and possibly additional deaths. At least two people need to be trained and assigned responsibility for turning off the sprinkler system. As backup, the Crisis Response Box needs to provide information on where shut-off valves are located in the building and the necessary procedures for shut-off.

Utility Shut-off Valves

Shut-off and access points of all utilities – gas, electric and water – need to be clearly identified and their locations listed so they can be quickly shut off in a crisis. If there is not a fire, the water should be shut off immediately to prevent flooding from the sprinkler system. Unless open electric or gas lines pose an immediate threat to life, the decision on whether to shut off these lines should be made by the Incident Command Officer.

Gas Line and Utility Line Layout

Include a diagram that shows where gas and other utility lines are located throughout the campus.

"Though cellular phones are an excellent tool, during the shootings at Columbine so many cell phones were being used in the area that the cell site became overloaded and shut down. During that crisis, some students resorted to computers to send e-mail messages. Many schools are equipping themselves with phones that do not require satellite transmission and several nationwide phone companies are offering free phones to schools."

Officer Scott Wells
Critical Incident Management Unit
Jefferson County Police Department
Littleton, Colorado

Sending out an SOS

"During a crisis you cannot be guaranteed of communications between a classroom and emergency personnel. Port Huron schools came up with a novel idea to alert SWAT Team members of an injured person in a classroom when communications have been cut off: In every teacher's closet, there are two sets of three posters, each of a different color. In a life-threatening emergency, all school personnel and students know that they are to tape the red card in the window to alert people on the outside that they need help immediately. A yellow card informs paramedics that there are injuries in the room, but not life threatening. A blue card notifies them that there are no injuries. These cards are also placed under the classroom door into the hallway to notify the SWAT team of the same information."

Captain James Carmody
Port Huron City Police
Port Huron, Michigan

Cable Television Satellite Feed Shut-off

If your school has a satellite feed for a cable television system, you should also provide directions on how to shut down that feed. Several of the police officers involved in nationally televised shootings recommend that the cable television feed be shut off so that perpetrators on the inside will not be able to view the whereabouts of the SWAT team by tuning into live coverage of the scene on the outside. On the other hand, in a natural disaster, the television system can be helpful (if working) to provide those who are sheltered-in-place with up-to-date information.

Student Photos

Photos can help in the essential task of identifying students injured, missing or killed. In addition, in those instances where the perpetrators' identities are known while the crisis is still in progress, photos can be of great assistance to law enforcement and SWAT teams who must enter the building and make split-second decisions amidst a sea of student faces. If you do not have access to copies of student photo IDs, the most recent school yearbook (along with the additional photos of the newest incoming class) will suffice. Be sure to include photos of teachers and staff, as well. You might want to consider asking vendors who take pictures for your school to digitalize them and make them available on a CD, which you can then include in the box. Many law enforcement agencies bring laptops to the crime scene and can thereby gain instant access to such photos, print them out, make copies and distribute them to other officers.

Incident Command System (ICS) Key Responders' Phone Numbers

Names and phone numbers for all team participants involved in coordinating with your local emergency response system should be in the box. These people would include the coordinators for the Incident Command System (ICS), Public Information, First Aid, Traffic Safety, Student Assembly and Release and Grounds and Maintenance. Also, include the names and phone numbers of other key staff members, such as the Food, Water and Supplies Coordinator; the bi-lingual translator (if appropriate for your school); and any additional numbers for potential additional positions you have identified. Be sure to place these phone numbers on several cards so that more than one person can begin calling them. (See Integrating with your local Incident Command System, p. 11.)

Designated Command Post and Staging Areas

Police chiefs involved in several of the recent school shootings recommend that schools and law enforcement plan for three distinct staging areas, in addition to the Command Post for the Incident Command Officer. Among other things, separate staging areas will prevent the press from converging upon parents or parents from converging upon police. The areas should be:

- A Staging Area for law enforcement and emergency personnel
- A Media Staging Area away from the school, at a location that can accommodate a large number of vehicles[3]
- A Parent Center, located away from the Command Post, where parents can retrieve their children

Maps of all command posts, listing each corresponding main phone number, should be included in the Crisis Response Box. Be aware that these command posts may change based upon the circumstances. It is also recommended that the command posts have telecommunications capability wherever possible.

[3]Refer to Attorney General's Opinion #95-509 found at 79 Ops. Atty. Gen. 58, June 10, 1996, regarding the site administrator's authority to restrict the media's access to the campus and students. For further information, call the Attorney General's Opinion Unit at (916) 324-5172.

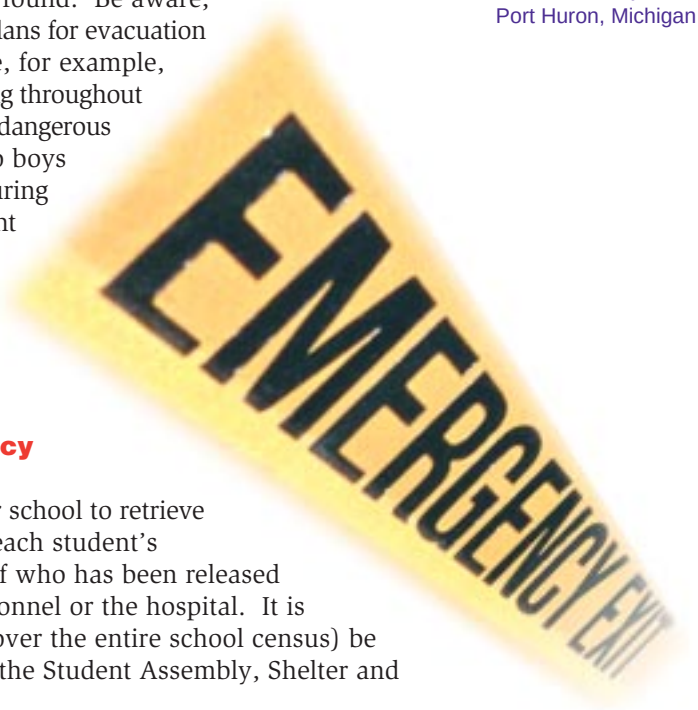
Emergency Resource List

A list of individuals and organizations who assist in an emergency should be prepared on a separate sheet of paper and placed in the box so that the person assigned can immediately begin to make phone calls to those on the list. Your local emergency management agency can recommend agencies you should call during an emergency. Please note that any volunteers you enlist for a critical incident response should be pre-screened and that the volunteers on your list must receive training prior to becoming a responsible member of your emergency response team. Some agency phone numbers to have on hand include:

- American Red Cross
- Clergy, including Law Enforcement Chaplaincy
- Counselors (A cadre of trained crisis intervention counselors should be identified to provide mental health "first aid" during and following the crisis.)
- County District Attorney's Victim/Witness Assistance Center
- Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) (local office)
- Local emergency radio channels
- National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
- Parent representative(s) (The parent representatives should be trained to help fellow parents receive information, answer questions and maintain calm at the Parent Center. Fellow parents can be an excellent source of support.)

Evacuation Sites

Maps with evacuation and alternate evacuation routes should be stored in the Crisis Response Box and should also be posted on classroom doors. It is where students will likely be headed (following the route) in order to identify them, or, if they are missing, to determine where along the route they might be found. Be aware, however, that during a shooting spree the best-laid plans for evacuation are also under siege. All classrooms at Columbine, for example, had evacuation plans – but with two students shooting throughout the entire school, evacuating the building was itself a dangerous venture. In the Jonesboro, Arkansas incident, two boys opened fire after students evacuated the building during a false fire alarm. Other factors may affect an Incident Command Officer to alter the usual evacuation route. In a chemical spill, for instance, how the winds are blowing will determine where to evacuate. Thus, it is important to have at least two predetermined evacuation sites identified.



Student Disposition Forms and Emergency Data Cards

Imagine hundreds of parents descending upon your school to retrieve their children while you are trying to account for each student's whereabouts. You will need forms to keep track of who has been released and to whom – parents, relatives, emergency personnel or the hospital. It is suggested that a set of release forms (enough to cover the entire school census) be stored in the Crisis Response Box and be given to the Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator of your ICS team.

Additionally, if possible, it is helpful to have a set of your student emergency data cards placed in the box. Having all the data stored on a disk is the most convenient way of containing the information. Optimally, the cards and disks should be updated every three months to remain current as possible. Emergency information can also be stored, updated and retrieved electronically either from the school office or a remote site, such as the office.

"Something most schools would never think of is to call the local Federal Aviation Authority. Yet, as soon as the news media learn of a disaster they send their helicopters and it's the last thing you'll need to gain control of the situation. The noise factor alone makes it difficult for people to hear on the ground. Only the FAA can restrict the airspace. A call should be made immediately."

Captain James Carmody
Port Huron City Police
Port Huron, Michigan

The North Sacramento School District has implemented a comprehensive crisis response system. Debbie Morris, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance, and Prevention for the district, relates that the district tracks student attendance via what they call the "Clipboard System." In addition, every classroom has a bright blue "Crisis Pack" in the room. Each day, the teachers fill out two student attendance registers. One is collected and goes to the front office. The other is placed on a clipboard which also contains a copy of each student's J -14 (Emergency Card). The clipboard is placed next to the Crisis Pack. In the event of an emergency, the teacher grabs both the pack and the clipboard. The Crisis Pack minimally contains emergency first aid supplies, flashlight and batteries, water and Band-Aids of all sizes. One other note-worthy protocol is called the Red/Green Cards. If an emergency situation occurs and the students are required to leave the room, they assemble on the playground. The teacher brings both cards to the assembly area. A green card indicates that all is well and that all students are accounted for at that moment. A red card means that the teacher is missing a student or students or that they have extra students. Designated personnel visually check the classes lined up on the play-ground, determine where the red cards are and provide immediate follow-up.

Student Attendance Roster

One of the most difficult challenges you'll face in such a crisis is accounting for all of your students. Teachers should have readily accessible, when on duty, a listing of all pupils in their charge. Teachers should also be instructed to take their classroom attendance list with them during an evacuation. A system should be developed to retrieve these lists from teachers when it is safe and feasible. Someone should be assigned to place that day's attendance roster into the box each morning. This information is shared with the Search and Rescue Coordinator who, in turn, coordinates with the Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator and the School Incident Command Coordinator.

Inventory of Staff Resources

Survey your certificated and classified staff to build an inventory of special skills and training they possess. Document your findings and place the list in the box under the ICS heading. For instance, experience can include prior medical and triage experience, bilingual capabilities, grief counseling background, search and rescue training, hostage negotiations, first aid/CPR certification and volunteer firefighter or reserve police officer/deputy. These skills could prove to be very helpful in a critical incident.

List of Students With Special Needs

A list should also be included in the box that identifies those students who need special assistance (e.g., blind and deaf students and those who need wheelchairs, crutches and braces) and/or with special medical needs (e.g., diabetes) that will require medications during a prolonged period and those with a disability that will require assistance in an evacuation.

First Aid Supplies Location

Sets of first aid supplies should be located throughout the campus. Storage locations should be included in the box. Include the locations on one of the building layout maps in the box.

Emergency First Aid Supplies

Though the following list of supplies are not contained in the box, the FBI Academy recommends that schools be aware of information from the Lessons Learned Summit regarding first aid supplies. In the Jonesboro, Arkansas shooting, large bins of first aid supplies were readily accessible on the school grounds and are credited with saving two children's lives and preventing others from going into shock. These supplies were situated in and out of the school building in anticipation of an earthquake because the school property is located on a fault line. The accessibility of these supplies proved to be lifesaving. It will not do anyone any good if these supplies are locked away deep within the confines of the school. Some schools have stationed first aid boxes in every classroom with basic emergency aid instructions to treat various injuries. Although not designed for first aid purposes, duct tape is very useful and versatile and should be available in every classroom. Whichever methods you deem will work best for your school, it is advisable to make sure that ample supplies are readily accessible throughout your complex and that all teachers are aware of their location.

"The Port Huron School District in Michigan employs a system whereby teachers secure the classroom and immediately take the attendance of all who are in the classroom. They have found that, though daily attendance records are helpful, a roster of student locations at the time of a critical incident is much more accurate and useful, as students could be out of their assigned classroom on a hall pass, visiting a classroom or – in the event of a shooting or other disaster – seeking cover in a classroom to which they were not previously assigned."

Captain James Carmody
Port Huron City Police
Port Huron, Michigan

Integrating with your local Incident Command System (ICS)

In order to complete the information needed in the Crisis Response Box, you will need to bring together an interdisciplinary team to review the School Critical Incident Information Inventory — including maintenance and grounds staff, local law enforcement, medical emergency response and fire officials. This planning process must be integrated with your local emergency response system, usually termed Incident Command System (ICS) to meet the requirements of SEMS. The Incident Command System provides a unified command in a multi-responder emergency in which all agencies which have a jurisdictional responsibility for a multi-jurisdictional incident contribute to the process of:

- determining the overall objectives to gain control of the incident,
- selecting strategies to achieve their objectives,
- planning jointly for tactical activities,
- integrating appropriate tactical operations, and
- making maximum use of all assigned resources.

The Incident Command System originated with fire companies. Faced with multiple-alarm fires, companies who might never have worked together before had to develop a protocol to function as a team. Each company, as it arrives on the scene, has one liaison officer who reports to the Incident Command Officer in charge of the scene. The liaison officer takes orders from the Incident Command Officer and then directs his/her own team. Such systems now integrate not just fire-fighting personnel but all public safety responders. As a rule of thumb, if a crime is involved, the police take over the scene; most everything else is controlled by the fire company or local emergency response system. School staff need to be familiar with their local jurisdictions' Incident Command System to avoid any confusion when responding to a crisis situation. In addition, schools should identify in advance a liaison officer for the school who will report directly to the Incident Command Officer. Usually the school's liaison officer is the principal. However, schools should identify at least two other people who will assume this role, in succession, should the designated liaison officer be incapacitated or unavailable.

There is a clear chain of command among law enforcement, emergency personnel of the fire department and paramedics. It is very important to meet them ahead of time and learn about their Incident Command System so that your school will know how to work with them in a crisis and become an effectively functioning member of the ICS team. Thinking through who should be on the school's ICS list provides an excellent opportunity to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the school, local law enforcement, the fire department and paramedics who will respond in a major critical incident.

Some schools have also involved local mental health experts, representatives of the media, the Red Cross and parent leaders in developing their MOU.

"In order to have the capability to manage a large scale investigation, individual jurisdictions need to come together to sign memorandums of understanding (MOU) identifying which agency will provide what resources and who will be in charge of the command post, crime scene processing, interviews, media, victim services and other agency support. It is important that a Memorandum of Understanding spell out specific task assignments and that each agency assign its best people to those tasks....During the crisis, no time exists to work out these issues. Once you have an MOU remember this: It is a living document. You must revisit it and continuously update it."

Special Supervising Agent Joseph A. Harpold
Behavioral Science Unit
FBI Academy

Incident Command System Functions

> "Communication is key between schools and law enforcement and a good way of putting it in writing is through a Memorandum of Understanding. This document should include a protocol that details who does what during a major critical incident, identifies the chain of command in specific circumstances, identifies the school's chief liaison with the Incident Command Officer and spells out the mutual expectations of each agency during a critical incident. You need to take the time to think through, under what set of circumstances, who takes the lead."

Nancy Goodrich
Assistant Chief of Police
San Diego Police Department
San Diego, California

The ICS provides overall direction and sets priorities for an emergency. In operation, the ICS has five functions: management, planning/intelligence, operations, logistics and finance/administration. Under each of these functions, schools should pre-assign specific individuals, based on their job roles and responsibilities, to assist in the management of school site operations.

Management (overall policy direction)

- **School Principal/Administrator:** The critical incident and/or disaster determines who will be the Incident Command Officer. Until the arrival of the Incident Command Officer, the site administrator is in charge. The site administrator is most often the principal unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

- **Public Information Officer:** The administrator may authorize and designate a trusted, well-trained individual to coordinate information being released to the press and make public announcements.

- **Safety Officer:** This person serves as a liaison officer. He/she is the point of contact for assisting and cooperating with agency representatives (fire, law enforcement, Red Cross).

Planning/Intelligence (gather and assess information)

- **Instructional Staff:** Teachers, librarians, computer center managers and teachers' aides can perform this function. These individuals must be able to use communication equipment, gather information in a timely manner and weigh it for significance.

Operations (implement priorities established by the Incident Command Officer)

- **First Aid Coordinator:** Knows where all supplies are located, oversees first aid prior to paramedics' arrival, coordinates with paramedics. This person is usually the head school nurse.

- **Search and Accountability Coordinator:** Accounts for everyone on site as quickly as possible. This person must have access to attendance records, visitor sign-in sheets, emergency data cards of students and any other information that will assist in accounting for the school population. This person works closely with the Student Assembly, Shelter & Release Coordinator.

- **Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator:** Oversees location where students assemble, attends to their needs when providing shelter, oversees how parents receive students and the process for releasing students. This person works closely with the Search & Accountability Coordinator.

- **Grounds and Maintenance Coordinator:** Knows layout of building and grounds, location of shut-off valves and utility lines and is familiar with blueprints.

- **Food, Water and Supplies Coordinator:** Oversees distribution of food, water and essential supplies throughout critical incident.

- **Traffic Safety Coordinator:** Oversees transportation system.

- **Bi-Lingual Translator:** Assists in communication in schools which have a significant number of students and parents who speak English as a second language.

Logistics (obtain resources to support the operations)

- **Instructional, Facilities and Administrative Staff:** Faculty, staff or administrators who provide support and resource systems for the operations functions.

Finance/Administration (track all costs associated with the operations)

- **Administrative and Clerical Staff:** Individuals responsible for purchasing, paying bills and balancing books are best suited to this function, which involves planning, purchasing emergency supplies and tracking costs following an emergency.

Make sure that there are two back-up people assigned to each position. In the Crisis Response Box, place a list of these individuals, along with their phone numbers, on several cards so that more than one person can begin calling them.

Debriefing

At the conclusion of any critical incident, whether large or small, it is important to conduct a debriefing session. This is often referred to as a critique. All participating agency representatives should meet to discuss what went right and how the system could be improved. It is critical that all agencies participate in this process in order to refine and improve the plan as needed.

School/Law Enforcement Partnership Cadre

The School/Law Enforcement Partnership cadre can provide technical and program assistance to schools interested in developing partnerships with local law enforcement. In order to access cadre services, contact the Coordinated School Health and Safety Office, California Department of Education, at (916) 319-0914, the Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center at (916) 324-7863, the CDE web site at **http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/index.asp.**

Basic Emergency and First Aid Supply List

General Emergency

- ❑ Sheets
- ❑ Candles
- ❑ Blankets
- ❑ Matches
- ❑ Pillows, Disposable Pillow Covers
- ❑ Bottled Water
- ❑ Flashlights
- ❑ Batteries for Flashlights and Radio
- ❑ Radio (battery operated)
- ❑ Cell Phones
- ❑ Duct Tape
- ❑ Large Plastic Trash Bags

First Aid Supplies

- ❑ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ❑ Iodine
- ❑ Alcohol Swabs
- ❑ Assorted Band Aids
- ❑ Oval Eye Patches
- ❑ Tongue Depressors
- ❑ Sterile Water (for burns), Instant Ice Packs
- ❑ Hypo-allergenic Tape
- ❑ Scissors
- ❑ Tweezers
- ❑ Gauze Rolls
- ❑ Sterile Pads (all sizes)
- ❑ Ace Bandages
- ❑ Sewing Needles and Thread, Safety Pins of Various Sizes
- ❑ Slings
- ❑ Anti-bacterial Ointment, Waterless Anti-bacterial Soap
- ❑ Steri-strips (butterfly closures)
- ❑ Disposable Gloves
- ❑ Eye Protection Masks
- ❑ CPR Shields
- ❑ First Aid Handbook
- ❑ Insulin and Syringes with MD Order for Diagnosed Diabetics
- ❑ Source of Sugar for Diabetic Students
- ❑ Sanitary Napkins
- ❑ Cotton Tip Applicators
- ❑ Finger Splints
- ❑ Cardboard Splints

Summary Contents

- Aerial Photo of Campus
- Maps
- Campus Layout
- Blueprint of School Building(s)
- Teacher/Employee Roster
- Keys
- Fire Alarm Turn-off Procedures
- Sprinkler System Turn-off Procedures
- Utility Shut-off Valves
- Gas Line and Utility Lines Lay-out
- First Aid Supplies
- Designated Command Posts
- Cable Television Shut-off
- Student Photos
- Incident Command System (ICS) Key Responder List
- Emergency Resource List
- Evacuation Sites
- Disposition Forms
- Student Attendance Roster
- List of Students with Special Needs

Crisis Response Box School Critical Incident Information Inventory

Item	Responsible Party	Date
Aerial Photo of Campus		
Map • Streets surrounding school • Intersections near school • Vacant lots		
Campus Layout • Room numbers, phone numbers, computers, e-mail, cable TV • Threat areas e.g., chemistry and biology labs, shops		
Blueprint of School Building(s)		
Teacher/Employee Roster • Room and cell phone numbers • Staff directory • Copy of employee photo IDs		
Keys Clearly marked and master keys		
Fire Alarm Turn-off Procedures How and where located		
Sprinkler System Turn-off Procedures How and where located		
Utility Shut-off Valves • Electric • Gas • Water Where and how to shut off		
Gas Line and Utility Lines Lay-Out		
First Aid Supplies Location and how to access		
Designated Command Posts • Law Enforcement, Emergency Personnel • Receiving Area for Parents • Receiving Area for Press		
Cable Television Shut-off Identify where and how		
Student Photos • Copy of photo IDs of students • Current Yearbook		

Crisis Response Box School Critical Incident Information Inventory

Item	Responsible Party	Date
Incident Command System (ICS) **Key Responder List (names and all phone numbers)** • ICS School Incident Coordinator • Public Information Coordinator • First Aid Coordinator • Search and Accountability Coordinator • Grounds and Maintenance Coordinator • Traffic Safety Coordinator • Student Assembly, Shelter and Release Coordinator • Food, Water and Supplies Coordinator • Bilingual Translator • Inventory of Staff Resources		
Emergency Resource List List of agencies and phone numbers to assist during an emergency such as: • Victim Assistance Response Team • American Red Cross • Federal Aviation Authority • Counselors • Emergency Radio Channels		
Evacuation Sites Maps with routes to at least two evacuation sites; should also be posted in classrooms		
Disposition Forms Set of forms for parents/guardians/hospitals/ER personnel to sign when a student has been released to them		
Student Attendance Roster • Roster should be entered in the box daily • Teachers bring their classroom attendance sheet to evacuation site		
List of Students With Special Needs • List of students with special medical needs requiring medications • List of students with a disability requiring assistance in an evacuation • Student emergency card data		
Additional Items to be Included Depending Upon Local Decisions: **SOS Communication System from Classrooms to Emergency Personnel** **(**e.g., color-coded posters to alert outside help about life-threatening injuries, non life-threatening injuries or no injuries)		
Incident Command System Organization Chart reflecting roles and responsibilities of school officials and local emergency personnel		

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- Major Ken Hardin of Paducah, Kentucky, where three students were killed and five wounded in a hallway at Heath High School.
- Chief Danny Bradley of Jonesboro, Arkansas, where four girls and a teacher were shot to death and 10 people wounded during a false fire alarm.
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