

The Virginia Educator's Guide for
Planning and Conducting School Emergency Drills
2019



Acknowledgments

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

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For additional copies, please contact:
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

This document is also available online at
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This document includes references and summaries of the *Code of Virginia* and the Virginia Administrative Code related to school safety. The information provided is not offered, nor should be construed as legal advice or a legal interpretation of statutes and regulations. Local school districts are encouraged to consult with legal counsel for legal advice.

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Introduction

In the wake of community tragedies that can occur during the school day, including tornadoes and active shooters, schools across Virginia and the nation continue to focus on crisis and emergency preparedness. Much has been done to elevate what used to be thought of as “schools implementing emergency drills” to all schools having comprehensive, all-hazards emergency plans. While it is imperative for each school division to work with first responders and emergency planning groups within their jurisdiction to develop comprehensive all-hazards emergency plans for each school, these documents can be overwhelming to administrators, faculty and staff that interact daily with students. This guide was developed to give those serving in direct service positions the hands-on information they need to practice the emergency response actions (drills) required.

Purpose:

1. Provide an overview of:

- Emergency planning at the federal, state and local levels and how these are related
- The drills required by the *Code of Virginia* within the broader scope of emergency planning
- The purpose of each drill

2. Provide more detailed information related to:

- Implementing drills according to the required schedule by the *Code of Virginia*
- Assembling go-kits or bags
- Preparing staff and students for participation in drills
- Implementing the steps for three main drills which school staff and students may need to employ in an emergency situation:
 - Evacuation
 - Lockdown
 - Shelter-in-place
- Using evaluations to improve the drill process

3. Provide a source of additional resources, including:

- Contact and web site information for state and federal partners
- Additional information about school emergency planning

Drills in the Context of Emergency Planning

In the wake of community tragedies that can occur during the school day, including tornadoes and active shooters, emergency planning agencies and first responders have been focusing on crisis planning at schools. When an emergency occurs, it is managed by the smallest group of responders necessary; first by school staff (e.g., on-site first aid), and then by calling local first responders (e.g., calling 9-1-1). When the size or scope of an emergency is beyond the capacity of the local first responders, additional assistance from neighboring jurisdictions and/or state resources may be obtained. In the most devastating instances, the Governor will seek assistance from federal resources (e.g., declaring a state of emergency). Thus, coordinating emergency responses across agencies and the local, state and federal levels has led to wider acceptance of universal planning.

All schools in Virginia have comprehensive all-hazards Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).¹ The division’s plan and each school’s Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) should be completed by a collaborative planning team. Plans should be based on assessed risks, as well as functional needs, assets and realities (e.g., varied response times of first responders due to each school’s unique location). Administrators are encouraged to annually review with the faculty and staff the EOP for their school. Division leaders are encouraged to ensure that appropriate staff members are trained on and are aware of the components of the division’s plan and the specific nuances of individual school plans.

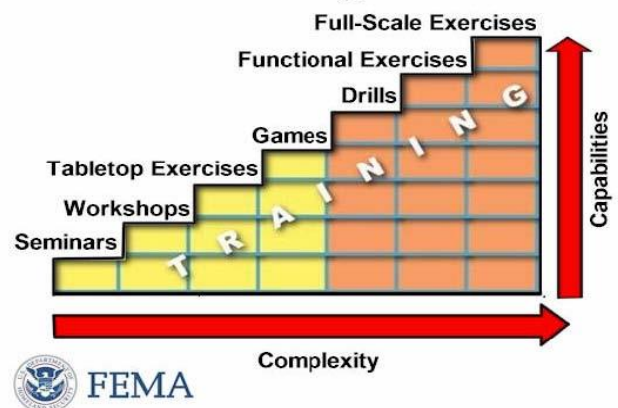
Training and practice are integral parts of an effective EOP. To fully understand the need to drill, and drill effectively, it is important to understand that drills are but one training component of effective emergency preparedness. School division staff are encouraged to host and participate in additional and expanded training, including tabletop exercises, functional exercises and full scale exercises. A broader understanding of what each of these terms means in the context of emergency planning and preparation is provided below.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) defines each type of training activity in the following manner:

Exercise: An exercise is an instrument to train for, assess, practice, and improve performance in prevention, protection, response, and recovery capabilities in a risk-free environment. Exercises can be used for:

- Testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and interagency agreements
- Clarifying and training personnel in roles and responsibilities
- Improving interagency coordination and communications
- Identifying gaps in resources
- Improving individual performance
- Identifying opportunities for improvement (essentially all training)

Building-Block Approach to Exercise Scheduling



¹ [Virginia School Crisis Management Review and Certification](#), Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Center for School and Campus Safety—Superintendents certify annually that school boards review EOPs for schools in the division.

Exercises can be classified into two broad categories: discussion-based and operations-based.

Discussion-Based Exercise: This type of exercise typically highlights existing plans, policies, mutual-aid agreements, and procedures, and can be used as tools to familiarize agencies and personnel with current or expected capabilities. Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletops, and games.

Operations-Based Exercise: Operations-based exercises are characterized by actual response, mobilization of apparatus and resources, and commitment of personnel, usually held over an extended period of time. Operations-based exercises can be used to validate plans, policies, agreements, and procedures and include drills, functional exercises, and full-scale exercises. They can clarify roles and responsibilities, identify gaps in resources needed to implement plans and procedures, and improve individual and team performance.

Discussion-Based Exercise Examples:

Seminar: A seminar is an informal discussion, designed to orient participants to new or updated plans, policies, agreements, and procedures.

Workshop: A workshop resembles a seminar, but is employed to build specific products, such as a draft plan or policy. A workshop is typically used to test new ideas, processes, or procedures; train groups in coordinated activities; and obtain consensus.

Tabletop Exercise (TTX): A tabletop exercise involves key personnel discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. TTXs can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures.

Game: A simulation of operations that often involves two or more teams, usually in a competitive environment, using rules, data, and procedures designed to depict an actual or assumed real-life situation.

Operations-Based Exercise Examples:

Drill: A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single, specific operation or function within a single entity. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or test new policies or procedures, or practice and maintain current skills.

Functional Exercise (FE): A functional exercise examines and/or validates the coordination, command, and control between multi-agency coordination centers. A functional exercise includes simulated deployment of resources and personnel, rapid problem solving, and a highly stressful environment.

Full-Scale Exercise (FSE): A full-scale exercise is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline exercise involving functional and “boots on the ground” response.

The Four Step Approach to Emergency Planning

Emergency planning typically includes terminology of a four-step approach: Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. A broader understanding of what each of these terms means in the context of this Guide, and in the context of emergency planning and preparation is provided below. It should be noted that these steps may also be referred to as Before, During, and After.

Prevention/Mitigation refers to assessments, which address the safety, security, and integrity of facilities, students, and personnel. **Prevention** means the capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring. **Mitigation** means the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency.

Preparedness means readying the school to respond in a rapid, coordinated and effective manner due to a crisis situation. Assembling effective plans, connecting resources, and conducting training exercises and drills are elements of preparedness.

Response means the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way; establish a safe and secure environment; save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery.

Recovery means the capabilities necessary to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment.

With the broader context and terminology regarding emergency planning and procedure in place, the remainder of the guide focuses on the specifics of the exercise commonly referred to as drills.

Note: In recent years the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) shifted from a four phase approach to a five phase approach. The traditional four phase approach (Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery) was replaced with a five phase approach (Prevention, Protection, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation). The new phase, Protection, refers to actions taken which safeguard assets and critical infrastructure elements. See for example the FEMA document *Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans*. This Drill Guide, and related DCJS materials, follows the traditional approach as many institutions have existing emergency operations plans aligned with the four phase model. Schools and school divisions should adopt the approach that best fits their needs and available resources.

Purpose of Drills

When an emergency strikes, immediate decisions need to be made, and actions taken, to reduce the potential for injury. Practicing those actions reduces the time for each individual to enact the responses and behaviors that can decrease risk. The requirement and frequency of drills mandated in the *Code of Virginia* are recognition that students and staff practicing action responses are an important component of school safety.

While EOPs encompass all facets of almost every conceivable natural and manmade disaster, the decision as to who communicates what to whom under what circumstances (i.e., evacuation for a bomb threat vs. evacuation for a flood) means sometimes split-second decisions need to be made. There are

two basic practical decisions to be made – is it safer to go or is it safer to stay? If the decision is to stay, should the action response be shelter-in-place or a lockdown? Thus, drills are completed on the three main response actions: lockdown, evacuate, and shelter-in-place. Sheltering for tornadoes and earthquakes are two additional variations on the "shelter-in-place" action response that everyone in schools is required to practice. Practice, in the form of drills utilizing varying situations and circumstances (i.e., during class time vs. during lunchtime), is also an opportunity to examine procedures and shore up vulnerabilities that otherwise may not have been known. Thus, evaluating all aspects of each drill is an important learning component for everyone involved.

In the past, many schools used codes and various signals as a way to communicate the start of any given emergency response plan or drill. A fire, horn, strobe or bell signal may be utilized to signal the need to evacuate the building. These "fire drill alarms" are practiced often, and are effective because the alarms are widely understood by all students and staff. Drills that are performed only once during the year, and for emergencies such as earthquakes the "announcement" is the event itself, and it is highly recommended that drills and emergency situations be announced repeatedly in plain language, e.g., "This is an earthquake drill. Please proceed accordingly." or "This is a lockdown drill. Please proceed accordingly." In this manner, the message will be understood by everyone.

The *Code of Virginia* mandates separate and distinct codes for a fire evacuation drill from a lockdown drill [Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) Section 404.2.3]. Whatever methods of signaling emergency response behaviors are needed, the signals should be well understood during drills and practiced by everyone at the school or on the campus.

Please note that when an emergency actually occurs, steps taken that are not outlined in the sections below as part of drills may include:

- Calling 9-1-1
- Notifying the division office
- Activating the EOP, including activating an Incident Command System (ICS) if necessary/appropriate for scope of incident
- Additional decision making
- Being flexible and adapting to change
- Making informed decisions
- Deploying resources
- Working with community partners/first responders
- Accounting for students and staff
- Assisting individuals with special needs
- Preserving evidence; not touching affected area(s) until cleared by first responders; keeping detailed notes of incident
- Managing communication with stakeholders (internal to the division, parents, and external in the community)
- Accelerating the Recovery Phase, including holding an emergency staff meeting to:
 - Advise all staff of known facts
 - Provide them with a written statement
 - Support their concerns and emotions
 - Identify resources for staff and students
 - Outline steps in the Recovery Phase (After)
- Documenting the incident, evaluating the response(s), and revisiting the overall emergency all hazards plan based on "lessons learned"

Responses to emergencies will vary depending upon the severity, intensity, and location of the incident/event.

Preparation for Drills

Preparing Staff and Students for Emergency Drills

Staff

All administrators, faculty and staff, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitors, office staff, and specialty staff should be educated regarding the overall emergency plans for the school or campus, outlining roles and responsibilities for all parties. This includes an understanding of who is tending to details outside of direct student contact covered by compulsory drills, i.e., shutting off ventilation systems when deemed necessary. Procedures should be put in place for educating substitute teachers and newly hired staff. Everyone should be provided with written instructions on drilling procedures and educated about the importance of emergency drills. Time should be allocated for staff to ask questions and provide feedback. Drills may be announced or unannounced. Unannounced drills may be more effective than announced drills since they add a component of realism.

At the beginning of the school year, or prior to an announced drill, staff should be given specific instructions regarding:

- The type, purpose, and objective of the drill, including possible scenarios when each action response would be appropriate
- The decision tree, such as the one provided in this guide (see pg. 10)
- Their roles and the specific behavior(s) they are expected to display
- Specific details of evacuation routes, safe assembly areas, safe spots in each classroom for each type of drill, etc.

NOTE: While it is sufficient to review a paper map with lines indicating primary and back-up evacuation routes and safe assembly areas; it is recommended that a first responder/building official on the emergency preparedness planning/crisis team visit each instructor in his/her classroom to physically point out load-bearing walls, and lockdown areas that would be optimal. Each staff member should also know whom to ask and be empowered to seek out this information.

- The contents and placement of go-kits/bags
- The checklist of action responses in creating the directions to be given for who ... should do what ... to what standard
- Use of green and red notification cards and any other bell or code system(s) in place (if applicable)

NOTE: To facilitate clear communication, use of “codes” is discouraged and should be accompanied by plain language whenever possible.

- Special instructions and provisions for individuals with special needs
- Procedures for staff feedback as a part of the evaluation process of every drill

Staff should also receive training in policies surrounding lines of communication as related to emergency incidents, because they are often the person(s) with whom parents feel most comfortable, as well as possibly being approached by the media. Recommendations surrounding flow of communication include:

- The principal (or designee) relaying all factual information to the superintendent (or designee) on a timely basis
- The superintendent (or designee) notifying other schools and may ask designated public information personnel to prepare media release(s)
- The division establishing a media information center away from the school, if needed
- Maintaining a log of all telephone inquiries and conversations
- When possible, using a scripted response to inquiries, e.g., press release
- School staff monitoring social media to monitor what parents and students are saying in order to address “rumors” by officially presenting facts
- The Public Information Officer or designated staff regularly providing updates to media
- All staff should be passing along only known facts.

NOTE: *Never respond “no comment” to a question. Instead, opt for an honest answer such as: “Please get your information from (name), the principal” or “Those details have not been verified/are not able to be released at this time.”*

- At all times, remember to respect the privacy of affected persons and their families

Students

Prior to each drill, students should be given specific instructions in developmentally appropriate language regarding:

- A review about the importance of emergency drills
- The type, purpose and objective of the drill, i.e., to evacuate the building should there be a fire or other reason the building is deemed unsafe
- Their roles and the specific behavior(s) they are expected to display, e.g., walking silently in single file, how to duck and cover for a tornado
- A review of the checklist of action responses in creating the directions to be given for who ... should do what... to what standard
- An explanation as to why they may not be told exactly what has prompted the drill or call for emergency action responses
- Special provisions for individuals with special needs

During this age of digital media, it is important to discuss appropriate information sharing with students. At a minimum, it is recommended that students be informed that during and after an emergency they should:

- Only provide known facts to others - do not guess, exaggerate, offer personal opinions, or promote rumors or sensationalism
- Not post information related to an emergency on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Respect the privacy of affected persons and their families

Go-Kits/Emergency Bags

These terms generally describe a container of items to be used for crisis/emergency situations. It is important that the go-kit/bag be readily available and easily grabbed—either for evacuation or to attend to those while being sheltered. At a minimum, three types of kits/bags are recommended—main office, classrooms, and nurse’s office—as the contents of each will differ. Kits/bags should be revisited, evaluated and restocked at the beginning of each semester.

Main Office (or other “Command Center” location if main office is rendered unusable in an emergency): The kit in the main office will be utilized for the Incident Command System (ICS). This kit/bag should be on wheels if possible and contain:

- Inventory list
- Division-wide Crisis Guide binder that contains:
 - Division’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
 - Parent Reunification/Family Assistance Center plan
 - Emergency contacts for students and staff
 - List of emergency contact numbers, division-level contacts and first responders
 - School’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and contacts, including school’s crisis team
 - School floor plans and maps with locations of exits, phones, first aid kits, assembly areas, etc.
 - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
 - Closest school’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and contacts
- Information for each grade MARKED CONFIDENTIAL that contains:
 - Bell and master schedules
 - Class lists/student locator
 - Bus lists
 - List of students who may need special assistance in an emergency (medically fragile, those with special dietary needs, limited English proficiency)
- Pads of paper and pens
- An AM/FM radio/weather monitor
- Emergency communication device such as a bull horn for making announcements
- Whistle
- Master keys to all building locations and external emergency locations
- Communication devices
- First aid kit with instructions
- Fluorescent lamps, flashlights or light sticks (batteries if necessary)
- Yearbook

When evacuating, be sure to take the Daily Visitor Log and the Student Check-In/Out Log.

It is also recommended to have available a pair of binoculars, which could serve to identify potential problems at a distance and to quickly ascertain the level of an emergency on a playground or along the edge of the school property.

Classroom: Items should be placed in an easily transportable and accessible container. At a minimum classroom go-kits/bags should include:

- Inventory List
- Quick reference to Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, Lockdown and early closing procedures, including “How to List” for substitutes
- Pen and paper
- Green “All Clear” and Red “Assistance Needed” Cards
- In a folder marked CONFIDENTIAL:
 - Names of students in each class period
 - Names of students identified as needing special assistance in emergencies
 - Names of students needing periodic medication
 - Bus lists
- Emergency medications for identified students (e.g., epi pens)
- Basic first aid supplies, including gloves, band aids, instructions and trash bags for disposal
- Flashlight(s) and batteries or light sticks (especially important for rooms lacking windows)
- Whistle
- Thermal blankets
- Points of contact persons designated to answer pertinent questions (school and division)

School Clinic: At a minimum the go-kit/bag from the school clinic should include:

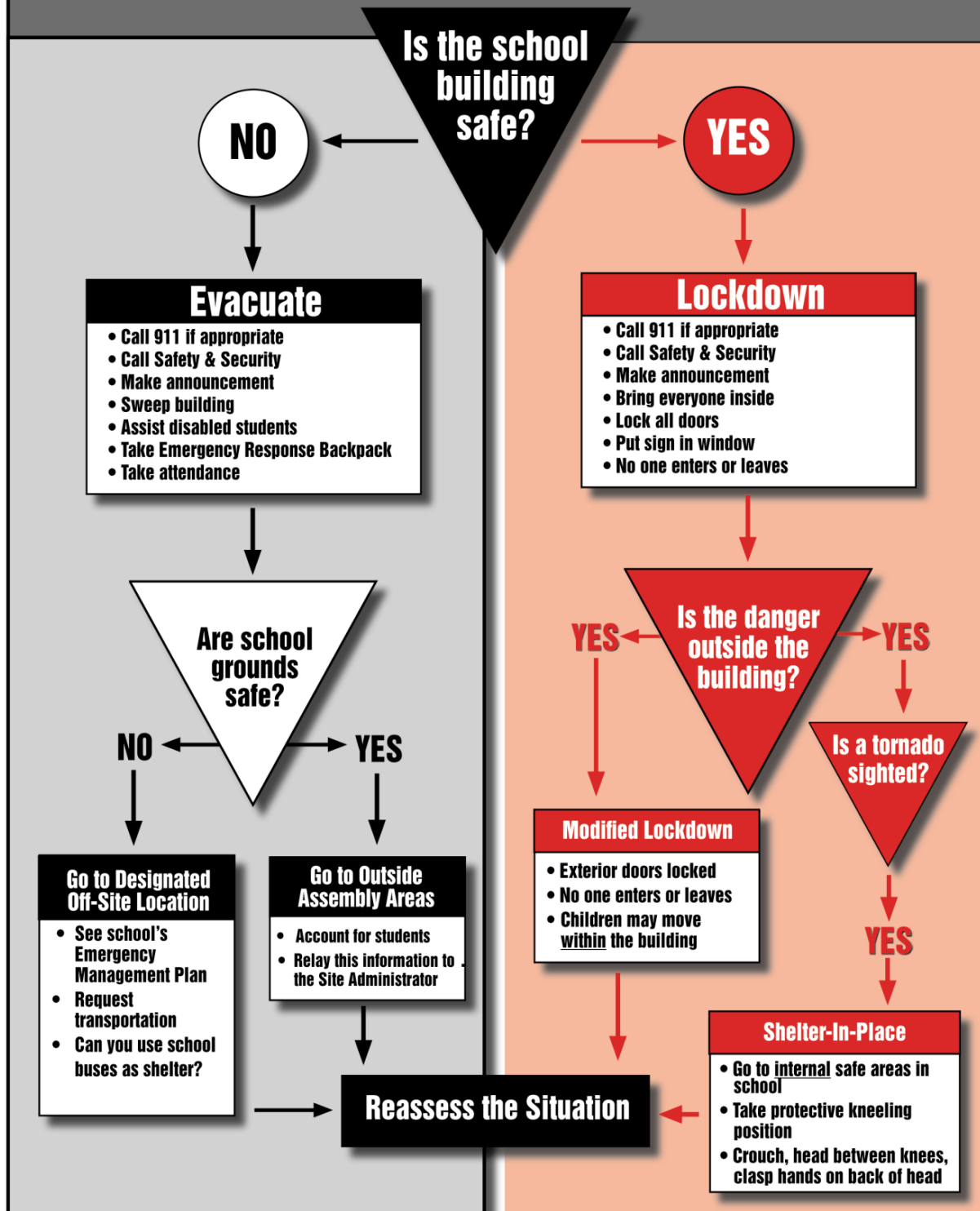
- Emergency medical supplies
- Emergency medical forms
- Medications and the medication log (student medications may change on a daily basis, so it may be prudent to store these individually-identified items in containers that can easily be “to go” within the locked drawer/cabinet)

Guidelines for Drills

Decision Tree

Directions are often given over the public address system during drills. However, when a real emergency strikes, immediate decisions must be made and staff should be empowered to go into evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown at their discretion without an administrator’s input if the emergency dictates. Besides the confidence that practice in the form of drills instills, having a visual image of the decisions surrounding the three action responses can also be of assistance.

Decision to Evacuate or Lockdown/Shelter-In-Place



(Source: Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance, 2007)

Evacuation Drill (REQUIRED)

(LEGAL REFERENCES: *Code of Virginia § 22.1-137*)

Code of Virginia § 22.1-137 and the Board of Education's Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (SOA) (8 VAC 20-131-260) require that every public school conduct:

- A fire drill at least twice during the first 20 days of school and
- At least two additional fire drills during the remainder of the school year.

The Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) (Sections 403.5.1, 404.2.1, 404.2.2, 405.1, and 405.2) requires that a school conduct:

- A fire drill within the first 10 days of school and
- At least one fire drill per month.

To be in compliance with the Code of Virginia, the SFPS, and the SOA, schools must conduct:

- An initial fire drill within the first 10 days of the school year,
- Another fire drill within the first 20 days of the school year, and
- At least one fire drill per month for the remainder of the school year.

Definition:

Moving everyone from inside school building(s) to a prearranged, safe place outside of school building(s). Evacuation drills include fire drills and similar type of events. Evacuation is used when it is determined that locations outside the school are safer than inside the school. Timing and working to improve response capabilities can increase confidence. Drills should be timed and everyone should work on improving times so that responses can be made quickly and with confidence. Conducting drills at inopportune times (such as during lunch or break periods, or during an assembly) is encouraged so that any vulnerabilities or hindrances can be identified before an actual emergency. In addition, practicing an evacuation drill where everyone exits with their hands raised, palms open (indicating to first responders that they are not a threat) is an additional important variation. Reverse evacuation drills can be practiced right after a fire drill.

Response Actions:

- Sound alarm
- Instruct students to immediately turn off Bunsen burners, blowtorches, appliances, etc., if applicable
- Take go-kit/backpack (No one should pause for other belongings)
- Use a pre-determined evacuation route that does not interfere with public safety vehicles and/or fire hydrants, assisting those in need; use an alternate route if the initially identified route is unsafe
- Move students quietly with staff supervision at all times
- Assemble at a pre-designated safe area (should be at least 300' away from the problem area)
- If there are injuries, provide first aid as able
- Ensure a full accounting of all students and staff using daily attendance records
- Utilize a portable bullhorn to make announcements to students and staff who have evacuated the building

- Remain in the safe area until given further instructions from the principal (or designee), which may include evacuating the campus to an alternate close site or an off-campus, far site, evacuation site
- Evaluate the students on performance, giving immediate praise if the evacuation was effective
- Complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example)
- Debrief on “lessons learned” from the evaluation with staff, and possibly students

Reverse Evacuation (RECOMMENDED)

Definition:

Moving from outside the school to inside the school in an organized fashion when it is deemed that conditions are safer inside the school. Reverse evacuations would be implemented when shelter-in-place or lockdown situations occur during recess, outside gym classes, or other events that are conducted outside. Reverse evacuations are often drilled immediately following a fire evacuation drill.

Response Actions:

- Alert all students and staff to the need of evacuating the outdoor space(s)
- Use a pre-determined route, assisting those in need; use an alternate route if the initially identified route is unsafe
- Students should move quietly with staff supervision at all times
- Arrive in the classroom or other designated safe area (perform any other action responses in accordance with any additional specified drill, i.e., tornado or lockdown)
- If there are injuries, provide first aid as able
- Ensure that students and staff are accounted for
- Remain in the classroom or safe area until given further instructions from the principal (or designee)
- Evaluate the students on performance, giving immediate praise if the reverse evacuation was effective
- Complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example)
- Debrief on “lessons learned” from the evaluation with staff, and possibly students

School Bus Evacuation Drill (REQUIRED)

(LEGAL REFERENCE: Virginia Administrative Code [8VAC20-70-110](#))

Definition:

Moving everyone from inside the vehicle to a safe place outside when it is determined that being in the bus is no longer safe. Typically, when a bus breaks down, it is safer for students to remain inside of the vehicle. Some exceptions that warrant evacuation include a bus stopping on railroad tracks, or when there is concern about a fuel leak.

The bus evacuation procedures will be determined by the nature of the emergency. Since the emergency dictates the exits used, riders should be familiar with each emergency exit of the bus. All the bus riders in case of an emergency should know the pre-planned evacuation procedure. To help familiarize riders with evacuation procedures and to comply with state law, emergency drills are

required to be conducted at least twice a year. In addition, training should include pre-planning in the event the driver is incapacitated.

Response Actions:

NOTE: *There are several ways to evacuate the bus. Types of evacuations are:*

- *All riders leave through the passenger entry door*
- *All riders leave through the rear emergency exit door*
- *Riders in the front half of the bus leave through the front passenger entry and those in the rear portion leave through the rear emergency exit door*
- *Riders exit through the side emergency exit door alone, or in combination with the above*
- *Riders exit through the roof hatch emergency exit if this is the only option available*

Some buses are equipped with emergency exit windows and emergency roof hatches. If the bus has these special emergency exits, their location and use must be fully explained to the riders.

- Secure the bus (turn ignition off and remove key, set parking brake, activate four-way flashers)
- Driver stands, opens the front passenger entry door (if this is a front door evacuation) and gets attention of students
- Driver gives the command “Emergency drill, remain seated, front evacuation” (Command should reflect whatever mode of evacuation the driver has selected)
- Driver should stand between the first two seats to be evacuated, (seats closest to the evacuation door) face the door and direct students to exit seat by seat starting on the right and alternating to the left (Instruct students to walk, not run)
- Student helpers should help evacuees as they exit (secure parental permission) and guide students to the rally point
- Students should stand in a group at least 100 feet away from the bus
- Driver must make sure that no one is left on the bus
- Driver should stand with students and provide further instruction if necessary
- Driver should complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example)

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES: A “School Bus Driver and Monitor” Video and “Safety and Security Manual” are available free for school divisions. These resources can be accessed online at the following links:

- [Virginia School Bus Driver and Monitor Video](#)
- [Virginia Schools Bus Driver and Monitor Safety and Security Manual](#)

Shelter-in-Place Drill

Definition:

Providing refuge for students, staff and, sometimes, the public, within school building(s). It is necessary when external conditions make it unsafe to leave the building, but where locking down in a classroom is not necessary. Sheltering in place means remaining inside the school for an extended period of time. Safe areas for shelter may change depending on the type of emergency. Special shelter-in-place drills are conducted for tornadoes and earthquakes and described in the sections below. A combination of shelter-in-place, followed by evacuation, may be necessary during such situations as earthquakes.

Response Actions:

- Identify safe areas and directions to be given. Consider large areas at the interior of the building away from numerous windows and outside walls which have a reliable source of lighting. Designate where students should go. Have a plan to shut down outside ventilators and disconnect electrical source, if necessary.
- Give directions about the drill and designated safe area(s) with the P.A., a bullhorn, or a system of notes sent by messengers; inform teachers and other adults of the situation and where to bring students.
- Assist those in need of special assistance.
- Clear students and staff from hallways, bathrooms, trailers and outside areas.
- Account for all students and staff in safe area(s).
- Monitor the situation to ascertain when danger is removed; direct teachers and other adults to escort students back to class when the situation is clear. Direct the students and staff to respond only to verbal and hand signals from the designated staff member(s).
- Evaluate the students on performance, giving immediate praise if the sheltering procedure was effective.
- Complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example).
- Debrief on “lessons learned” from the evaluation with staff, and possibly students.

Tornado Drill (Drop & Tuck) (REQUIRED)

(LEGAL REFERENCE: *Code of Virginia § 22.1-137.1*)

Definitions:

Severe Weather **Watch**: Forecast of severe weather in the area; normal activities continue, no school-wide announcement is made, and the principal (or designee) monitors the situation.

Severe Weather **Warning**: Severe and dangerous weather situation approaching. Be prepared to implement response action.

Response Actions:

- Evaluate situation
- Activate Incident Command System (ICS) if necessary/appropriate for scope of incident, per Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
- Alert staff of impending situation (use specific, easily understood terms, i.e., “A severe weather warning has been issued. Implement tornado procedures. This is not a drill.”)
- Call emergency numbers as appropriate
- Call the superintendent (principal or designee)
- Get word to all students and staff who are outside or who are in outlying buildings
- Evacuate gyms, auditoriums, and classrooms
- Move students quickly and quietly to the designated area, providing for students with special needs
NOTE: *These areas should be underground shelter, if available, or interior hallways on first floor. North and east walls are preferable to south and west walls.*
- Take go-kits/backpacks
- Give “drop and tuck” command—sit in fetal position with face and head protected
- Account for all students/staff/others

- Check for and provide care for injured
- Determine status for safe return to classes or dismissal/relocation, and communicate to all staff (principal or designee)
- Evaluate the students on performance, giving immediate praise if their response actions matched directions
- Complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example)
- Debrief on “lessons learned” from the evaluation with staff, and students if appropriate

Earthquake Drill (Drop & Tuck⁺) (RECOMMENDED)

Definition:

A sudden, rapid shaking of the Earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the Earth's surface.

+ **NOTE:** “Stop, Drop & Hold” is sometimes used; however, the moves are identical to Drop & Tuck

Response Actions:

During a drill, the public announcement system should be utilized to announce when the shaking starts, as well as (after at least one minute) when the shaking stops:

- Drop immediately to the ground as safely as possible
- If close by, slide and get under the closest table or desk
- Cover your body and head, as if in a tornado drill
- Remain as still as possible (Ride out the shaking, remain in place until the drill is complete)
- Evaluate the students on performance, giving immediate praise if their response actions matched directions

When the shaking stops:

- Account for all students
- Utilize evacuation procedures, the safest place being the middle of an open field
- If a student is injured, stay with them, but send the rest of the class out

NOTE: Have two students report to a nearby teacher and inform them that you are still inside, your exact location, and that you are staying with an injured student until first responders arrive.

- Debrief on “lessons learned” from the evaluation with staff, and possibly students

NOTE: If class is outside, stay outside. Move students away from buildings, poles, wires, etc. (anything that could fall). The safest place is in the middle of a field.

Also note that in a strong earthquake, electricity may go out, or fire alarms and sprinklers may go on. Most earthquakes last less than one minute, (while it is happening, it can seem quite long), so remain in place until the shaking stops.

- Complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example)

If an aftershock occurs during the evacuation process:

- Repeat Action Response

Lockdown Drill (REQUIRED)

(LEGAL REFERENCES: *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-137.2 and *Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC)* Sections 404.2.3 and 405.1)

NOTE: During the 2016 General Assembly session, the Virginia Code was amended to require every public school to hold a lock-down drill at least twice during the first 20 school days of each school session and at least two additional lock-down drills during the remainder of the school session. A school that holds two lockdown drills during the first 20 days of school and two additional lock down drills during the second semester will be in compliance with the Virginia Code.

The Code of Virginia mandates separate and distinct codes for a fire evacuation drill from a lockdown drill [*Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC)* Section 404.2.3]. Whatever methods of signaling emergency response behaviors are needed, the signals should be well understood during drills and practiced by everyone at the school or on the campus.

Definition:

A variation of a shelter-in-place, when all staff and students are directed by the administration to report to, or to remain in, the classrooms with the additional instruction that teachers lock their doors to prevent entry, cover windows, and account for all students under their care, while having students silently sit away from windows and against solid walls. The purpose of a lockdown is to prevent people outside of the building from gaining entrance. No one should be locked into a building where they are not able to escape. A key, tool or special knowledge, such as a code, should not be required to open a door to leave the building. Also, please note that any locks added to a school building must be approved by the local building official.

Response Actions:

- Lock all exterior doors, provided it is safe to do so
- Instruct students to silence all cell phones, computers and other devices that may make noise
- Instruct students to silently move to pre-determined seated positions, preferably against solid walls, not visible from windows or doors, and away from windows
- Follow predetermined process of closing blinds, turning off lights, and placing “All Clear” or other notification card based upon requirements or plans in your locality
- Remain in these positions until receiving further instructions*
- Evaluate the students on performance, giving immediate praise if their response actions matched directions
- Complete an evaluation of the drill process (see Appendix A-2 for an example)
- Debrief on “lessons learned” from the evaluation with staff, and possibly students

***NOTE:** A critical incident in which a lockdown is necessary is when an active shooter is present. While this event is highly unlikely, should it occur, a “Run, Hide, Fight” response may be added to the decision-making process. These behaviors are not part of compulsory, required drills.

Online training is available regarding an active shooter incident. It includes deviating from the standard lockdown procedure when there is imminent danger and no other alternatives are present. This may include running to evacuate if safe to do so. Hiding is the recommended action in a no warning incident when safe evacuation is not possible, and as a very last resort, fighting to protect yourself and students. The video, *Critical Incident Response for School Faculty and Staff* may be accessed at www.dcjs.virginia.gov/publication-link/critical-incident-response-video.

Appendices

A. Sample Forms and Documents

1. Sample Drill Schedule and Accompanying Legislation
2. Sample Post-Drill Evaluation
3. Sample Evacuation Site Form
4. Sample Green Card Template
5. Sample Red Card Template
6. Sample Emergency Response Information for Parents

B. State and Local Contacts

1. Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
2. Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
3. Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
4. Virginia Department of Education
5. Virginia Department of Health
6. Virginia Department of Emergency Management
 - a. Preparedness Division
 - b. Office of Training and Exercises
 - c. Regional Coordinators
 - d. CERT program for individuals
7. Virginia State Police
8. State Fire Marshal's Office
9. Local Emergency Manager/Coordinator

C. Resources

Appendix A: Sample Forms and Documents

Appendix A-1: Sample Drill Schedule and Accompanying Legislation

Appendix A-2: Sample Post-Drill Evaluation

Appendix A-3: Sample Evacuation Site Form

Appendix A-4: Sample Green Card Template

Appendix A-5: Sample Red Card Template

Appendix A-6: Sample Emergency Response Information for Parents

Appendix A-1: Sample Drill Schedule and Accompanying Legislation

Sample Drill Schedule	
<i>Drill</i>	<i>Description/Notes</i>
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	One fire drill per week during the first month of school ^a
Intruder/Lockdown Drill	At least two drills during first 20 days of school ^b (one drill must occur during September)
Reverse Evacuation (outside to inside)	1 drill in September (recommend conducting in conjunction with re-entering building after a fire drill)
School Bus Evacuation Drill	1 drill during first 30 instructional days of school ^c
OCTOBER	
Earthquake Drill	1 drill annually (recommend participating in annual FEMA Great Shakeout event)
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^a
NOVEMBER	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^a
DECEMBER	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^a
JANUARY	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^a
Intruder/Lockdown Drill	1 drill in January ^b (recommended to meet legislative mandate)
School Bus Evacuation Drill	1 drill during first 30 instructional days of second semester ^c
FEBRUARY	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^a
Shelter-in-Place	1 drill in February
MARCH	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^a
Tornado Drill/Duck and Cover	1 drill in March ^d – recommend conducting in cooperation with annual state event
APRIL	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^{a, e}
MAY	
Intruder/Lockdown Drill	1 drill in May ^b (recommended to meet legislative mandate)
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^{a, e}
JUNE	
Fire/Evacuation Drill	1 drill per month ^{a, e}

SUMMARY	
Earthquake Drill	1 drill annually – conducted in cooperation with FEMA (Recommended)
Fire/Evacuation Drill	One fire drill per week during the first month and one per month thereafter ^a (Required); not to take place during periods of mandatory testing required by the Virginia Board of Education ^e
Intruder/Lockdown Drill	Minimum 4 drills per year ^b (Required)
Reverse Evacuation	Minimum 1 drill per year (Recommended)
School Bus Evacuation Drill	Minimum 2 drills per year, each during first 30 instructional days of each of the 2 semesters ^c (Required)
Shelter-in-Place	Minimum 1 drill per year (Recommended)
Tornado Drill/Duck and Cover	Minimum of 1 drill per year conducted in cooperation with VDEM ^d (Required)

a. *Code of Virginia § 22.1-137* and the Board of Education’s Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (SOA) (8 VAC 20-131-260) require that every public school conduct:

- A fire drill at least twice during the first 20 days of school and
- At least two additional fire drills during the remainder of the school year.

The Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) (Sections 403.5.1, 404.2.1, 404.2.2, 405.1, and 405.2) requires that a school conduct:

- A fire drill within the first 10 days of school and
- At least one fire drill per month.

To be in compliance with the Code of Virginia, the SFPS, and the SOA, schools must conduct:

- An initial fire drill within the first 10 days of the school year,
- Another fire drill within the first 20 days of the school year, and
- At least one fire drill per month for the remainder of the school year.

b. *Code of Virginia § 22.1-137.2*. Lock-down drills will be held at least twice during the first 20 school days of each school session and at least two additional lock-down drills during the remainder of the school session.

Lock-down plans and drills shall be in compliance with the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC) Section 404.2.3.

NOTE: *House Bill 1279 also amended Code of Virginia § 22.1-137.2 to require that every public school hold a lock-down drill at least twice during the first 20 days of school and hold at least two additional lock-down drills during the remainder of the school year. Section 22.1-137.2 of the Code further requires that lock-down plans and drills be in compliance with the SFPC.*

However, Section 8VAC20-131-260 of the Standards of Accreditation requires that every public school conduct at least two simulated lock-down drills and crisis emergency evacuation activities each school year, one in September and one in January. Therefore, in order to comply with the Code of Virginia and the Standards of Accreditation, every public school will need to conduct two lock-down drills during the first 20 days of school – one of which must occur in September – and two additional lock-down drills during the remainder of the school year – one of which must occur in January.

A school that holds an initial fire drill within the first 10 days of the school session, another fire drill within the first 20 days of the school session, and one fire drill per month, will be in compliance with both the Virginia Code and the Fire Prevention Code.

- c. Regulations governing pupil transportation section 8VAC20-70-110 state that emergency exit drills will happen at least twice a year, during the first 30 instructional days of the first semester and again during the first 30 instructional days of the second. This would also allow schools to comply with the *Code of Virginia § 22.1-184*: “At every public school having public school buses there shall be held, at least once during the first ninety calendar days of each school session and oftener if necessary, a drill in leaving school buses under emergency circumstances.”
- d. *Code of Virginia § 22.1-137.1*. In every public school there shall be at least one tornado drill every school year, in order that students may be thoroughly practiced in such drills.
- e. Emergency evacuation drills shall not be conducted in school buildings during periods of mandatory testing required by the Virginia Board of Education as provided in SFPC Section 405.1. Title 1 bill, Senate Bill 97 (2006) <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?061+ful+CHAP0164>

Appendix A-2: Sample Post-Drill Evaluation

Date: _____

School: _____

Drill Event (check all that apply):

- Evacuation
- Reverse evacuation
- School bus evacuation
- Shelter-in-Place
 - Earthquake
 - Tornado
- Lockdown
- Unannounced Drill Event

Start time: _____ Weather conditions _____

Time at which there was 100% accountability for students, staff and visitors completing designated action _____

End time: _____ Total time for drill: _____ Approximate number of participants: _____

After Action Review Record:

Date and Time after action review conducted: _____

Individuals included: _____ (continue as needed)

This guide was designed so that the list of components of each type of drill can be utilized as a check-off list for evaluation purposes. Thus, each could be printed and every staff member could provide feedback on the drill by completing the check-off list, including times and any concerns that were identified.

Commendations: _____ (continue as needed)

Recommendations: _____ (continue as needed)

Signature _____ Date: _____

Sent to _____ at division office on date _____

Appendix A-3: Sample Evacuation Site Form

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the school building(s), the principal, in consultation with the division superintendent or his designee may decide to transport the students and staff to another county school. The designated partner school or partner private church or business facility is listed below. This partnership is reciprocal so that if an emergency occurred at an affected partner school, as an example the unaffected partner school would host students from the affected partner school.

This partnership is designed to avoid the problems and liability of dismissing and sending young children home early without proper supervision. This decision will be influenced by many related conditions at the time of the incident—including the time of day, season of the year, urgency of the evacuation, and weather or civil conditions in the community.

The receiving school or private facility will use the gymnasium, cafeteria, library or other common area large enough to house the evacuated students for the remainder of the school day and/or possibly into after school hours. Bus schedules must be adjusted to accommodate these circumstances.

Evacuation Partner School/Facility FORM

SCHOOL NAME:	DATE:

Emergency Evacuation Location 1	Emergency Evacuation Location 2
Point of Contact	Point of Contact
Address	Address
Telephone Number	Telephone Number
Other Information	

(Use additional space below if applicable)

Emergency Evacuation Location 3	Emergency Evacuation Location 4
Point of Contact	Point of Contact
Address	Address
Telephone Number	Telephone Number
Other Information	

ALL CLEAR

Room Number:

ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Room Number:

Appendix A-6: Sample Emergency Response Information for Parents

Drills and Emergency Responses in Our Schools: A Message to Parents and Guardians

This information is designed to provide parents and guardians with information regarding SCHOOL NAME's all-hazard four phase mission (Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery) emergency planning and the initiatives in place to keep students, employees and visitors safe. Below each are examples of how the school division is addressing each in order to provide a safe and effective learning and teaching environment for staff and students.

Prevention/Mitigation refers to assessments, which address the safety, security, and integrity of facilities, students, and personnel.

Prevention is the action schools take to prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring. Prevention actions may include:

- Partnerships with local law enforcement, Fire and EMS, State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) and local, regional and state health departments and human services agencies.
- Regular review of the Code of Student Conduct.
- Anti-bullying programs at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Student Assistance Programming and Threat Assessment Team.
- Alternative education programs in secondary schools.
- Ongoing training for staff members.
- Specialized training for school bus drivers.
- Surveillance camera at main entrance of all schools.
- Closed circuit television equipment placed in high school hallways, common areas and parking lots.
- Full-time parking lot attendants at all high schools.
- Metal detectors at major varsity athletic events.
- Photo identification badges for all school district personnel.
- Security camera equipment on school buses.
- Annual safety audits required at each school and filed with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, Center for School and Campus Safety.

Mitigation means reducing the likelihood that threats and hazards will happen. Mitigation actions are prioritized according to:

- The risk(s) to life safety.
- The number of people exposed to a hazard.
- The cost to mitigate including time, money and other resources.
- The probability that a specific hazard will occur.
- After an incident, a review and evaluation of the lessons learned by school leaders, teachers, students, parent representatives and other community members with adjustments to school security measures and emergency response plans recommended as appropriate to become part of the prevention, preparation and response efforts of the school district.

Preparedness means readying the school to respond in a rapid, coordinated and effective manner due to a crisis situation. Assembling effective plans, connecting resources, and conducting training exercises and drills are elements of preparedness. Preparedness actions include:

- Division-level and school-based emergency response plans developed with input from local law enforcement agencies, Fire and EMS, SFMO, and other human services agencies to manage emergencies that may arise including, if appropriate, evacuation of students and staff to another location or locking down the building, allowing only authorized personnel entrance to the school.
- Emergency Planning Drills to include fire/evacuation, school bus evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place, earthquake and tornado drills practiced regularly in accordance with state guidelines.
- Staff training in emergency management according to the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Parent volunteers enlisted by schools to provide assistance with security (i.e., monitoring entrances and exits; welcoming visitors and providing visitor badges, etc.).
- Telephones in all classrooms; two-way radios with access to main office, transportation, law enforcement and Fire/EMS, weather alert radios at all schools, school buses equipped with radios and base stations; automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in every school.

Response means the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way; establish a safe and secure environment; save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery.

For several important reasons, the specific details about emergency/crisis response plans are not shared publicly. However, it is important for parents to understand the following:

- Safety is the priority for staff at the school when an emergency is unfolding. Staff members and first responders will be focused on managing the emergency and taking care of the students.
- A key part of all response plans includes timely communication of accurate information to stakeholders. As soon as accurate information is available, it will be shared with parents as follows:
 1. Parents of individual students directly involved in the event;
 2. Parents of students indirectly involved in the event;
 3. School Board and staff; and
 4. Local media as appropriate.

Information will be shared appropriately as required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with sensitivity to issues of public safety, public health, confidentiality and respect for individuals and families.

- Information will be shared using one or more of the following methods as appropriate to each situation:
 - Telephone call(s);
 - E-mail;
 - Letter home;
 - Web Site; and/or
 - Local media.

- The school division understands the anxiety that parents feel when there is potential danger to children. Probably the most difficult, but very important way that parents can assist schools in responding effectively to emergencies, is NOT to call or come to the school during an emergency. Important considerations are:
 - Telephone lines are needed for emergency outgoing calls.
 - In the case of an intruder or other terrorist activity, schools will be locked down and only authorized personnel will be permitted to enter or exit buildings.
 - Access roads may be blocked by first responders.
 - Information about the emergency, including plans to open a Family Assistance Center, if deemed appropriate, will be provided as soon as possible.

Recovery means the capabilities necessary to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment. Recovery actions include:

- School counselors and other human services professionals available to work with individuals and groups of students who may need help working through fear or grief following an emergency.
- Restoration of normal school activities as quickly as deemed appropriate.

The school division recognizes and appreciates the vital role that parents play in each phase and appreciates parental involvement and support of these efforts.

Appendix B: State and Local Contacts

1. Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)
Physical and Mailing Addresses: 1100 Bank Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-4000 • www.dcjs.virginia.gov
2. DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS)
Physical and Mailing Addresses: see DCJS above
www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety
3. Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)
Physical Address: 1220 Bank Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1797, Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797
(804) 786-3921 • www.dbhds.virginia.gov
4. Virginia Department of Education (DOE)
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia 23218
Physical Address: James Monroe Building, 101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 225-2818 • www.doe.virginia.gov
5. Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
Physical Address: James Madison Building, 109 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2448, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2448
Office of Emergency Preparedness (804) 864-7026 • www.vdh.virginia.gov/ContactUs.htm
6. Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
Physical and Mailing Addresses: 10501 Trade Court, North Chesterfield, Virginia 23236
(804) 897-6500 • www.vaemergency.gov
 - a. Preparedness Division: for technical assistance with emergency operations plans (EOPs) and other preparedness actions
 - b. Office of Training and Exercises: for technical assistance in developing, designing and improving EOPs and exercise schedules and tracking
 - c. Regional Coordinators
 - d. CERT program for individuals: training for citizens
7. Virginia State Police (VSP)
Physical Addresses: 7700 Midlothian Turnpike, North Chesterfield, Virginia 23235
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 27472, Richmond, Virginia 23261
(804) 674-2000 • www.vsp.virginia.gov
8. State Fire Marshal's Office
Physical and Mailing Addresses: 1005 Technology Park Drive, Glen Allen, Virginia 23059
(804) 371-0220
http://vdfp.virginia.gov/state_fire_marshall/state_fire_marshall_regional_offices.html
9. Local Emergency Manager/Coordinator
<https://lemd.vdem.virginia.gov/Public/Default.aspx>

Appendix C: Resources

From the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety:

- [Juvenile Law Handbook](#)
- [School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Response Plan](#)
- [School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Response Plan Quick Guide](#)
- [Critical Incident Response Video](#)
- [Critical Incident Response – Accompanying Manual](#)
- [Guidance for Division-wide Safety Audit Committee Formation and Responsibilities](#)
- [Guidance for Emergency Manager Designee](#)
- [Guidance for School Safety Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Guidance for School Systems in the Event That Victims Arise from an Emergency](#)
- [Guidance for Technical Assistance for Threat Assessment and Management Teams for Virginia Schools and Institutions of Higher Education](#)
- [Guidance for Threat Assessment Teams and Reporting](#)
- [School Safety Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Threat Assessment Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines](#)
- [Virginia School Bus Driver and Monitor Video](#)
- [Virginia Schools Bus Driver and Monitor Safety and Security Manual](#)

From Other Sources:

- A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments: http://rems.ed.gov/docs/VA_Report_2008.pdf
- Active Shooter—How to Respond: www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf
- Bomb Threat Response: www.threatplan.org
- Emergency Management 101: What Every School District Needs to Know: www.hsd.org/?view&did=28334
- Guide for Developing High-quality School Emergency Operations Plans: http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf
- Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence: https://www.bja.gov/Publications/IACP_School_Violence.pdf
- Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools Tool Kit: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/emischool/EL361Toolkit/Start.htm>
- National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), Transporting Student with Special Needs Training: http://icsw.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/buses/UpdatedWeb/topic_9/
- National Incident Management System: <http://rems.ed.gov/docs/NIMS.pdf>
- Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities: www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center <http://rems.ed.gov/>



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