

School Lockdown Handbook

A Reference Guide for Schools



updated 2020

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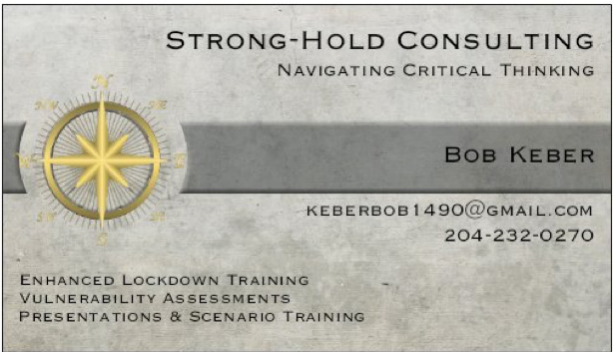
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Manitoba School Boards Association Risk Management would like to thank **Bob Keber** for his contributions towards the creation of this reference guide. Bob Keber is a keynote speaker and consultant within the education, non-profit and corporate communities, delivering benchmarked strategies and initiatives to those that seek to facilitate change to their safety and security culture.

Throughout Bob’s 30 years with the Winnipeg Police Service, he served in numerous operational and supervisory roles where he obtained a unique blend of certifications and experience which has led to holistic safety initiatives and strategies throughout the Province of Manitoba.

His training and experience in the field of Violence Threat Risk Assessments & Trauma Responses, Active Shooter/Active Aggressor Civilian Response, Pre-Attack Threat Assessment, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and Vulnerability Assessments, will enhance your workplace preparedness by providing insights and training to those who are truly the “First Responders”- those who are on scene when the crisis begins.

Bob’s training will prepare your employees and leaders to respond effectively to the increasing threat of critical workplace events.



Introduction

Staff, students and visitors in Manitoba's schools, have the right to learn, work and be present in a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality which cannot be overlooked. Everyone who spends any amount of time in a Manitoba school on a regular basis, needs to know how to protect themselves and how to protect our children, in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence.

Many Boards have actively undertaken the process of establishing lockdown plans.

However there has not been a consistent approach across the province with respect to lockdown planning. The R.C.M.P. Safe School Guidelines were the foundational procedures and were supported by the Winnipeg Police Service. Enhanced lockdown strategies continue to support the Safe Schools doctrine but have integrated the evolution of using Critical Thinking Skills in understanding Alerts, Barricading techniques, Evacuation and if necessary, countering strategies.

The following guidelines should accompany the Protocols already developed. The following guidelines are being provided to help schools ensure their lockdown plans meet basic requirements, and to ensure a degree of consistency across the province.

In developing lockdown plans, each school should consider the following guidelines:

When to lockdown/terminology to be used

Terminology is very important. Plans should clearly identify when "lockdown" versus other terminology is to be utilized. Terminology used to order a lockdown, should be plain language, clear and leave no misunderstanding as to what is expected. No secret passwords should be used. RCMP guidelines state that only the following language be used: **"LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN NOW"**.

The lockdown phrase should only be use for an immediate threat in or approaching the school. Its overuse or variations of the word "lock" or other lockdown terminology for anything else *will* create confusion. It will also desensitize staff and students to the importance or urgency of a real situation if they are hearing it used for anything other than its intended purpose.



LOCKDOWN should only be used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school. The over or misuse of lockdowns, will result in staff/students becoming desensitized and they will not take lockdowns seriously.

“Lockdown refers to the restriction of movement of students and staff due to a threat of violence within the building. The objective of a lockdown is to secure occupants out of sight and in a safe location in the event of an active threat where serious injury or death is imminent or occurring. Types of events that activate a lockdown include but are not limited to the following:

- dangerous intruder,
- active shooter,
- barricaded suspect.

HOLD AND SECURE should be used when it is desirable to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school (e.g., a bank robbery occurs near a school but not on school property). In this situation, the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors being locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved.

SHELTER IN PLACE is used when personal safety is considered to be in danger if anyone leaves the school. It is necessary for everyone to remain inside the school and take protective actions. Types of events that trigger a shelter in place:

- weather events such as a sudden blizzard;
- environmental event such as a chemical spill exterior to the school
- missing child;
- dangerous wild animal (cougar, bear etc.) and;
- any situation where evacuation may pose a greater risk than sheltering in place.

Boards should use the above terminology in developing local plans, in an effort to ensure consistency across the province.

Common language across the province allows for easy integration when staff, students and emergency service personnel are transferred from one jurisdiction to another.

Fire Alarms

Every school must have a fire safety plan as part of their overall emergency planning. The plans include details on fire alarm procedures, building floor plans, staff duties in a fire emergency, exiting and holding fire drills.

<http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/documents/services/riskManagement/studentSafety/Fire%20Safety%20in%20Educational%20Facilities%20-%20Guide%20for%20Educators.pdf>

Plans should address the issue of how to deal with a fire alarm and include the **proper exiting techniques** and how to use critical thinking skills to determine if it is in fact safe to exit the room (or how to exit a room during any type of emergency evacuation).

- Stop- Do not instinctively line up and exit the room.
- Listen to what is happening outside your door.
- Look through your windows, what do you see?
- **Where will you be when an emergency occurs? Know all of the exit points.**

Critical thinking skills must always be used before evacuating due to any type of emergency.

In the event that a fire alarm is pulled once a lockdown has been called, staff and students shall not respond as they normally would to a fire alarm, but shall remain locked down, if it is safe to do so. Staff and students must always be aware of other dangers and be prepared to respond accordingly in order to ensure their own safety.



Control of Visitor Access

Every school faces unique challenges, but they all share a basic responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of the students, the faculty and the staff. The balance that must be struck in incorporating access control is maintaining an open user-friendly environment while establishing a safe and secure facility at all times; including when school is in session, when limited faculty and staff are present, and when the school facilities are unoccupied.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING WHO, WHERE AND HOW INDIVIDUALS ENTER YOUR SCHOOLS CANNOT BE UNDERSTATED

Legislative Requirements

January of 2011 the Minister of Education initiated the new protocol for school principals and childcare centers regarding control of visitor access in schools. The protocol established the minimum requirements for controlling visitor access in schools. The requirement for controlling visitor access in schools can also be found in *the Safe Schools Charter*, *the Child Care Safety Charter* and *the Public Schools Act*.

Access control is a planned and purposeful means to monitor the school environment and both buildings and grounds, for school safety and violence prevention purposes. The main purpose of access monitoring is preventive; that is, to reduce the likelihood of incidents or problems.

The following are accepted security practices that provide a guideline for minimum standards that all schools should work towards. All schools are required to control visitor access in their buildings. A copy of the access control plan must be posted in a conspicuous location in the school and child care facility. Parents must be educated about access control strategies and the importance of them following the rules at the start of the school year.

Controlling visitor access **DURING** school hours:

- All schools must develop, manage and adhere to a visitor sign in policy.
- All staff should have Divisional assigned ID and be required to wear them at all times so that they are visible.
- All visitors and volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival. Visitors and volunteers who remain in the building must sign in at the office indicating date and time of arrival and sign out at departure.
- Volunteers should be required to wear a volunteer identification tag and visitors should be required to wear visitor tags.
- Visitor tags with brightly colored lanyards should be used for easy identification.
- The school receptionist should contact staff in the area the visitor will be attending. Visitors must be escorted to their desired location by a staff member.
- All exterior doors at the school should remain securely locked with the exception of monitored front doors to the school. Signage must be placed on all locked doors directing visitors to the main entrance door as well as posted inside the school to direct all visitors to the office.
- Schools without direct supervision of the access should migrate to one entry point controlled by a door buzzer and camera.
- Schools that have clerks working reduced hours and principal teachers must lock their doors when no one is managing the access.
- All visitors, including parents should remain at the office and should not have access to classrooms or be allowed to wander the hallways.
- All division employee's who are required to attend alternate locations must wear board approved identification and must sign in at the office.
- Vendors or inspectors must attend to the office, sign in and out and produce credentials prior to being escorted within the school.
- Occupied classrooms doors must be in a locked position at all times.
- Unoccupied rooms should be closed and locked.
- Mechanical, maintenance and custodial rooms must remain closed and locked.
- School files, personal data, medication and keys must be protected at all time.
- Portable radios should be available and used while supervising. A proper sign out process must be managed to ensure the radios are returned.



Controlling visitor access **AFTER** school hours:

- During evening hours all fire doors and gated areas should be closed and locked to limit access in the school. All staff working after hours are required to lock the classroom doors to prevent access of other permit holders or individuals.
- All staff must be familiar with their divisional work alone policies.
- Evening custodial staff must be familiar with emergency procedures including how to access and operate the fire panel and emergency shut off valves.



Permit holders:

- All permit holders should be required to use only the main floor of the school. All other floors are off-limits to anyone other than school/custodial staff.
- For evening and weekend permits - doors will be opened no more than 30 minutes prior to any event and locked 30 minutes after the event starts (where possible).
- Permit holders are required to supervise the entrance doors at all times while in the school.
- Any suspicious or unknown individuals wandering around the school will be questioned by teaching/custodial staff. If the person refuses to leave, local law enforcement will be summoned.
- All permit holders for after hour school use must carry liability insurance and provide a copy to the school during the permit application process.

Planning processes

There are many things to consider when developing a district-wide school safety and security plan. The planning process takes time and is ongoing. The four phases of emergency management; mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery, help to establish a foundation for planning. The phases are all interconnected impacting the outcomes of each phase. Additionally, the following six (6) basic steps may be of assistance to the school district when formulating its Safety & Security plan:

- 1. Assemble a district-wide planning team.** The team should at least include administrators, parents, teachers, and maintenance, transportation, food service, and nursing personnel from within the district. Outside agencies that should be involved include law enforcement, fire, hospital, and emergency management personnel.
- 2. Conduct hazard analysis** of the school site and surrounding area to identify what hazards are likely to affect it. Determine the severity of impact of each identified hazard.
- 3. Eliminate or mitigate hazards**
Determine if you can eliminate or mitigate any of the hazards you identify in step 2.
 - Trim trees and shrubbery and eliminate other sight features that could eliminate hiding places and provide clear lines of sight wherever possible.
 - Eliminate climbing devices that could allow access to windows or the roof.
 - Secure roof hatches, HVAC equipment doors and access doors.
 - Make immediate repairs to perimeter of buildings, including windows, security lighting and routinely check for bulb wear.
 - Fence off areas that may create niches and blind spots (consider cameras)
 - Slow traffic by adding stop signs, pavement markings, walkways and speed bumps in parking lots and driveways
 - Clearly direct visitors to the main entrance.
 - Limit the number of entry points to the school.
 - Routinely check exterior door hardware for damage.
 - Clearly number doors and rooms so that emergency responders can locate rooms quickly.
 - Labeling room numbers on the exterior so emergency responders can locate them from the exterior.
 - Routinely inspect windows and window hardware at the lowest floor levels.
 - Keep egress paths clear of obstructions and flammable materials.
 - Routinely check egress doors and exit way passageways to make sure that they are not blocked.
 - Routinely check that exit signs, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, etc. are in working order.
 - Ensure that emergency evacuation maps are current.
 - Install panic or duress alarm within the main office area to alert key staff and local law enforcement.
 - Consider a master shut off for the school's ventilation system.
 - Restrict access to all rooms and spaces containing wiring, equipment and controls.



4. **Develop procedures to respond to hazards.** Develop written procedures on how to respond to the hazards identified in step 2 that cannot be eliminated.
5. **Train students and staff.** All students and all staff must be trained how to use the plan and what their responsibilities will be in a given response.
6. **Conduct drills and tabletop exercises.** Drills and tabletop exercises should be conducted to test the plan. All participants should be debriefed at the conclusion of each drill. The feedback provided by participants is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the plan. The plan is then modified to strengthen any weaknesses.



Establish and document the following policies and procedures relating to target hardening initiatives.

- Building access
- Visitor policy
- Delivery procedures
- Vendor and contractor policies
- Student transportation security
- Master key/access code distribution
- Vehicular access and parking
- Storage area (i.e. food, chemical, equipment, medication)
- HVAC systems

A culture of safety must be developed for the entire school population. The weakest link to any system is usually identified as the people that the system is trying to protect.

In trying to build thriving communities, sometimes, we lose sight of what is most important in that pursuit; the individual. A culture of safety speaks to the individual. Everyone of us. A culture of safety is the environment in which we all flourish, physically, emotionally, financially, socially, with the realization of our individual and collective potential.

Be aware.

It sounds basic but sometimes the most obvious points are the most crucial. Put down your phone and tune in to your surroundings.

"In security, we often refer to the phrase 'situational awareness,' being aware of our situation wherever we are,"

When you first walk into a building, get your bearings and taking inventory of your surroundings: Notice the people in the room, the layout of the venue, where the nearest exits are and whether anything appears off.



Make a brief, mental "what if" plan ahead of time.

Have the mindset that when you walk into anywhere to begin to mentally prepare yourself with the 'what if' scenario."

This type of thinking trains you to be a lot more diligent in looking for exits or a safe room where you can shelter. Take a few minutes to put an escape plan into place when you first arrive at a venue and then go back to enjoying the evening.

Know what to look for.

When taking inventory of a place or scenario, be on the lookout for anything that appears suspicious.

The biggest red flag is somebody appearing out of place by their clothing — they are dressed for the winter in the summer — or by their actions. Actions to watch for include leaving a suspicious package behind or behaving uncharacteristically for the setting.

Don't be afraid to report something suspicious.

Be aware of your neighbors, people's activity on social media, and don't be afraid to share your concerns.

If something seems suspicious, you shouldn't assume that somebody else is going to call it in or otherwise report it. Make the call yourself. "Trust your gut instinct when something niggles at the back of your mind that something is wrong. Too many people ignore those feelings even though they could save lives.

Try to remain as calm as possible.

Focus on breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth as you act. Remaining calm and focused can mean the difference between life and death as a heightened state of panic may impair your judgment and ability to make sound decisions when time is of the essence."

Run if you're able to.

In a situation involving an active shooter, your immediate move should be to get out of the building if you can safely do so. And once you are through the door, don't stop.

Keep going and get as far away from the line of fire as you can. Don't assume that you're safe once outside just because the gunfire is happening inside. Get to safety and then make that 911 call. Those few seconds may count.

Hide if you need to.

If you can't get safely to an exit and out the door, your second choice is to hide. Once you are hidden and secure, remain quiet and still. Hiding is not the time to get on your phone. If you have that opportunity and you truly think you are safe, you can reach out to 911, but you want to be very careful.

Especially in a dark situation, you want to maintain the darkness. You don't want to have your phone on to give you away." Conceal yourself behind the hardest object possible to shield yourself from bullets.

Barricading

Barricading is building a wall by stacking desks and tables up in order to block an intruder's ability to see inside or easily access a classroom. Considering the placement of filing cabinets, bookshelves or other heavy items near the entrance to the classroom will assist in the timely building of a robust barricade.

For a door that opens out, build a wall by stacking desks or propping a table up in order to block the intruder's ability to see inside the room once the door is opened. For a door that swings in, push heavy furniture against it, prop a chair under the handle or use door jams

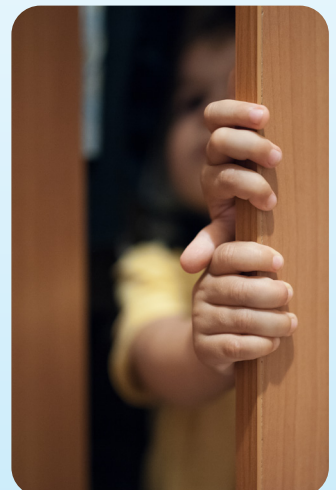
Stay hidden for the long haul.

Once hidden, don't come out until law enforcement arrives and announces that they are ready to escort you out. Don't try to determine when it's safe to emerge on your own accord.

Follow law enforcement directions and commands. Because officers don't know who the perpetrators are, you must remain calm and follow their directions. Keep hands visible and avoid sudden movements. Display empty hands with open palms raised. Avoid pointing, screaming and yelling. Expect to be detained and possibly searched.

Officers are entering a very uncertain, chaotic scene and will be focused on clearing the entire structure to ensure there are no additional shooters or threats. Officers will usually be working in teams and may be in uniform or tactical gear. The initial officers may bypass injured people asking for help until the scene is secure, but they will return to render aid and evacuate.

First responders will not enter the building or help the victims until the threat has been neutralized.



Fight back only as a last resort.

Your safety comes first. Attempting to stop an active shooter is only advised if they are extremely close to you and you cannot take any of the above safety steps. Basically, only try this if it's your only survival option.

Finally, curb your curiosity.

If a shooting happens in your neighborhood and you are not actively caught in the situation, remain a safe distance away.

It may sound silly to say this but if somebody shoots a gun, you want to run away from the gunfire.

If there is a shooting in your area, remain inside, keep your doors locked and wait until you are given the all-clear from officers to leave your premises.

1. Communicate to everyone in your community in a proactive and non-fear-based way that they must take threats they hear, read and see seriously, and encourage them to report their concerns to school and local authorities.
2. Work with local first responders to develop response plans, and conduct drills and full-scale exercises with them.
3. Regularly and frequently train students, teachers, staff, clinicians and administrators on how to respond under stress to all kinds of emergencies, including active shooters, via drills and, when possible and appropriate, full-scale exercises.
4. Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in new construction and renovation projects to delay or possibly even prevent the entry of potential attackers. Properly implemented CPTED concepts also enable administrators to get a better view of what is happening on and around campus, which also improves security.
5. Adopt multiple layers of emergency/mass notification so that those who are able can take steps to protect themselves via lockdown, evacuation or by avoiding the area where the emergency is taking place. Emergency notification should be used to communicate with your community before, during and after an emergency. Additionally, adopt two-way radios so staff can communicate during an emergency.
6. Create multidisciplinary threat and behavioral assessment teams to identify and respond to at-risk individuals who show signs that they might harm themselves or others.
7. Set up anonymous tip lines (text, email and/or phone) so that students, staff, can anonymously report concerning behavior to school administrators and threat/behavioral assessment teams. Encourage the use of these solutions and educate the school community on how to use them. **IF YOU SEE/HEAR SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!**
8. Install locks and other appropriate access control equipment to prevent or at least delay the entry of unauthorized individuals to schools.
9. Develop and Implement an effective visitor management and school access system.
10. Develop effective parent/student reunification plans and processes.
11. Plan for mental health services to be provided after a tragedy so students, staff, clinicians, administrators and faculty can emotionally recover, even if they weren't physically injured during the attack.
12. Develop the plans, policies and procedures necessary to implement No. 1-11.

This list is not complete, and each item is multifaceted. That being said, sometimes we need to go back to the basics. This is especially true for folks who are new to the school, but it's also true for those of us who might have forgotten.

An active shooter is an individual engaged in attempting to kill people in a confined space or populated area. Active shooters typically use firearms and

**IT CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE.
IT CAN HAPPEN ANYTIME.**

**If you are involved in an
active shooter incident**



**see something,
say something.**



**Before you run,
know the exits.**



**Find a place
to hide.**

To help prepare for lockdowns, drills and preparedness can continue by following the guidelines of your school district policies and procedures.

During emergency situations, safety of your students, staff and visitors takes precedence over things like social distancing. Scenarios and discussion can be implemented during these times (or any time).

- Set a training time (15 min).
- Use School specific floor plans.
- Display floor plans on Smart Board or overhead, indicate current location.
- Discussion should be Grade/age appropriate.
- Review division lockdown policies and procedures. Educate students on visitor/access control.
- Scenario discussions:
 - Discuss with view from current and different locations.
 - Discuss differing types of incidents (i.e. intruder in the school, outside the school).
- Critical Thinking, Situational Awareness.
- Consideration must be given for high needs students. There is not a one size fits all answer for students with special needs. The school must consider each case individually.
- Age appropriate topics can be discussed during sensitive times. This will emphasize critical thinking skills.
- See Something Say Something, Violent Threat Risk Assessments, use available resources to help with discussions.
- Early years: Walking field trip through and around the school. Stagger classrooms and ages to accommodate social distancing.
- Emphasis that this is a life-long safety skill. (Mall, after school programs, restaurants, church etc.).

Low-Cost Security Strategies for School Facilities

Here is a variety of school safety and security measures that may be implemented at little or no cost and without the use of complex technology.



General

Using incident reporting data, locate trouble spots in the school and consider alternative solutions. There are four ways to improve school security:

1. Upgrading building or site features
2. Adding electronic security devices
3. Increasing manpower
4. Improving school climate

The best solution is often a mix of two or more of these measures.

Prepare school facilities emergency information for administrators and first responders. Include, at minimum:

1. A site plan showing surrounding streets, primary and secondary access points, fire hydrants, and power, water, gas, and communications line locations; and
2. Reduced-size building floor plans showing room names and numbers, evacuation routes, building entries and exits, designated areas of refuge, roof access points, and the locations of the public address system panel, intrusion alarm panel, fire alarm panel, sprinkler shutoff, main power control panel, main gas or oil shutoff, oil storage tanks, main water shutoff, main HVAC shutoff, emergency generator, and fire hose boxes.

Outside the Building

- Use signs, vegetation, fencing, or other methods to clearly define school property. Well-defined school boundaries demonstrate respect for and ownership of property, qualities that tend to be reciprocated by students, staff, and the community. In urban settings, sidewalks are often enough to define one or more sides, with objects, fences, or buildings defining the others. In rural settings, landscaping may be enough if properly designed.
- Trim shrubbery and trees and relocate other obstacles such as trash containers to eliminate hiding places and provide clear lines of sight throughout school grounds. Where vegetation obstructs vision, tree branches should be removed below 7 feet and bushes trimmed to 3 feet (18 inches for vegetation bordering walkways). This allows ready surveillance by school staff, neighbors, and passing pedestrians and patrol cars.
- Prevent access to windows and roofs by trimming trees, relocating objects near the building that can be used as climbing devices, and ensuring that down spouts, covered walkway supports, light posts, and other building or site features are not scalable. It is surprisingly easy to gain access to windows and roofs in some schools, thereby exposing them to vandalism and break-ins.
- Keep trees well trimmed if they are located near building exits, access roads, and utility wires so they don't block site access and building entry and egress in an emergency.
- Secure roof hatches, operable skylights, rooftop equipment doors and access panels. Where possible, this is best done from the inside of the building so locks and latches are not exposed.
- Ensure that fire hydrants on and near school grounds are visible and unobstructed.
- Keep school grounds and buildings safeguarded and make immediate repairs to damage inside or outside the building. Well maintained schools promote orderly behavior by demonstrating respect for and ownership of property. This helps prevent the spread of vandalism and ultimately lowers maintenance and repair costs.
- Routinely inspect exterior lighting for damage and bulb wear and make immediate repairs. Vandals often target exterior



lighting fixtures and seek areas darkened by inoperable lighting. Add additional lighting where necessary.

- Fence off or otherwise enclose niches and blind spots in exterior walls that provide hiding places. Do not, however, impede or obstruct any means of egress. When exterior doors are involved, work with your local fire or building department.
- Clearly mark and separate visitor parking. Visitor parking should be easy to locate, within sight of the main entry, if possible, and separated from staff and student parking. Number non-visitor parking spaces and use signs to direct visitors to their parking area.
- Keep bus and car access separated from school buildings and play areas by curbs, removable bollards, or gates that allow emergency vehicle access but keep other vehicles at a distance.
- Place traffic calming devices — stop signs, pavement markings, bumps — in parking lots and driveways.
- Give each school building a distinctive marking to help emergency responders, new students, and visitors quickly find their way. Use names, numbers, icons, colors, or artwork. Reflective markings are ideal.
- Clearly mark the main entry to the school and post signs on other entries redirecting visitors to the main entrance. Signs should include arrows, maps, or directions, not just the statement “Visitors must report to the office.”
- Ensure that the fresh air intakes for the school’s mechanical systems are screened and located at least 12 feet off the ground or are otherwise inaccessible. This reduces the risk of accidental or intentional exposure to irritating, unhealthful, or dangerous substances.
- Ensure that portable classrooms are adequately identified, lighted, and tied down, and that trailer hitches and tongues have been removed and access beneath them is restricted with fencing, siding, or other materials. Unsecured spaces beneath portables can be used for hiding people, weapons, contraband, and incendiary devices. Conduct assessments of relocation facilities.

Inside the Building

- No one, other than staff and students, should have unescorted access to the school.
 - Parents should remain at the office if picking up children.
 - Outside companies/agencies should sign in and be escorted. (Contractors, meter readings, food inspectors, deliveries etc.)
- Limit the use of building entrances to one or as few as possible. Adjust locking hardware on all other entrances, including portables, classrooms opening to the outside, and kitchen, delivery, and maintenance entries, so they cannot be opened from the outside without a key, proximity card,



or other device.

- Routinely (monthly) inspect exterior doors for damage and faulty hardware, making immediate repairs. School doors take a beating. Frames, view lights, hinges, locks, and latches should be examined at least monthly, and lubricated, adjusted, and repaired as needed.
- Install face plates at exterior door latches to prevent jimmying. Face plate kits are available from door hardware suppliers and are easy to install.
- Install fish-eye viewers in exterior doors lacking windows or sidelights to help identify those seeking entry.
- Institute strict procedures for key control. Where keys are used, their careful control enhances building security and reduces spending on re-keying locks and issuing new keys when they are lost or stolen.
- Ensure that internal access points between the school and joint-use facilities are limited and secure. Building egress routes cannot be compromised.
- Where appropriate, number or renumber doors and rooms in a logical, sequential, floor-by-floor pattern so emergency responders can locate them quickly. This includes numbering exterior and stairway doors. Consider removing door labels such as ‘Telephone Room,’ ‘Mechanical Room,’ etc., so room use cannot be identified by intruders.
- Consider displaying room numbers on classroom windows so they are readily visible to first responders from outside the building.
- Routinely inspect all windows accessible from the street for damage and faulty hardware and make immediate repairs. This helps prevent accidents and injuries and reduces the opportunity for the unauthorized passage of people, weapons, and contraband.
- Ensure that all classroom windows meant to provide a secondary means of escape are in working order and are not blocked by screens, security grills, louvers, awnings, or other devices. Escape windows should be easily accessible and readily opened from the inside.
- Consider an all-lights-off policy for the school when it is not being used. This policy assumes that intruders’ lights give them away. The policy costs nothing to implement and can significantly reduce energy bills, so discuss it with your local police department.
- Consider displaying room numbers on classroom windows so they are readily visible to first responders from outside the building.
- If burglaries have been a problem, install motion detectors inside the school that trigger intrusion alarms and alert the police. Motion detectors should supplement the above all lights-off policy.
- Keep unoccupied rooms and spaces locked when not in use. This practice requires full cooperation by faculty and staff.
- Keep door latches in the locked position in occupied classrooms so that in the event of a school lockdown, teachers can simply pull doors shut. This practice prevents

the exposure of teachers as they step outside to lock their classroom doors.

- Keep egress paths — corridors, stairs, stairwells, and exits — clear of obstructions and flammable materials. Examples of common fire code violations are (1) obstructions such as empty cardboard boxes, boxes of used fluorescent light tubes, carts, desks, tables and chairs, lawnmowers, steel racks, ball racks, stored equipment, and (2) tripping hazards such as electrical cords, tools, lumber, and hoses.
- Ensure that no more than 20 percent of wall space in classrooms or hallways is covered with teaching materials and artwork. Fire codes generally prohibit coverage greater than 20 percent for reasons of fire safety. Ensure that corridor and restroom lighting controls are protected from unauthorized use. Installing keyed switches is the simplest solution to this problem.
- Ensure that all spaces in the school requiring two exits have, in fact, two functioning exits. This includes classrooms.
- Monthly - check that exit signs are visible and illuminated. Keep a supply of bulbs and spare fixture components so replacement and repair can be immediate.
- Monthly - check that fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and other fire safety components are in good working order, and that staff is trained in the use of fire extinguishers.
- Post clear and precise emergency evacuation maps in classrooms and other major building spaces and at key corridors locations. Include at least two alternative evacuation routes. Color-code them “red”, “blue”, etc., for clarity. Ensure that the maps are correctly orientated.
- Ensure that all classrooms, including portables, have two way communication with the office. Most schools have a P.A. system, but many do not have a two-way intercom system.
- Install a panic or duress alarm at the school reception desk and within the main office area to alert key staff.
- Use caller ID on all school phones to help identify and deter threatening callers.
- Ensure that medical supplies are available in several locations through out the school, such as: health room, gym, science, home EC, industrial arts, custodial and administration office.
- Ensure that designated areas of refuge (safe space in the building when evacuation isn’t possible) have appropriate window and door protection. This includes strong and lockable doors and windows for protection from high winds and flying debris.
- If the school’s ventilation system has a master control, provide a shut-off switch in the principal’s office. If that is not feasible, ensure administrative school staff know where the master control is located and how to operate it. Conduct regular shut-off drills.
- Ensure RF (radio frequency) communication is possible throughout the school. This capability is critical for local emergency responders. Invite them to test all parts of the building. Where there are problems, install repeaters as necessary.
- Install a battery or portable generator backup power supply for telephones and emergency communications. Schools without an uninterrupted power supply (UPS) should have a sufficient backup source to maintain voice communications for at least several hours, preferably 24. Routinely test the backup power supply.
- Restrict access to all rooms and spaces containing building wiring, equipment, and controls, including access to electrical or control panels. This is a normal procedure in most schools, but it’s wise to routinely check for unlocked or broken doors and access panels, loose or exposed communication wiring, and signs of tampering with suspended ceiling panels.
- Provide back-up emergency lighting in stairs, hallways, and rooms without windows. If emergency lighting is provided, check its operation on a monthly basis (as per fire code requirements).



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Works Cited

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at the National Institute of Building Sciences www.ncef.org Prepared under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools ©2008, National Institute of Building Sciences