

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document contains answers to questions most frequently received from stakeholders in the emergency management field.

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13. What is the Tool Box and how do I submit a resource for potential inclusion?
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15. I still can't find the information I need. Can I request electronic or telephone support?

1. **What is the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center?** On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS), the REMS TA Center supports schools, school districts, and institutions of higher education (IHEs), with their community partners, in the development of high-quality emergency operations plans (EOPs) and comprehensive emergency management.
2. **What services do you offer?** The REMS TA Center provides a hub of information, resources, training, and services in the field of school and higher ed emergency operations planning. We provide the following services:
 - a. **Comprehensive Website:** Our TA Center Website, <http://rems.ed.gov>, offers a number of helpful resources, publications, and archived and future training opportunities. It currently showcases important Federal guidance on developing high-quality emergency operations plans for schools and institutions of higher education.
 - b. **Virtual Trainings:** We offer live and archived Webinar trainings, PowerPoint presentations for download, and will soon have online courses available for self-paced, individual learning.

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- c. **Live Trainings by Request (TBRs):** Our live trainings are available by request for delivery on-site at your school, district, or institution of higher education.
 - d. **Technical Assistance:** REMS TA Center staff are available to respond to your direct requests for technical assistance on a variety of topics pertaining to emergency operations planning for schools, districts, and institutions of higher education.
 - e. **Emergency Management Planning Tools:** Interactive emergency management planning tools available through the TA Center include online self-assessment and evaluation tools designed to evaluate school and IHE capacity to create a high-quality EOP, as well as a software tool, designed to guide users through the process of generating a high-quality EOP as recommended in the Guides.
 - f. **Tool Box:** The TA Center Website houses an online, searchable library of free, downloadable tools developed by school emergency managers in the field.
3. **Do you serve my institution/organization?** The TA Center serves the following institutions/organization:
 - a. Schools, school districts, and Local Educational Agencies (including Pre-K and K-12, public, non-public, and private);
 - b. Institutions of Higher Education (including community colleges, universities, and technical schools);
 - c. State Educational Agencies;
 - d. Community partners (e.g., law enforcement, public safety, health and mental health agencies);
 - e. Current or former grantees (e.g., ERCM, REMS, EMHE);
 - f. Other stakeholders in K-12 or IHE emergency management (e.g., families, non-profit organizations).
4. **What are the *Guides for Developing Emergency Operations Plans*?** On June 18, 2013, the White House released guides for developing high-quality emergency operations plans for schools, IHEs and Houses of Worship. These *Guides* align and build upon years of emergency planning work by the Federal government and are the first joint product of the U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services on this critical topic. The *Guides* are customized to each type of community, incorporate lessons learned from recent incidents, and respond to the needs and concerns voiced by stakeholders following the recent shootings in Newtown and Oak Creek and the recent tornadoes in Oklahoma. Schools, IHEs and Houses of Worship can use them to create new plans as well as to revise and update existing plans and align their emergency planning practices with those at the national, state, and local levels. The *Guides* are available here <http://rems.ed.gov/EOPGuides.aspx>. We encourage you to download and examine the Guides in their entirety.

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- 5. Do you offer any resources supporting the new guidance?** The TA Center Website offers a variety of additional resources to assist schools, school districts, and institutions of higher education with their emergency management efforts. Resources featured on the page include publications, links to additional sources of information, partner organizations, and other general emergency management information. Also available are information on four key topics that support emergency operations plan development including, but not limited to, Information Sharing, Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S), Campus Public Safety, and *Active Shooter Situations*.
- 6. What types of technical assistance are available through the TA Center?** TA Center staff are available to walk TA requestors through the new Federal guidance for emergency operations plan development. TA Center staff also provide live support during Webinars and other online training events, such as assisting attendees with access and lost registration confirmations. We also provide information on where to find sample tools, checklists, MOUs, and other documents, available both through the TA Center, and as available in our Tool Box.
- 7. How do I find a resource on the TA Center Website?** Use the Advanced Search feature on the REMS TA Center Website to search for resources by keyword, audience type (K-12/Higher Ed), file format (MS Word, PowerPoint, PDF), resource type (checklists, drills, forms, procedures) and by topic (emergency operations planning, engaging youth, mental health, special topics, other). If you need help locating a particular resource, please complete the TA Request Form available here: <http://rem.ed.gov/RequestTA.aspx>.
- 8. What tools does the TA Center offer to assist schools, districts, and institutions of higher education in their emergency management planning efforts?** The TA Center offers online self-assessment evaluation tools to determine their emergency management capacity, as well as a downloadable software tool to support K-12 schools in the development of a high-quality emergency operations plan based upon the new Federal guidance.
- 9. What are Trainings by Request (TBRs) and on what topics are they offered?** TBRs are available for delivery on-site at schools, school districts, or IHEs. Trainings are provided free of charge, and include training materials, one or more expert trainers, and TA Center staff support for the event hosted at your site. For additional information on currently available trainings, as well as to determine your eligibility to host a training, please visit: http://rem.ed.gov/TA_TrainingsByRequest.aspx.
- 10. Does the TA Center offer self-paced online courses?** Yes. On a rolling basis over the next several months, the TA Center will release a number of online courses, on both introductory and advanced topics, and based upon the new Federal emergency operations planning guidance. To receive

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notification of the availability of our self-paced online courses, please send an email to info@remstacenter.org with subject line: Online Courses.

11. **Does the REMS TA Center offer any trainings for delivery to school staff, teachers, and administrators in a classroom setting?** Over the next few months, the TA Center will make available on our Website several introductory and advanced training topics PowerPoint presentations, intended for delivery in a classroom setting. Each module will consist of a 30-minute presentation, including detailed instructions, PowerPoint slides, and speakers' notes, and on topics ranging from emergency management for large events to infectious diseases, and from food defense to integrating the needs of persons with disabilities into emergency operations planning.

12. **What are Virtual Trainings and how do I sign up to receive notification of upcoming virtual training events?** TA Center Webinars feature Web conference presentations from experts in the field of emergency management, along with downloadable PowerPoint slides, supplemental reading, and other online materials that enhance the presentation's key learnings. To view archived Webinars and accompanying presentation materials and resources, please visit: http://rem.s.ed.gov/TA_VirtualTrainings.aspx. To receive notifications on upcoming events, please send an email to info@remstacenter.org.

13. **What is the Tool Box and how do I submit a resource for potential inclusion?** The Tool Box is a virtual library of tools developed by emergency managers in the field containing relevant resources pertinent to the needs of local education agencies (LEAs) and IHEs and their partners as they engage in the process of emergency management planning. To view resources currently available in the Tool Box, please visit: <http://rem.s.ed.gov/ToolBox.aspx>. If you would like to submit a resource for potential inclusion in the Tool Box, please complete the Resource Submission Form available on the Tool Box page.

14. **I would like to serve as a subject matter expert (SME) for the REMS TA Center. What do I do next?** Please send an email containing your resume and biographical information to info@remstacenter.org with the subject line: Subject Matter Expert. TA Center staff will respond to your message within two business days of receipt.

15. **I still can't find the information I need. Can I request electronic or telephone support?** TA Center staff are available via email or our toll-free phone line to respond to your direct requests for technical assistance on a variety of topics. Send us an email at info@remstacenter.org or call us toll-free at 1-855-781-REMS [7367]. Our hours of operations are Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EDT.