

Response



**U.S. Department of Education,
Office of Safe and Healthy
Students**

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Washington, DC 20202

Overview of Response Session

- Define
- Response phase steps
- Action options
- Post-incident activities
- Tabletop exercise



Phases of Emergency Management



Learning Objectives

- Understand response actions related to evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place.
- Review effective strategies for making response decisions.
- Understand how to develop and implement an after-action review.
- Participate in an interactive exercise.



What is the Response Phase?

- The Response phase is when emergency management plans are activated to effectively contain and resolve an emergency.



Response Phase Components

1. Assess magnitude of situation
2. Report to school administration
3. Initiate Incident Command System structure
4. Execute emergency management plan
5. Initiate transfer of command, as necessary, with response agencies
6. Operate in a Unified Command Structure with response agencies as necessary
7. Account for students and staff
8. Reunify parents and students, as necessary
9. Transition to the Recovery phase
10. Conduct after-action reviews



Events That Require Response Planning and Efforts

- High**
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- Violence in schools or community (assaults, robberies, etc.)
 - Student and/or staff deaths
 - Suicides
 - Accidents (students hit by cars, bus accidents, car accidents, etc.)
 - Infectious disease outbreaks
 - Major natural disasters (tornado, earthquake, wildfire, hurricane, etc.)
- Low**
- School shootings
 - Terrorist events (i.e., 9/11)



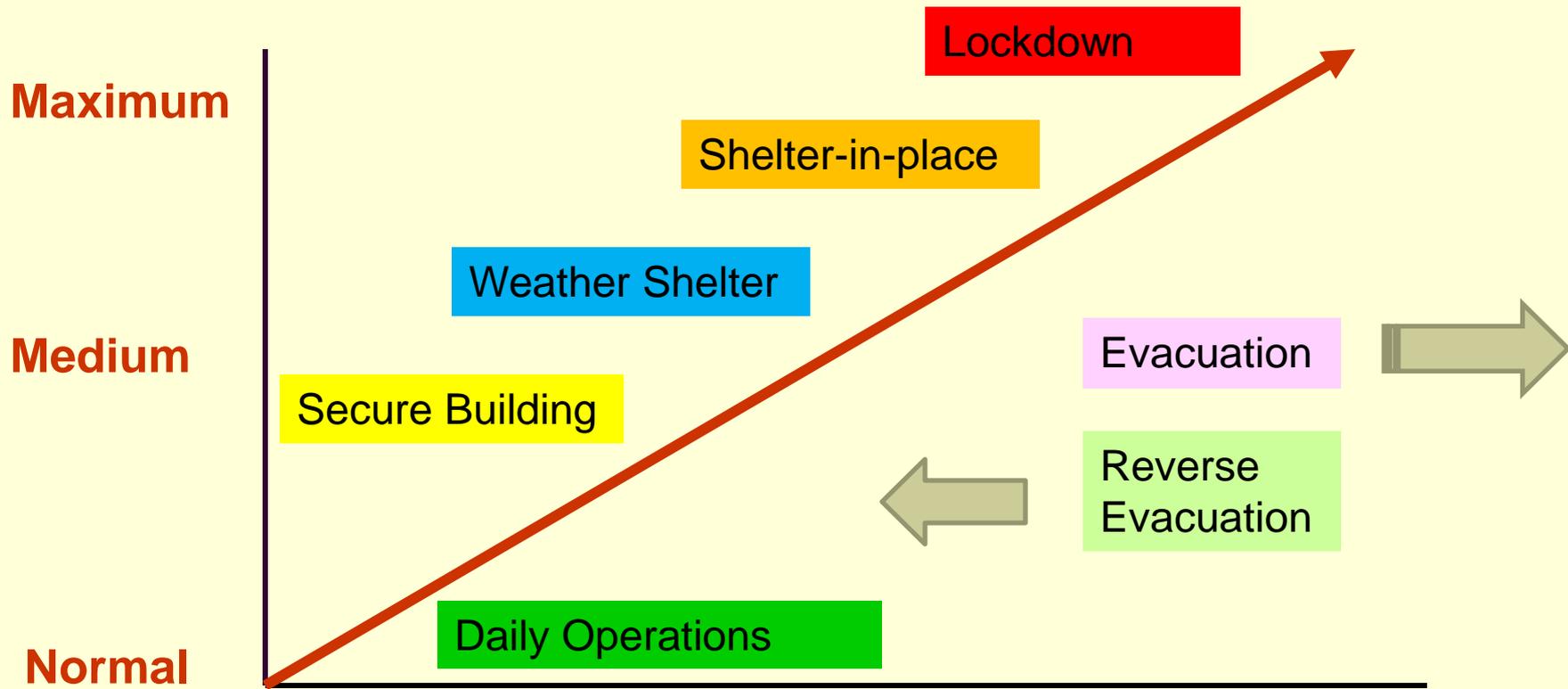
Response Actions

- During an emergency, there are three primary responses:
 - Evacuation
 - Lock-down
 - Shelter-in-place
- Each response should depend on the specifics and the severity of the situation



Standard Emergency Response Procedures- Levels of Protection

Protection



Response Actions: Decision-Making

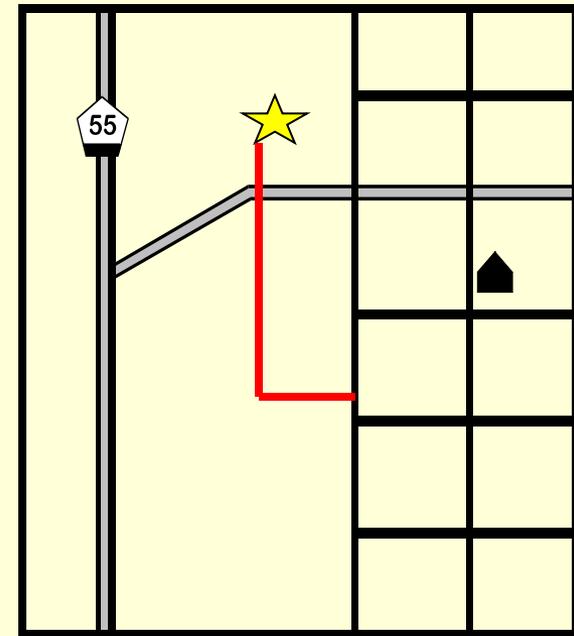
- Incident commanders need to make informed decisions
- Develop protocols in advance to help with making decisions in an emergency
- Level and type of response should be commensurate with the incident



Response Actions: Evacuation

Evacuation: Use when locations outside the school are safer than inside the school

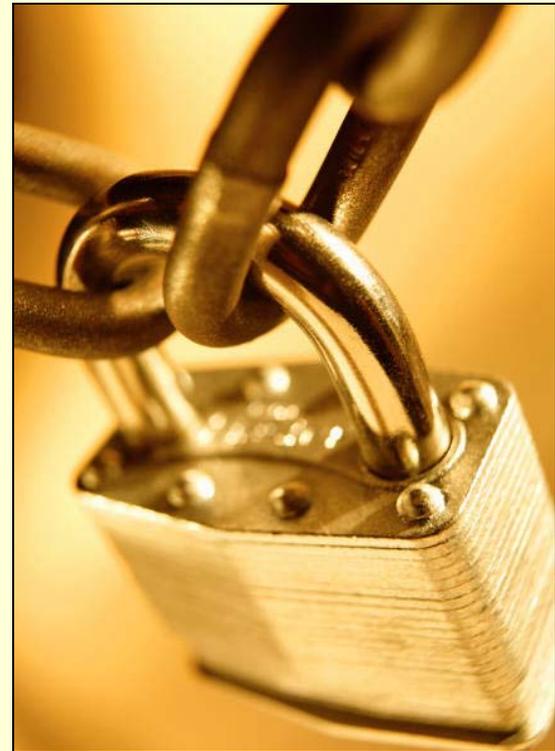
- Identify multiple evacuation routes in coordination with police and fire and that do not interfere with public safety vehicles and/or fire hydrants
- Determine how teachers will account for students
- Ensure teachers, staff members, and administrators have appropriate “go-kits”



Response Actions: Lock-down

Lock-down: Use when there is an immediate threat of violence in, or immediately around, the school.

- Lock all exterior doors, if safe to do so
- Ensure public safety officials can enter the building
- Follow predetermined policy about closing blinds, turning off lights, and using status cards
- Move all staff and students to an area not visible from windows or doors



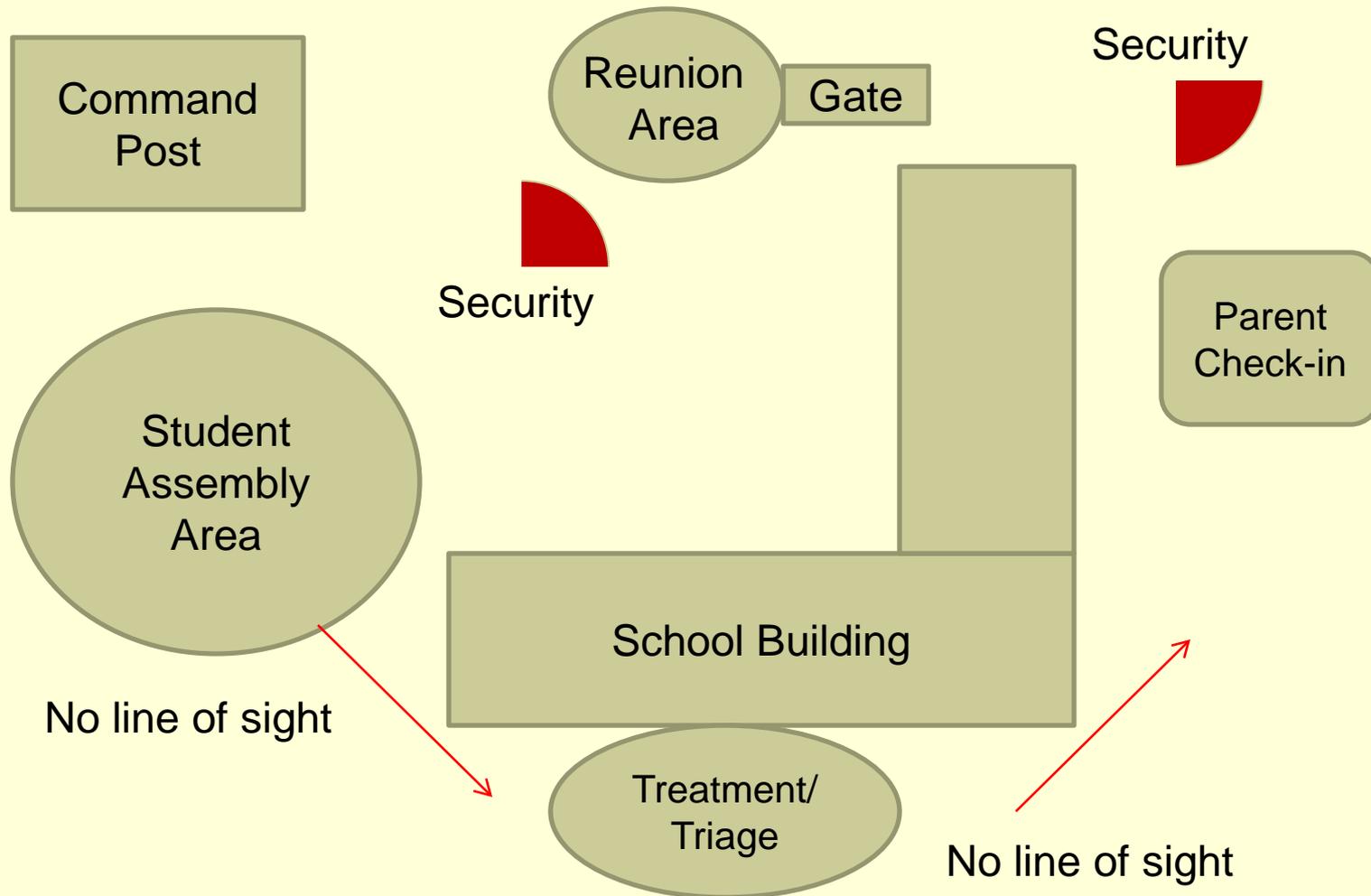
Response Actions: Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place: Use when students and staff must remain indoors during an extended period of time—what events would prompt this?

- Close all windows and turn off all heating and air conditioning systems
- Create activity schedule to keep students engaged
- Ensure necessary supplies are available—what supplies are needed?
- What contingencies for staff must be considered?

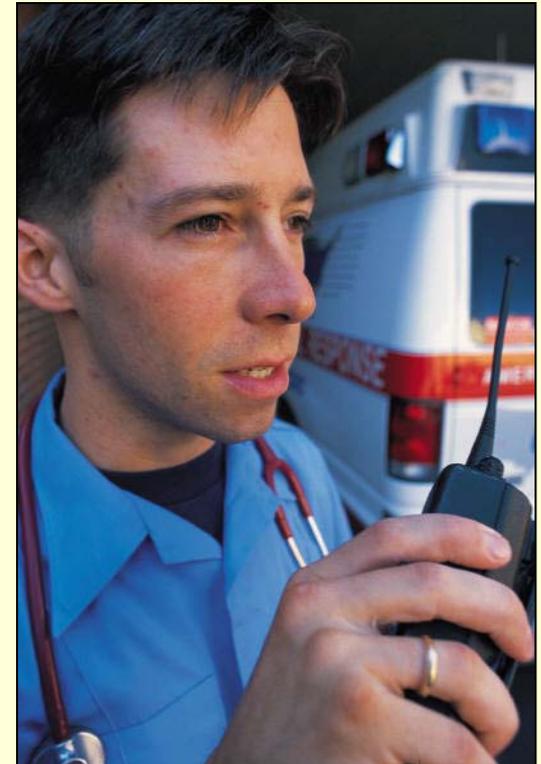


Considerations for Reunification Site Design



Special Response Considerations

- Class transition times
- Lunch periods
- Outdoor activities (physical education classes, etc.)
- Athletic and after-school activities and events
- Messages to students and staff (plain language vs. codes, use of placards)
- Messages to parents
- Discourage external cellular communications by students and staff during emergencies



Post-Incident Review

- “Hot wash” vs. After-action reviews
 - Hot wash: A brief meeting shortly after and event intended to capture immediate impressions or explanations of actions.
 - After-action review: A thorough debrief and evaluation approximately a week following an event to capture key lessons learned from emergency response and make recommendations for improvements.



Why Conduct Reviews?

- Critical for identifying key lessons learned and recommendations for improvements
- Help identify “what worked” and gaps and weaknesses in emergency management plans and responses:
 - Conduct briefings at two levels:
 - Internal—district level
 - External—community level
 - Briefings should take place shortly after an emergency response situation
 - Participants should include school staff, first responders, and other key stakeholders



After-Action Report Components

- Exercise or incident overview
- Exercise or incident goals and objectives
- Analysis of outcomes
- Analysis of capacity to perform critical tasks
- Summary and recommendations
- Accountability plan for each partner



Summary

- Efforts in the Prevention-Mitigation and Preparedness phases will impact the quality of response
- Responses to emergencies will vary depending upon the severity and intensity of the event
- Utilizing an ICS structure improves response efforts
- There are three key response actions: evacuation, lock-down, and shelter-in-place
- After-action briefings and reports are an integral part of the emergency management continuum

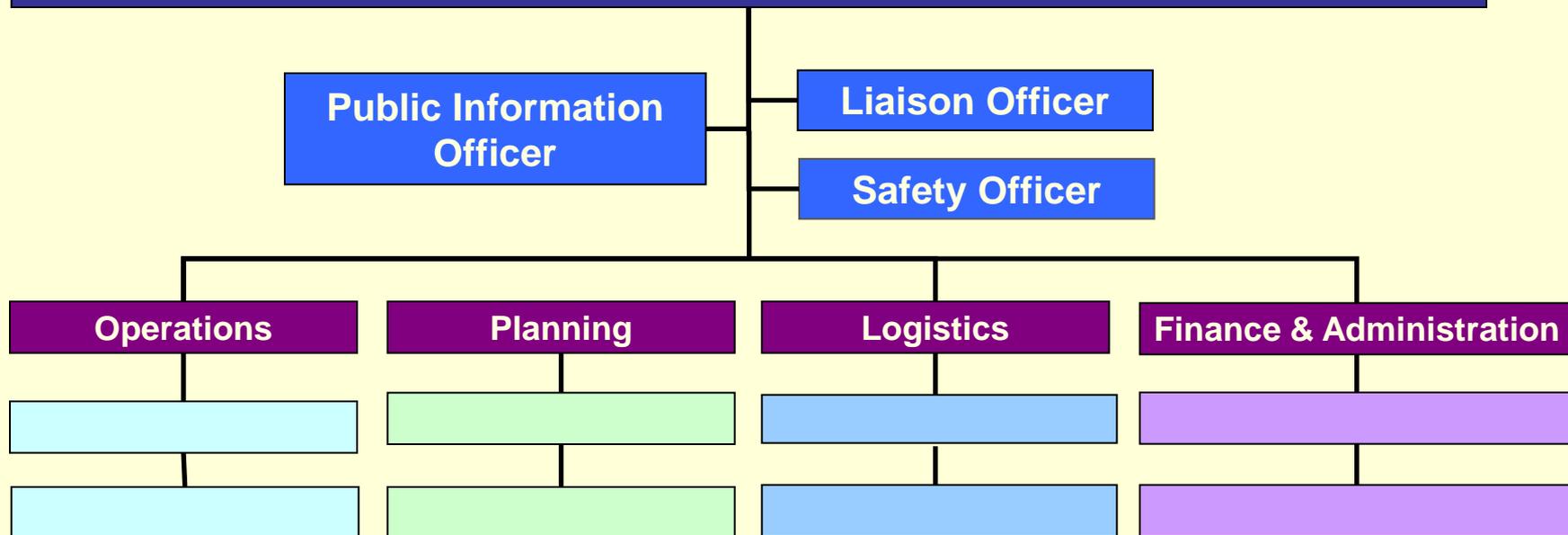


Tabletop Activity



Tabletop Activity ICS

Incident Commander and Incident Command Team



Tabletop Instructions

- Each team is to designate an incident commander, who will be responsible for:
 - Making critical assignments
 - Developing response strategies
 - Conducting team updates and reporting out
 - Conducting exercise debriefing to assess, evaluate, and discuss lessons-learned
- Team members must maintain a written activity log [incident plan] to record the names of people they would have contacted, requests, actions taken, and the status of those actions



The Scenario Timeline

- Facilitator will read the initial scenario
- Your team will be given time to develop and explain a list of steps/actions taken to manage the emergency
- Your team will be given scenario interjects at various intervals
- Selected incident commanders will report out to the entire group



Scenario Incident Facts

- Town Middle School (TMS) is a suburban middle school with 719 students and 79 staff members
- TMS is a one and one-half level building with 116,300 square feet
- School starts at 7:50 a.m. and dismisses at 2:40 p.m.
- All students ride the school system-owned and operated school buses unless parents drop them off



Scenario Incident Facts (Cont'd.)

- TMS has an on-site emergency management team
- School buses initially pick up high school students followed by middle school students and then elementary school students:
 - High school begins at 7:10 a.m., middle school at 7:50 a.m., and elementary school at 8:20 a.m.
 - City High School is the feeder high school to TMS and is located three miles from TMS
 - The school system is a comprehensive district that provides direct support services to all schools as opposed to contracting out for services
 - All schools report to the Office of School Performance located at the central office for school related issues or needs, and each school has an assigned community superintendent for these purposes



Scenario Incident

Today, at approximately 8:00 a.m., a school system employee from the food service division was making a delivery of food supplies to TMS. As the driver was backing the delivery vehicle up to the cafeteria loading dock, he unknowingly struck an exposed valve to a 1,000 gallon propane tank that is buried beneath the ground. The propane tank supplies propane to all of the school's science labs and was filled to capacity. As a result of the valve being struck, the cap was severed and propane immediately began to leak from the tank. The propane tank is located next to the cafeteria near the school's air intake system. The fumes from the leak immediately began to penetrate the school building through the cafeteria as the doors were open in anticipation of the delivery. The fumes also were being emitted via the air intake system.



Scenario Incident (Cont'd.)

The cafeteria manager immediately notified the school principal of the incident. After realizing what happened, the driver pulled the delivery vehicle a few feet forward from the severed valve, left the vehicle ignition running, and entered the school to report the incident to his supervisor. A physical education class with 30 students and one teacher has just started outside in the athletic field area behind the cafeteria. At the time of the incident, there are approximately 15 students and one teacher who are in the cafeteria discussing an upcoming extracurricular event. At the time of the incident, the outside temperature is approximately 25 degrees with clear skies and moderate winds blowing approximately 10-15 miles per hour in the direction of the cafeteria.



Group Work

- Select the school incident commander
- Work as a team to identify incident response strategies, assignments made, what steps, decisions, and actions would you take to respond to the incident and why?
- Identify what assistance you may need from the Office of School Performance
- Be prepared to report out to the at-large group



Interject #1

At approximately 8:20 a.m. the Office of School Performance (OSP) contacts the principal and advises that the community superintendent and representatives from the Department of School Safety and Security (DSSS) are en route to provide assistance. The DSSS also notified the school principal of the properties of propane which include gases that are extremely flammable and easily ignited by heat, sparks, or flames. Vapors from liquefied gases are initially heavier than air and spread along the ground. Vapors may cause dizziness or asphyxiation without warning. Some vapors may be irritating if inhaled at high concentrations. The Office of the Superintendent and OSP is starting to get calls from parents about the incident. Several local media outlets also are making inquiries about the incident.



Group Work

Continue to respond as a team to the emergency/crisis based on the existing and new conditions.

Selected teams will give a brief report to the entire group.



Interject #2

At approximately 8:40 a.m., the Department of School Safety and Security was notified by a firefighter supervisor on the scene that there was a significant presence of fire and rescue personnel to include a HazMat unit and several police officers at the school. The supervisor also advised that the responders are having difficulty securing the propane leak, and there are two media helicopters hovering over the area. This information was relayed to the school principal via cell phone.



Group Work

Continue to respond as a team to the emergency/crisis based on the existing and new conditions.

Selected teams will give a brief report to the entire group.



Interject #3

At approximately 9:00 a.m., the Department of School Safety and Security was again notified by a firefighter supervisor on the scene that an incident perimeter was established and the incident will take several hours to resolve. School system maintenance staff and staff from the propane refueling company are at the school providing assistance in an effort to properly secure the propane tank leak. It is estimated that it will be at least one and one-half hours before the leak may be contained. This information was conveyed to the principal via cell phone.



Group Work

Continue to respond as a team to the emergency/crisis based on the existing and new conditions.

Selected teams will give a brief report to the entire group.



Scenario Response

- Assess the situation—analyze safety risks
- Ensure 911/Fire and Rescue communications notified with all known information
- Make an immediate decision to evacuate the building based on threat of explosion and health risks
- Make the evacuation notice to students and staff:
 - Made via PA system to evacuate?
 - Made by pulling fire alarm?
 - Evacuate to multi-hazard site at least 300 feet from school in an upwind location
 - Ensure outside PE class notified of the incident and evacuated to safe area



Scenario Response (Cont'd.)

- Student and staff accountability:
 - Outside communication (two-way radios, etc.)
 - Verify student/staff presence and report any discrepancies
- Notify Office of School Performance (central office) of incident and initial response
- Establish an outside incident command post
- Ask emergency management team members and other available staff to gather at the command post
- Communicate with the SRO via phone/radio



Scenario Response (Cont'd.)

- Key emergency management team assignments:
 - Designate a tracking coordinator
 - Bring the emergency kit/additional two-way radios
 - Assist with special needs students/staff
 - Identify students/staff exposed to propane fumes and assess medical concerns. Health concerns must be addressed immediately and comprehensively
 - Identify media liaison/media staging area
 - Establish and staff parent/child relocation area at school



Scenario Response (Cont'd.)

- Incident commander/principal must recognize they will be operating under unified command:
 - Identify school public safety liaison assigned to unified command post
 - Coordinate any media statements/releases
- Critical decisions by incident commander/principal:
 - Remember critical roles should be delegated during your response
 - Keep students and staff informed of response with updates
 - Evacuate to off-site location-City High School
 - Request OSP assistance in obtaining school bus transportation



Scenario Response (Cont'd.)

- Coordinate evacuation with City High School administration:
 - Student/staff accountability
 - Continue to monitor medical/mental health needs
 - Reconvene the emergency management team
- Notify parents of incident/evacuation with updates
- Keep OSP updated and coordinate school system assistance
- Coordinate parent/child reunification with City High School staff
- Discuss school closing with community superintendent



Scenario Response (Cont'd.)

- Continue to notify parents, and non-school based staff of any changes in the status of the emergency
- Continue to update and maintain accurate records
- Ensure that all health hazards and maintenance concerns are addressed prior to reentering the middle school
- Obtain clearance from public safety officials to return and reenter the school
- Ensure parent notification letter sent home
- Coordinate and conduct comprehensive incident debriefing
- Ensure after-action report is completed



The REMS TA Center was established in October 2007 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students.

The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency management plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications and individualized responses to requests.

For additional information about school emergency management topics, visit the REMS TA Center at <http://rems.ed.gov> or call 1-866-540-REMS (7367). For information about the REMS grant program, contact Tara Hill (tara.hill@ed.gov).

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