



## Conducting a Safety Audit Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. What role does the school district's liability insurance carrier play in safe physical management?**

A. Most insurance carriers have a risk management specialist who could assist schools in addressing physical plant safety practices.

### **Q. Should schools create vulnerability assessment teams?**

A. Yes. Vulnerability assessment teams are an important part of creating a unified and comprehensive effort for assessing risks and hazards. Teams can be used to establish goals and objectives for assessment, develop a timeline for assessments, assign roles and responsibilities for next steps, monitor progress on action items, and update and revise assessments as needed.

### **Q. Who should be involved in the team?**

A. Administrators can serve as leaders in vulnerability assessment efforts and facilitate formation of teams by selecting and coordinating or supporting team members. Such as general and special educators, school resource officers and/or security officers, administrators, school nurses, clerical and reception staff, paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, coaches, cafeteria and facilities staff, and bus drivers. Involve members of the community outside of the school. Consider involving students and family members in the vulnerability assessment process.

### **Q. What are some of the key factors in maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment?**

A. Some of the key factors include supervision of:

- The physical plant;
- The students; and
- Visitors who come on campus.

### **Q. What is the first step schools should take before conducting an assessment?**

A. Determine what assessment tool best fits the needs of the school (or school district). As schools continue to plan and prepare for critical events that could have severe consequences, identifying the appropriate vulnerability assessment tool(s) is an important step for helping schools to understand from what they are at risk and just how seriously they could be impacted.

### **Q. How do schools get buy-in from administrators to conduct a vulnerability assessment and follow-up appropriately?**

A. Vulnerability assessments demonstrate to parents and the school community that district administrators are concerned about the safety of students and staff and they are taking steps to address vulnerabilities. Buy-in usually is enhanced when liability enters the picture. Not to conduct frequent assessments is negligent. Once concerns have been identified the onus falls upon the school district to address the identified concerns.

### **Q. What if a school conducts an assessment but it is not able to implement the suggested change? Does that have liability implications?**

A. It is incumbent on the school district to address any critical safety need immediately. In cases such as this, the superintendent/school board will need to make the decision whether to address identified safety issues or not. Such decisions need to be made in collaboration with the school board's legal counsel.