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SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
PLAN GUIDELINES

PREPARED BY
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF STATE POLICE
New Jersey Office of Emergency Management

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Introduction

The following materials are guidelines developed to assist school administrators with the design of an effective, standardized, multi-hazard emergency operations plan which is compatible with existing emergency plans at the local, county and state level. While this plan may never be needed, its development and subsequent use will be essential to saving lives and protecting property in controlling the effects of an emergency or disaster situation.

In conformance with long time state planning guidelines which have been validated under extreme emergency situations, this checklist is a guide for schools of all sizes and is generalized to accommodate all natural and man-made hazards.

The New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM), as the statutory responsible agency for statewide emergency planning, requires that all items in this checklist be addressed somewhere in every school emergency operations plan.

Legislation is now under development in state government to formalize the school emergency planning process. This initiative includes provisions for this checklist, planning assistance for schools, a certification process for school plans, integration of school emergency planning at the local level, a vigorous exercise program for plan validation and the identification of funding to support the school emergency planning effort.

This checklist is not restrictive. School plans may contain additional information, instructions or checklists deemed appropriate for a particular area or situation. Tool kits, commercial planning guides and audio-visual supplements are entirely appropriate adjuncts to the basic plan. School emergency plans should be crafted with consideration given to local hazards, threat levels, populations, resources and availability of local emergency assistance. It should be expected that certain items in this guidance may not pertain uniformly to all school facilities. Remember to consider the age of the students, the internal and external environment and all other factors affecting your facility and adjust the checklists accordingly.

It is envisioned that completed school emergency operations plans will first be evaluated by the school district. The plans will then go to the local emergency management coordinator for certification. County emergency management coordinators, county prosecutors and county superintendents of schools will provide assistance in completing the plans. NJOEM and the State Department of Education will provide oversight of the planning process.

It is our pledge to assist school administrators in ensuring that the students in our schools remain safe and secure at all times. This effort must incorporate a living partnership which includes the emergency management and education communities, local government, first responders and the private sector.

THE NEW REALITY

The innocence and simplicity of public safety planning just a decade ago, with its emphasis on natural hazards and the occasional man-made accident, have been replaced with a sobering, terrifying reality that permeates our very way of life. The true horror of school violence thrust upon this nation at Columbine and subsequent incidents of students turning weapons on fellow human beings in a school environment, laid bare a shocking level of unpreparedness to deal with this type of crisis. Educators and law enforcement professionals have labored mightily to close this gap and extend the blanket of public safety to our school systems. The school violence component of emergency planning documents has taken its place beside actions to cope with floods, tornados, fires, plane crashes and epidemics. This integration must remain seamless and an integral part of all school emergency planning documents.

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 put our nation on notice that our homeland is at risk from determined and cunning enemies operating within the freedoms of our society. The suicide attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the foiled attempt terminating in a Pennsylvania farm field, represented an assault on the American way of life. These heinous crimes against humanity provided a grim reminder that our entire infrastructure is a target. Our school children, our most precious resource, congregated together in large numbers in relatively unprotected structures, represent an incredibly lucrative target vulnerable to attack involving numerous levels of sophistication and including weapons of mass destruction. The federal government has responded to this threat with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the largest government reorganization since the end of world War II, to focus attention and resources on the problem of domestic terrorism.

THE NEW JERSEY REACTION

\#   In October 2001, the New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Act, an omnibus piece of counter-terrorism legislation, was signed into law to galvanize the efforts of state and local government and the private sector in the war on terrorism. The law addressed planning, training, funding, exercising, intelligence collection and security. It created the following organizations which have been working nonstop since to increase the state's level of preparedness against terrorism in all its forms:

!   The New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, a cabinet level body with extraordinary powers, to coordinate the state's counter-terrorism efforts. The Task Force, under the leadership of the Attorney General, further directed the formation of the following organizations to mobilize the talents and resources of government and the private sector.

♦   The New Jersey Domestic Security Preparedness Planning Group, with representation from state government, supporting agencies, federal partners, and volunteer agencies, to develop the agenda for the Task Force and spearhead planning and exercising efforts.

♦   The Infrastructure Advisory Committee, representing 24 sectors of business and industry in New Jersey and committed to developing best security practices to be shared throughout the private sector. The newest sector to be organized is the Schools Sector with sub-committees for planning and school construction.

♦   The Office of Counter-Terrorism, created by a Governor's Executive order, to collect intelligence, develop an intelligence data base, coordinate county-level counter-terrorism efforts, develop funding, coordinate training and provide liaison with the Department of Homeland Security.

♦   The Weapons of Mass Destruction Advisory Committee, chaired by the Adjutant General and staffed by the New Jersey National Guard, to provide expertise on this most critical aspect of counter-terrorism.

Major initiatives of the Task Force include:

!   Continuity of government planning by all state departments

!   Critical infrastructure identification and protection planning

!   Active partnership with the private sector in terrorism preparedness

!   Formation of a Technology Council to explore active partnerships with federal military installations for information collection and technology sharing

!   Mutual cooperation with New York City, New York State, Pennsylvania, Delaware and the New England States in response to periodic increases in the national terrorism threat level

!   Streamlining the process for acquisition of federal counter-terrorism funding from numerous agency sources and the prioritization of state needs and strategies

!   Creation of a counter-terrorism data-base to incorporate information recently made available through the Department of Homeland Security, and formulation of a sharing mechanism through local law enforcement agencies and counter-terrorism task forces

! Creation of a Schools Sector component to the Infrastructure Advisory Committee. This organization, with sub committees designated for School Planning and School Construction, will interface with the law enforcement, firefighting, health and emergency management communities to ensure the inclusion of our education establishment in the mainstream of counter-terrorism preparedness. The Schools Sector will ensure the integration of "best practices" for readiness and security throughout New Jersey's school campuses.

\# In March 2003, Governor McGreevey, by Executive Order, created the Fire Service and Safety Task Force under the DCA Division of Fire Safety to ensure the active involvement of the firefighting community in the counter-terrorism effort. Protection of our school systems in an intensified domestic terrorism environment is one of the primary goals of this organization.

\# Federal Developments: In a series of Homeland Security Presidential Directives, President Bush has tasked the Department of Homeland Security with conducting a major revision of the nation's emergency plans and procedures. A comprehensive National Response Plan (NRP) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) will provide for the seamless integration of emergency plans and practices at the federal, state and local level, enhancing the mechanism for the delivery of massive federal assistance in the event of a major natural disaster or terrorist attack.

Available Resources & Resource Materials

Many government agencies, professional associations and commercial establishments have done extensive research that will provide resources to assist in the development of school planning. Every county and municipality in the State of New Jersey is required by law to prepare and maintain a multi-hazard emergency operations plan which is certified quadrennially by NJOEM. These plans are available for all school systems to use in their planning process. One of the critical emergency management functions at the municipal level, Shelter, Reception and Care, is most often assigned as the responsibility of the local school district. Most Shelter, Reception and Care Annexes to local emergency plans are prepared by the schools in close coordination with the American Red Cross. Many agencies may also be able to provide individual assistance with the actual preparation of plans. These include the state, county, and local offices of emergency management, local first responders in the community (Police, Fire, Emergency Medical, Public Works and Health) and volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

Municipal and county emergency operations plans are an excellent source of background information to use as a reference for the preparation of school plans. Information contained in local plans includes but is not limited to :

! Responsibilities matrix and task assignment lists for individual plan annexes

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! Detailed hazard analysis applying to all facilities in the municipal geographical area

! Vulnerability analysis for all critical facilities in the community

! Staffing, equipment and capabilities of local police, firefighting, emergency medical. Public works, health and hazardous materials (HAZMAT) organizations

! Resource lists for mutual aid, state assets, local purchase and services

! Evacuation and damage assessment arrangements

! Local emergency operations center procedures and public information strategies

The local and county emergency management coordinator and State Police Emergency Management Bureau Regional Unit personnel are available to provide guidance and assistance with planning materials, identification of resources and how to avoid duplication of effort. A copy of the local EOP should be part of the school emergency plan reference library.

Schools and the Emergency Management System

An emergency is any unplanned event, which can cause significant injuries, substantial damage, disrupt normal operations, and/or threatens the success or existence of an organization. **Emergency Management** is the process of planning for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating the emergency. The recent emergence of domestic terrorism as a major threat to our way of life has led to the modification of the traditional cycle of emergency management. Current planning documents include provisions for **awareness** and **prevention** to be integrated into the planning cycle. A major effort is underway at the federal and state level from the Department of Homeland Security, through New Jersey's Domestic Security Preparedness Task force, to develop a constant flow of terrorism-related intelligence information to the law enforcement and emergency management communities for subsequent sharing with local government, the school system and the private sector. This newly developed stream of information includes alert notifications, special law enforcement bulletins and, if appropriate, public service announcements. Given the reality that our school system presents prolific opportunities for an attack on a "soft", high population density target, considerable emphasis is being placed on integrating our schools into the information flow as expeditiously as possible.

School officials have the responsibility for the welfare of the students faculty and staff. Typically, municipalities use school facilities for the safety of people in the community as part of the local emergency management plan. Non-governmental organizations may also include school facilities in their emergency plans. Developing a coordinated plan will help successfully to endure and mitigate the potential effects of disaster events. A well-coordinated school

emergency plan which compliments and supports local plans will strengthen the level of preparedness, facilitate situational assessment following a disaster event, and enhance the expeditious delivery of assistance from all levels of government.

Responsibilities of the School

Depending on the severity of a given emergency, school officials may be responsible for quickly solving multiple complex problems simultaneously. Following are some issues that should be considered in the planning process:

!   The safety and supervision of students, faculty, staff and visitors to the school.

!   Notification and reporting requirements

!   Timely evacuation of facilities.

!   Provision of food, shelter and care to all those in need and requesting assistance, including the residents of the community or evacuees from outside the area should the facility be designated and in use as a temporary shelter.

!   Coordination with local emergency operations plans and community resources.

Developing a Plan

Creating a School Planning Committee starts by forming a group representing different interests of the school, who will be responsible for organizing the research and formation of an emergency plan. The primary group should consist of school officials with decision making power and people who would be involved in the implementation of such a plan. The school system may already have a crisis management team assembled that has gained experience with other emergency situations. Nevertheless, representatives of the planning group should represent the leadership of the school, security, safety and risk management, legal counsel, financial, human resources, medical, facility management, parent support organizations and public relations.

Representation from key municipal government officials is highly encouraged. Emergency management, police, firefighting, emergency medical, health and public works officials provide expertise and experience either as members or adjunct consultants to the planning effort. Volunteer agencies such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the county-level Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) broaden the base of knowledge of the planning team.

Most schools have a well established planning mechanism in place to deal with the everyday issues of public safety in the campus environment. Fire drills, power outage procedures, early dismissals for weather events, health concerns such as food poisoning, trespassers or bus accidents are dealt with quickly and efficiently through a well publicized, well rehearsed set of

procedures familiar to staff, faculty, student body and parents. This critical planning base forms the cornerstone for a multi-hazard school emergency operations plan which will deal with threats and hazards beyond the ordinary with the potential for catastrophic results and life threatening situations.

The Checklist

The State Office of Emergency Management has developed a checklist as a guide to the design and implementation of an emergency management plan. Remember that the plan is for future occurrences and consideration should be made for what resources will be available. By "answering" the items on the checklist, the plan will start to write itself. Keep the following in mind during the planning process:

! *The checklist is only a guide*. If the local situation requires planning for something that is not included, add it to the checklist.

! The checklist is designed to help develop a plan using resources already available.

! The checklist will assist in identifying resource shortfalls so that they can be addressed.

! Since some sections may not be applicable to individual situations. Do not leave them blank. Instead, mark "N/A" (Not Applicable) for the appropriate element, so anyone evaluating the plan in the future will recognize that this section was addressed.

! List any changes that would help strengthen the plan in the future.

! List all planned resource allocations that will impact the emergency plan.

! Include notes on building layouts which may pose restrictions on utilizing the facility as a shelter, or impede emergency responses. This information may be used when considering changes to a structure, or construction of a new facility.

Time Lines

Time lines will allow progressive work through a schedule and achieve planning group goals in a consistent manner. One of the failures in planning is the attempt to complete all tasks simultaneously. By developing discrete start/finish dates, reasonable progress can be measured toward completing the plan. Remember not to lose sight of the overall objective of a comprehensive plan. Always start with the framework of the "Basic Plan," then work to complete individual sections.

! Establish a time line for completion for each section of the plan.

$ Place a date of completion next to each section on the table of contents with a date of final completion at the end.

$ Remember to include time to review each section after it is completed. Include appropriate reviewers (i.e., people affected by the section)

!   Include a date for future review.

$ At a minimum, annual reviews are suggested.
$ Maintain familiarity with the plan.
$ Introduce and train new faculty and staff to it.
$ Reviews provide an opportunity for changes in resources, facilities, or procedures to be incorporated, especially after an event that activated the plan.

Assessment of the Situation

Before planning, be aware of the situation. An assessment will detail the risks and the capabilities that will allow tailoring response and recovery. The first segment of every section in the plan that needs to be considered is "Situation." Consider the following examples:

•   Physical factors such as the location of the facility in respect to water, trees, power lines, highways, airports, hazardous materials facilities and railroads

•   The proximity of emergency service agencies and their capabilities. For example, is the local fire department paid or volunteer? What is the expected response time? If the school is multi-story, is there a ladder capability in the local fire department?

$ The resistance of school facilities to known hazards that have been identified in the local emergency operations plan (Was the facility built to be earthquake resistant? Are there expanses of glass in the walls? Is the school protected by sprinklers? Do the school grounds drain properly after heavy rain?)

•   Utilize the local Emergency Operations Plan's Hazard Analysis and Vulnerability Assessment. If questions develop, consult with the municipal or county engineer.

$ Develop an awareness for building code requirements affecting school structures. Consult the local building inspector for assistance and guidance.

$ Information already on hand from the sheltering role provided by the local school system will assist the planning effort. American Red Cross evaluation criteria for emergency

shelters will also be helpful

$ Incorporate any information available on the concept of **Awareness** as it pertains to the school. Are there increased police presence or patrols on the campus? Is there a neighborhood watch? Are there electronic surveillance systems in place?

Assessment of Resources

Evaluate available internal and external resources of the school and community in regard to the successful implementation of the plan. The information on community resources should be available in the local emergency operations plan.

- Internal resources to analyze include:

  ▸ Capabilities to extinguish small fires, treat medical conditions, perform light rescue, feed and house faculty/staff and students, provide transportation for an   emergency eva

  ▸ School staff with medical, rescue or other specialized training which would enhance response capabilities

  ▸ Mutual aid immediately available from other schools in the district, especially in a situation where advanced warning of an incident is provided

- External resources to analyze.

  ▸ Lists of emergency agencies and their projected response times during normal conditions.

  ▸ Local business resources applicable to an emergency response. For example, a fast food restaurant may be able to accommodate a large number of people and provide them with food and water.

  ▸ Unplanned resources, such as "spontaneous volunteers" from the community or other schools.

- List capabilities of the school which may be improved upon and suggestions for doing so with projected time frames.

Hazardous Materials

While planning for hazardous materials may not be considered relevant for a school, realize that there are substantial materials on school properties that pose risk. Schools must also consider the environment where the facility is located, as sources of potential risk may be nearby. Hazardous

materials take on a new and ominous level of importance when they are deliberately utilized as part of a terrorist attack against a school system. Such attacks could involve transporting hazardous materials to a school or damaging a facility near a school which produces such materials.

•   Identify any substances or materials and locations that would pose a health and safety risk to the occupants of the school. Include science departments, janitorial supply storage, above ground fuel supplies, shops, boilers or maintenance facilities

•   Maintain accurate files for *Right To Know Information*, including Material Safety Data Sheets and Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets on all hazardous materials

•   Maintain an inventory of hazardous substances and how they are stored. Include a list of any structural features such as heating units and gas lines which may present a danger within a certain proximity of hazardous materials

$ Provide copies of inventory files at alternate locations in the event school files are unavailable.

▸   Immediate availability of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets is essential for medical treatment of anyone who has come into contact with a hazardous material, as well as for the clean up effort

▸   Do not assume that the Hazardous Materials team or other agency will have these readily available.

•   Consider the external sources of hazardous materials.

▸   Is the school located near a facility that produces, utilizes or stores large quantities of hazardous materials?

▸   Is the school located near a major transportation route (road or rail)?

▸   What is the nature and estimated quantity and frequency of hazardous materials on these routes during and after normal school hours.

Communications

"Communications" is not only used when referring to equipment or techniques, but in speaking to the correct people at the correct time. An effective response is based upon rapid and accurate communications with the occupants of the school, the public and the local government. The importance of reliable internal communications and backup systems cannot be over stressed.

During Hurricane Floyd in September 1999, flood waters in New Jersey overwhelmed a major regional long lines telephone switching center, disrupting long distance service locally and along the entire eastern seaboard. On September 11, 2001, the terrorist attack brought down the World Trade Center Towers, and with them, the master radio antenna serving police radio communications throughout northern New Jersey. Develop an emergency telephone number list that is readily accessible. The resources and procedures that are tasked in this area are:

- External communications:

  ▸ Emergency notifications to the schools should originate from the local government (fire, police, 911 centers), or via NOAA Weather Radio.

  ▸ Determine what municipal agencies utilize for primary and back up communications. For example, Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services
  routinely use mobile and portable radios. Radios facilitate the coordination of the local emergency operations center, incident command, search and recovery teams, medical teams and any media relations representatives.

  ▸ - Consider using a municipal radio frequency to coordinate with municipal agencies. Note that if a major emergency occurred, radio frequencies will get overloaded. Additional traffic on these frequencies could hinder effective communication.

  ▸ Cellular phones can be used during localized emergencies, but are not reliable in large scale disasters, as the circuits become overloaded. Satellite telephone systems are available but involve considerable expense to maintain service.

  ▸ Notification to off-campus, off-duty personnel can be accomplished through a "telephone call-down tree" or via pagers.

- Internal communications:

  ▸ Warning procedures to alert the school of an emergency should utilize public address systems, fire alarms and alternative methods such as "runners" in the event of a power failure

  ▸ Hand-held/portable radios are recommended for coordinators of the facility. They provide communications regardless of phone lines, weather or other external factors.
- Always consult with the local or county office of emergency management as well as other local agencies and organizations that may provide communications resources.

Crowd Control

Crowd control considerations are not confined to physical control of people and boundaries, but also what goes on within them. This need extends beyond the normal concerns of what to do with the student body, and includes the media and "interested" public.

- Direct supervision of the students is the responsibility of the teachers. The school system has the ultimate responsibility.

- Faculty, staff and students should be familiar with evacuation routes from the facilities and where meeting points are on the outside.

- Accountability for every individual is crucial; attendance should be taken and turned into the incident command or the individual directing the emergency response. Attendance taken during an emergency will have to be verified with daily records as the situation permits
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$ To avoid restlessness, consider developing activities that occupy the students.

- Restrict access of curiosity seekers.

- Anticipate media behavior and the desire to infiltrate the school.

- Plan to establish a physical perimeter around the school to control all entrances and exits.

Traffic Control

Controlling vehicles at the scene of an emergency is a vital planning consideration that must address both incoming and outgoing traffic. Plans must consider the spontaneous arrival of family members, curiosity seekers, volunteers, and other personnel from outside the school's jurisdiction. While the plan may relinquish the responsibility of traffic control to the municipal government, school personnel should be aware of roles they may fulfill. An additional consideration made necessary as a result of the terrorism threat is the safety of all areas outside the immediate school buildings.

- Responsibility of Traffic Control must be defined in the school plan. Do not assume that the function is automatically a responsibility of the local government.

- Emergency vehicles will have access to all areas of the facility.

$ Consider parking arrangements if volunteers respond with private vehicles.

$ Enforce parking regulations at the school (i.e., fire lane access).

- If an immediate evacuation is required, students can be instructed to walk away from the facility. This may be required if there is not enough time to assemble buses. Plans should be developed for walkaway evacuations that address routes to assembly locations and methods ti ensure accountability of students

$ Establish a bus staging/loading area away from the building or any areas of potential risk.

- Parents should not be allowed to pick up students at the school if an evacuation is underway. Release of students in evacuation situations should be done at prearranged locations outside the affected area.
- Students who drive to school should not be allowed to utilize their own vehicles for evacuations. The addition of a large number of vehicles to the simultaneous influx of emergency response units could hinder evacuation. Furthermore, spontaneous evacuation of students with vehicles does not allow for required student accountability. .

- Early school closings should be managed with procedures that are in place and currently used by the school.

- Media will add a burden to traffic control activities and site access. It is necessary to rely on and plan for local law enforcement organizations to control site accessibility.

Media Relations

Media relations can make or break the success of an operation. In all emergencies, remember that there are two versions of reality: first, the actual event, what is really happening, and second, what people think is happening based on rumors, media reports, past history and perceptions of what they know and hear. The plan's Media Relations/Public Information component, needs to address these phenomena and the following:

- Appoint a school system media representative prior to any event who is knowledgeable in the implementation of the emergency plan and can explain the various activities that are occurring.

  ▸ Think about creating pre-disaster (canned) press releases.

  ▸ Provide facts about the facility and the number of students enrolled.

  ▸ Designate an individual who is comfortable in front of the media and presents an "honest" image

  ▸ Be prepared to address the who, what, where, when, why and how.

- Create a separate area for the media where they can see what is going on and get

information. This should be at a safe distance, away from the students and sectioned off from the response activities. Schedule ongoing press conferences and ensure that the proper officials are in attendance.

- Anticipate media behavior, manage information dissemination and establish rumor control mechanisms.

- Be conscious that media relations work must not only involve students and their families, but also the issue of family members and students directly interacting with the media.

Student Roles

There are many roles that students can fulfill in emergency situations, however, under no circumstances should a student be sent into a dangerous situation.

- Issues:

    ▸ Students should be used as needed outside of the affected (danger) area.

    ▸ Students chosen should be responsible individuals and have prior written consent from parents or guardian.

    ▸ Training must be provided to any student who is tasked with a role in the   emergency plan.

    ▸ Distinctive identification should be provided to students fulfilling emergency responsibilities.

- Roles;

    ▸ Use students to "run" from area to area passing along paperwork, or gathering equipment. They may also be used to verbally deliver a message if other systems are down

    ▸ Students may be assigned leadership roles to direct specific activities (e.g., attendance at the assembly point)

    ▸ Some students may be members of the local emergency medical service and fire department and can add their training to the overall response effort. (Note: consider these roles based upon legal issues such as whether they can be released from the responsibility of the school, the legal responsibility of the volunteer agency, and parental/guardian consent.)

Release of Students

In the event that the school will be shut down for the remainder of a school day, students should be sent home as soon as proper notifications are made and transportation is available.

- Proper notifications to parents/guardians must be made following established school system policies. If parents or guardians are unreachable, keep the student at the school or reception site until notification is made

- Coordinate the release with the responsible individuals for "Traffic Control" and "Media Relations" in the plan.

- If the closing of the school is due to an emergency, but not an evacuation:

  ▸ Direct students onto buses and maintain accountability of students as they board by checking off names.

  ▸ Designate and utilize an area of the facility where students can be picked up by their parents. Parents should check in and sign a release.

  ▸ Students with their own transportation should, after parental notification and assessment of their ability to safely operate a vehicle, be instructed to proceed home immediately. Students driving home should be allowed to only transport other students or siblings if prior parental approval is received.

- If the closing is due to an emergency evacuation, follow established procedures to move students and faculty/staff to the designated reception site. Release of students at this location should be accomplished after an evaluation of the situation that caused the evacuation (i.e., Is it safe to move?)

Mutual Aid

Schools should enter into mutual aid agreements with similar facilities in the area for personnel and materials to augment existing resources.

- Although mutual aid for Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services and other public safety agencies will not be coordinated by the school, familiarization with existing agreements for mutual aid is essential.

  Agencies should be invited to visit the school facility for familiarization and provided facility guides and campus maps.

Special Needs Populations

Special needs populations present particular concerns to emergency planners, as typical response activities are magnified. Planning considerations should address needs of hearing, mobility, and sight impairments. There are other groups that may need addressing such as non-English speaking, or specific age ranges that have precise requirements.

- Any procedures for handling special education students should be as simple as possible. Special education students may react more to the emergency situation, thus requiring additional actions on the responder's part, and/or more responders.

- During evacuations, access/egress to sections of the school may not be available, so alternative methods and routes will be needed. This is especially a concern for mobility impaired individuals.

- Transportation of special needs individuals will require the utilization of equipment already tasked in the day-to-day operations of the school. Determine whether these resources have been tasked by the local government for evacuation use.

- Sheltering activities also require distinctive procedures for special needs individuals.

  ▸ Assure that the reception facility can accommodate the specific individuals.

  ▸ Provide the specialized personnel at the reception/shelter facilities to meet the needs of the evacuees.

  ▸ Do not assume that the agency/organization that is operating the reception center/shelter is aware that special needs individuals will be directed there.Many organizations are not prepared, or will not handle clients with special needs.

- During any planning effort, attention should be paid to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and New Jersey Barrier Free Sub-Codes if applicable.

Training

Training activities for emergency plans and response activities should be conducted on a continuous basis for all students, faculty and staff. Participation in exercises and drills with the local government is also encouraged. Training should be revised as necessitated by plan changes or experience in actual events. Remember to be inclusive, as everyone has a role in an effective emergency plan. The records of training should be maintained and monitored to assure currentness.

While certain portions of the emergency operations plan may need to be practiced on a more frequent basis, the categories of training fall into two basic categories:

- Generalized knowledge for students, faculty and staff.

  ▸ Potential disasters.

  ▸ Warning signals, emergency instructions and appropriate "instant survival techniques."
  ▸ Evacuation routes, staging areas, reception center/shelter locations.

  ▸ Availability of personal and group counseling and support following a disaster.

  ▸ Updates in the emergency plan that effect the total population of the school.

- Specialized Knowledge

  ▸ Specific duties and procedures assigned to students, faculty and staff to fulfill responsibilities in the emergency plan.

  ▸ Local emergency operations plan integration/coordination.

  ▸ Consider adding First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation into the student's curriculum as well as in-service training for the faculty and staff. Other considerations for faculty/staff training are: Emergency Medical Technician, Incident Command and Incipient Firefighting

  ▸ A recent development in the concept of community involvement in preparedness as part of the President's Citizens Corps Initiative, is the activation of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) at the local level. Interested citizens volunteer to receive basic medical, firefighting and awareness training and form teams to assist first responders during a disaster or emergency situation. County teams are being formed and are receiving training, equipment and funding support.

Future Planning & Activities

Planning for the future does not only involve what should be done differently "the next time" it entails considering issues or changes to the internal or external environment that effect current response capabilities. It analyzes possibilities to do things better before they happen. It compares your plan to other plans in the school system and those of the surrounding districts that may be called upon for mutual aid. Finally, it looks at ways to mitigate disasters–before they

happen.

One of the most important concepts, all too often forgotten, is the necessity of continuous revisions to plans and procedures. A plan is never finished. There will always be opportunities to improve. For instance, consider a process to document the entire school property and contents on video tape or photographs. This will be valuable evidence in future disasters should the facility be impacted. Critical reviews are essential immediately after a disaster. Commonly referred to as "hot washes", these after-action reviews should include all participants in a no fault atmosphere where participants are encouraged to share positive and negative experiences. Results should be recorded and should not be limited to only debriefings of personnel, but examining plans and procedures that were utilized.

In addition to modifications to plans and procedures, consider developing a needs list of materials, equipment or even changes to the facility. Prioritize the needs list, identify possible obstacles for the acquisition and develop suggestions for fiscal managers to overcome these obstacles. Integrate the resource cycle into the ongoing planning effort.

After a disaster, remember to acknowledge the help received–express appreciation to those that spent so many hours and faced many risks. This will go a long way toward building relationships in the community.