



Threat-Specific Response Considerations

Emergency Response Protocols

The State of Virginia has adopted the *I Love U Guys® Foundation's* Standard Response Protocol (SRP) to provide guidance for general response to any incident. The SRP is action-based and covers all hazards in nature. It does not focus on the variety of scenarios schools might face but rather on a set of actions schools can implement to protect staff and students. SRP demands a specific vocabulary but also allows for great flexibility and the use of situational awareness to determine the level of implementation.

In addition to the SRP actions listed below, there are hazard-specific threats that must be planned for in accordance with the *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-279.8.A. These threats may utilize the SRP action they are listed under as a primary response with additional actions assigned to crisis management team members.

Secure

SECURE is used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose a threat or hazard outside of the school building. This may include an emergency in the area, law enforcement activity near the building, an unauthorized person on site, or a dangerous animal in the area. **SECURE** uses the security of the physical facility to act as protection.

Where possible, classroom activities may continue inside the building. Classes being held outside should return to the nearest building and, if possible, continue classes inside the building. Staff members should make a quick check of areas directly outside exterior doors to ensure all students and staff have returned inside. Secure and lock all doors; stay away from windows; if blinds or curtains are available on exterior windows, close them. No person may enter or exit the building without proper authorization.

A critical component of a **SECURE** is ensuring that all exterior doors are locked, and signage is posted to inform those arriving at the school of the action. **SECURE** signs should be provided by the school at the beginning of the school year.

Act of Terrorism

Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives. Depending on the extent and location of the act of terrorism, the building administrator should activate the school safety team and/or ICS-assigned staff members to assist in monitoring the situation, preparing for any necessary protective actions, and providing communication to staff and students. The team may consider placing the school on **SECURE** as a preventative action.



Lockdown

LOCKDOWN is an action schools take to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence inside the school building. The primary objective is to ensure all students, staff, and visitors are secured away from immediate danger. Consideration will be given to safe locations for students and staff with functional or access needs. Incidents might include an altercation in the building, an intruder, or any other active threat.

Accounting for students and staff is critical in all emergencies but never trumps ensuring the safety of all individuals. During a **LOCKDOWN**, getting to safety and securing the door(s) are the priority. The person notifying response agencies should remain on the line with 911 as long as it is safe to do so while taking protective measures of their own.

Challenging Areas

All schools have locations that are challenging to the **LOCKDOWN** response, including gyms, cafeterias, and outdoor spaces. For these areas, specific response considerations and procedures must be developed. This can include self-evacuation to an off-site location or going into another nearby area that can be secured.

Access to Building

An important piece of the **LOCKDOWN** response procedure is that the door(s) must remain locked after entering a **LOCKDOWN** until it is opened by a first responder or administrator.

Self-Evacuation

In some cases, and in some locations, self-evacuating the building may be the best option during a **LOCKDOWN**. Self-evacuation is when individuals (as opposed to a building-level response) decide it is best to leave the building rather than Lockdown in a secure location. This may be because there is no location that can be secured or because getting to a secured place may put them in more danger. In all instances, as soon as possible, those who self-evacuate should call 911 or alert a first responder of their location for the purposes of accountability.

Active Attack

If a person displays a weapon, begins threatening students or staff with the weapon, or attempts to harm others with the weapon, school staff should initiate **LOCKDOWN** procedures immediately. Individuals in the area of the active attack should move away from the area as quickly as possible to a safe location or self-evacuate if possible.

If a report of a weapon on school property is made but has not yet been verified, place the school on **HOLD** until the report can be investigated and a thorough search completed within the bounds of school policy. If the weapon is reported to be in a locker, backpack, or vehicle, prevent access to those areas. Do not allow the suspected individual to pick up or carry their own belongings. Contact law enforcement immediately when a report of a weapon on campus is received.



Evacuate

EVACUATE is used to move students and staff to safer locations outside of the building when a fire or other emergency requires that they leave the building. The primary objective of an evacuation is to ensure that all staff, students, and visitors can quickly move away from the threat. Consideration will be given to establishing primary and secondary evacuation routes, as well as evacuation meeting locations for staff and students with access and functional needs.

Student, staff, and volunteer accountability is essential to ensure the building is clear during the evacuation process. Do not re-enter any building until directed by the Incident Commander or first responders. If relocation to a pre-established assembly area is necessary, account for all students before leaving the evacuation location and again at the new location; report this status to Incident Command. All two-story buildings should be equipped with one or more evacuation chairs.

School Gathering Locations

Once safely outside the building, on-site locations are identified where students and staff will gather until directed otherwise by first responders or school division personnel.

On-Site Assembly Area

In some instances, primary evacuation gathering locations may not be accessible due to safety concerns. In such events, students and staff will be moved to an on-site assembly area until division and school reunification plans can be activated to relocate students safely.

Teacher Buddy System

The school has established a teacher buddy system that allows teachers to take over for one another if necessary. Buddy teachers should be in adjacent or nearby rooms. During emergencies, buddy teachers should check to determine each other's health or the need to remain with injured students. If necessary, one buddy teacher should evacuate both classrooms. In addition, teachers should be aware when a substitute teacher is on duty for their buddy teacher to assist in the event of an emergency.

Bomb Threats/Suspicious Package

All bomb threats must be taken seriously until they can be assessed. The principal/CMT is primarily responsible for assessing the threat and taking all available information into account before protective actions are initiated. Any decision to evacuate rests with the principal/CMT; first responders will only offer guidance. If a device is located, police or fire personnel will take command of the incident.

WARNING: Because there is a slight risk that radio waves may activate detonating devices, the use of two-way radios and cell phones should be avoided within 300 feet of the building or suspected location of any explosive device unless absolutely necessary to facilitate urgent communications.

Based on the information gathered, assessment of the situation, and advice from local responders, the building principal will determine whether to follow **EVACUATE** procedures.



Flood

Flooding can be caused by multiple sources, whether a sudden heavy rain, the failure of a dam, tropical storms or hurricanes, or broken water pipes within the building. If flooding occurs within the building, the affected site will follow the **EVACUATE** instructions listed above.

Utility Failure

Utility failures are common occurrences and may happen at any time. An unexpected gas line leak may require only a spark to set off an explosion. Flooding from a broken pipe may cause extensive damage to buildings and property. Electrical power failure will cause disruption of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

Should any of these occur, the building administrator will determine the course of action needed. If there is a gas leak indoors or the danger of fire during electrical power failure, **EVACUATE** the building immediately.

Shelter

SHELTER can be used to quickly move students, staff, and visitors indoors in the event of a severe weather incident or if hazardous materials are released in the area.

For severe weather, depending on the threat level (**watch**: conditions are ideal for a weather event to occur, vs. **warning**: weather event is imminent or beginning), individuals may be required to move to rooms without windows or into the main building if they are assigned to an auxiliary or portable classroom.

If a hazardous materials incident is reported by first responders or school administrators, follow **SECURE** procedures to bring students, faculty, and staff indoors. Once indoors, begin **SHELTER** procedures by moving to identified shelter locations and taking any necessary precautions such as sealing doors, windows, air vents, etc. Individuals with access or functional needs will move to shelter locations in accessible areas and be given adequate time to access safe locations.

Weather Shelter Areas

Depending on the severity of the weather, it may not always be enough to bring everyone into the building. The weather may get too severe and dangerous, requiring staff and students to move to designated safe areas at the school. Interior rooms without windows are ideal for shelter locations. If hallways are the space where individuals will be moved to for cover, be sure to stay at least 30 feet from exterior doors and large panes of glass. In some cases, the safest place may be the classroom, and students may remain in place.

Severe Lightning

Severe thunderstorms are categorized by the presence of heavy rain, lightning, thunder, and damaging straight-line winds of 58 mph or stronger and/or hail at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. To prepare for lightning strikes, appropriate school staff should be trained in CPR, First Aid, and the use of AEDs. In the event of a lightning threat, move all students and staff from outside, auxiliary, and portable buildings to the main building and follow **SHELTER** instructions listed. All



outdoor classes, movement between buildings, and recess should be cancelled until the weather has passed.

Tornado

Tornados are violently rotating columns of air in contact with the ground, visible as a funnel cloud. Thunder, lightning, heavy rain, hail, and strong winds often precede a tornado. Most tornadoes have winds of less than 110 mph and last less than 10 minutes.

A storm **watch** may be issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) when the risk of hazardous weather has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. If a watch is called, move all students and staff from outside, auxiliary, and portable buildings to the main building and follow **SHELTER** instructions listed above. All outdoor classes, movement between buildings, and recess should be canceled until the watch has been canceled.

A storm **warning** may be issued by the NWS when hazardous weather is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property. If enough time is present, move all students and staff from outside, auxiliary, and portable buildings to the main building and follow **SHELTER** instructions listed above. If the weather situation is imminent and there is not sufficient time to move all staff and students into the main building, shelter will need to be taken in auxiliary or portable buildings as best as possible.

HazMat Shelter Areas

In the case of a **SHELTER** for a hazmat or chemical release outside the building, it may be necessary to seal exterior windows and doors. All classrooms should be equipped with emergency go-kits containing supplies needed to seal windows and doors. In some cases, relocating staff and students to a room with less exterior exposure may be needed, but sealing the doors/windows is still needed to isolate the hazard.

HVAC Shutdown

In the case of a **SHELTER** for a hazmat or chemical release outside the building, it may also be necessary to shut down the HVAC system to limit the spread of the hazard. A procedure should be established and the individual(s) responsible for implementing that procedure should be assigned and trained in shutting down the HVAC system.

Hold

HOLD is utilized when hallways need to be cleared. Movement throughout the building is stopped, and subsequent bells and any/all scheduled class changes are disregarded until the all-clear is given. A **HOLD** could be used for a medical emergency in the hall that occurs just before a class transition bell. Once all individuals are cleared from the hallway, all students and staff should be accounted for and reported to school administration.



Medical Emergencies

Medical emergencies can vary greatly in nature, scope, and needed response. Never leave an ill or injured individual unattended. Have someone else call 911, notify school administration, and/or contact the school nurse for instructions. When in doubt of the severity of the situation, 911 should be called. Do not move an injured individual or allow them to walk. School staff should be enlisted to clear the area of any additional students who may congregate around the situation. The school may be placed on **HOLD** to allow emergency services to access the individual quickly upon their arrival.

Missing/Abducted Students

A student is considered missing any time they are unaccounted for at school, on school property, at a school activity, or while traveling to and from school. Abducting or kidnapping is the unauthorized or forceful removal of a student from school property, a school activity, or a school bus without consent from school officials and/or parent(s)/guardian(s).

If a student is reported missing, the school should be placed on **HOLD** until a thorough search of the building has been completed. Parents should be contacted to notify them of the student's missing status. If it is suspected that the student was abducted or kidnapped, law enforcement should be contacted immediately, and all actions taken to locate the student should be documented to assist in their investigation.

If the missing student has known functional or cognitive disabilities, information should be prepared and provided to law enforcement as to the nature of their disability, known risks or behavioral triggers, known favorite locations or hiding spots, and expected response if approached by an unknown individual. Photos of the student should be provided to aid in identification.

Trespasser/Unauthorized Persons

An unauthorized person who enters school property and does not report to the office to follow visitor check-in processes is considered an intruder or trespasser. If the intruder does not have legitimate business to be on the property, ask them to leave. Immediately notify the police if the intruder refuses to leave. Additional safety measures may be initiated by the building principal, such as placing the building on **HOLD** until the situation is resolved or in **SECURE** status if needed.

Additional Response Planning

Bus/Vehicle Crash

The building principal or designee should respond to the scene of a local bus and/or vehicle collision involving injured students or staff members traveling to and from school and during off-site activities such as field trips, sporting events, performing arts events, etc. If it is not feasible to travel to the site of the crash, communication should be maintained with staff members onsite or through the transportation department reports from the driver.



Death or Serious Injury

The death or serious injury of a student or staff member by accident or illness has the potential to disrupt the school environment. The response to these events should be time-limited, problem-focused interventions designed to determine the facts, disseminate accurate information, restore equilibrium, and support productive and appropriate responses.

A common reaction to such situations is to generate rumors or stories to fill in unavailable information. School staff should provide clear and frequent communication about known factual information about the situation to prevent rumors from spreading.

The school's general response to an attempted or completed suicide does not differ much from a response to any sudden death crisis; however, additional issues related to a student suicide may require a specific response. School administrators must allow students to grieve the loss of their peer without glorifying the method of death. To prevent additional or "copycat" suicide attempts, individuals considered especially susceptible to depression or suicidal attempts should be carefully monitored and appropriate actions taken as needed.

Emergency Communications

In times of a weather event or other types of emergencies impacting school or division operations, including delayed starts and school closures, the division will contact parents and staff via multiple sources. During emergencies or crisis situations, the division will also work closely with local news media to provide clear and direct information about the situation at hand and corrective or emergency actions underway. Contact information for all responding agencies should be updated frequently to ensure accuracy.