



School Safety Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 5

January 2014

Improved Illinois Website for Schools and Campuses through Illinois.gov

The Ready Illinois Plan and Prepare Schools/Campus website has a new look. By accessing the site, you can find information about (1) the upcoming safety grant; (2) training; (3) the School Safety Information Sharing Program including archived monthly newsletters; and (4) a resource tab for legislation, preparedness and planning, campus security task force, violence prevention resources, NIMS and other useful information.

The website is: <http://www.illinois.gov/ready/plan/pages/schools.aspx>. You can also search Illinois School Safety and look for the search result including the www.illinois.gov web address.

*Protecting our
future through
information
sharing*

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Ready Home | **Plan and Prepare** | Hazards | After a Disaster | Multi-Media | Monthly Preparedness

Ready Home ▶ Plan and Prepare

➔ **Schools/Campus**

School and Campus Safety Grants

In early 2014, the State of Illinois will announce a competitive grant program to increase the safety of schools and campuses. Eligible applicants will include public K-12 schools, inter-district special education cooperatives, public community college districts and public university systems located in the state of Illinois. Eligible projects will include the purchase and installation of physical security enhancement equipment, inspection and screening systems, information technology, and/or interoperable communications equipment for buildings where students are primarily taught in academic classes. Separate grant funding will be designated for colleges/universities and K-12 schools. Check back here at Ready.Illinois.gov for full details on the school and campus security program and procedures for submitting an application.

Safety in our schools and on our college campuses is a right every student and family should expect. The State of Illinois has taken measures to increase the level of preparedness of our schools and campuses. Please select a topic on the drop-down menu below to learn more about Illinois' school and campus safety initiatives. Among the topics covered are:

- **Training**—The School and Campus Security Training Program is a collaborative effort of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System. Awareness and preparedness level training is provided free of cost to public and non-public schools, higher education institutions and first responder agencies.
- **School Safety Information Sharing**—This program, a partnership between the Statewide Terrorism & Intelligence Center and the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, is designed to share information relevant to school safety with those whose job it is to protect students, employees, and infrastructure. The program features a first-in-the-nation dedicated K-12 and campus intelligence officer.
- **Resources**—This tab contains an extensive listing of school/campus safety resources, including legislation, preparedness and planning, and violence prevention.

Training | **School Safety Information Sharing Program** | Resources

PLAN AND PREPARE

- Animals / Pets
- Children
- Communications Plan
- Cyber Safety
- Emergency Communications
- Emergency Kit
- Family Plan
- Functional Needs
- Go Bag
- Hazard Mitigation
- Home Safety
- How Do I?
- Local Officials
- Schools/Campus**
- Seniors
- Staying Put / Evacuation
- Utilities

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Preparing for an Active Shooter Situation

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans, Washington, DC, 2013. (U.S. Departments of Education, Health & Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Federal Emergency Management Agency)

Planning

As with any threat or hazard that is included in a school's emergency operation plan (EOP), the planning team will establish goals, objectives, and courses of action for an annex. These plans will be impacted by the assessments conducted at the outset of the planning process and updated as ongoing assessments occur. As courses of action are developed, the planning team should consider a number of issues, including, but not limited to:

- How to evacuate or lock down students, staff, and visitors, including those who are not with staff or in a classroom (e.g., in the hall, bathroom, break room). Personnel involved in such planning should pay attention to disability-related accessibility concerns when advising on shelter sites and evacuation routes.
- How to evacuate when the primary evacuation route is unusable.
- How to select effective shelter-in-place locations (optimal locations have thick walls, solid doors with locks, minimal interior windows, first-aid emergency kits, communication devices and duress alarms).
- How the school community will be notified that there is an active shooter on school grounds. This could be done through the use of familiar terms, sounds, lights, and electronic communications such as text messages. Include in the courses of action how to communicate with those who have language barriers or need other accommodations, such as visual signals or alarms to advise deaf students, staff, and parents about what is occurring. School wide "reverse 911-style" text messages sent to predetermined group distribution lists can be very helpful in this regard. Posting this protocol near locations where an all-school announcement can be broadcast (e.g., by the microphone used for the public announcement system) may save lives by preventing students and staff from stepping into harm's way.
- How students and staff will know when the building is safe.

The planning team may want to include functions in the Active Shooter annex that are also addressed in other functional annexes. For example, evacuation will be different during an active shooter situation than it would be for a fire.

Responding to an Active Shooter Situation

School EOPs should include courses of action that will describe how students and staff can most effectively respond to an active shooter situation to minimize the loss of life, and teach and train on these practices, as deemed appropriate by the school.

Law enforcement officers may not be present when a shooting begins. The first law enforcement officers on the scene may arrive after the shooting has ended. Making sure staff know how to respond and instruct their students can help prevent and reduce the loss of life.

No single response fits all active shooter situations; however, making sure each individual knows his or her options for response and can react decisively will save valuable time. Depicting scenarios and considering response options in advance will assist individuals and groups in quickly selecting their best course of action.

Understandably, this is a sensitive topic. There is no single answer for what to do, but a survival mindset can increase the odds of surviving. As appropriate for your community, it may be valuable to schedule a time for an open conversation regarding this topic. Though some parents or personnel may find the conversation uncomfortable, they may also find it reassuring to know that, as a whole, their school is thinking about how best to deal with this situation.

During an active shooter situation, the natural human reaction, even if you are highly trained, is to be startled, feel fear and anxiety, and even experience initial disbelief and denial. You can expect to hear noise from alarms, gunfire and explosions, and people shouting and screaming. Training provides the means to regain your composure, recall at least some of what you have learned, and commit to action. There are three basic options: run, lockdown/hide, or fight. You can run away from the shooter, seek a secure place where you can lockdown, hide-out and/or deny the shooter access, or incapacitate the shooter to survive and protect others from harm.

As the situation develops, it is possible that students and staff will need to use more than one option. During an active shooter situation, staff will rarely have all of the information they need to make a fully informed decision about which option is best. While they should follow the plan and any instructions given during an incident, often they will have to rely on their own judgment to decide which option will best protect lives.

Respond Immediately

It is not uncommon for people confronted with a threat to first deny the possible danger rather than respond. An investigation by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (2005) into the collapse of the World Trade Center towers on 9/11 (Continued page 2)

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found that people close to the floors impacted waited longer to start evacuating than those on unaffected floors. Similarly, during the Virginia Tech shooting, individuals on campus responded to the shooting with varying degrees of urgency. These studies highlight this delayed response or denial. For example, some people report hearing firecrackers when in fact they heard gunfire.

Train staff to overcome denial and to respond immediately, including fulfilling their responsibilities for individuals in their charge. For example, train staff to recognize the sounds of danger, act, and forcefully communicate the danger and necessary action (e.g., “Gun! Get out!”) to those in their charge. In addition, those closest to the public address or other communications system, or otherwise able to alert others, should communicate the danger and necessary action. Repetition in training and preparedness shortens the time it takes to orient, observe, and act.

Upon recognizing the danger, as soon as it is safe to do so, staff or others must alert responders by contacting 911 with as clear and accurate information as possible.

RUN

If it is safe to do so for yourself and those in your care, the first course of action that should be taken is to get out of the immediate area of the shooter (referred to as the kill zone by police) and far away until you are in a safe location. If you are not in the immediate presence of the shooter, you should lockdown in the nearest classroom, office or storage area.

Students and staff should be trained to:

- Leave personal belongings behind;
- Visualize possible escape routes, including physically accessible routes for students and staff with disabilities as well as persons with access and functional needs;
- Avoid escalators and elevators;
- Take others with them, but not to stay behind because others will not go;
- Call 911 when safe to do so; and
- Let a responsible adult know where they are.

LOCKDOWN / HIDE

Students and staff should be trained in LOCKDOWN procedures. They should seek shelter in a lockable classroom or office. In addition,

- Lock the doors;
- Barricade the doors with heavy furniture;
- Close and lock windows and close blinds or cover windows;
- Turn off lights;
- Silence all electronic devices;
- Remain silent;
- Hide along the wall closest to the exit but out of the view from the hallway (allowing for possible escape if the shooter enters the room);
- Use strategies to silently communicate with first responders if possible, for example, in rooms with exterior windows make use of RED or GREEN signs to silently signal law enforcement officers and emergency responders to indicate the status of the room's occupants.
- Remain in place until given an all clear by identifiable law enforcement officers.
- Make an escape plan if confronted by a greater danger, such as a fire or if the intruder gets in the room.
- If an intruder enters the room before lockdown or breaches the door, teachers should tell the students to **“Run, Get Out”** anyway they can. Remember, children look to the teacher or school staff for direction in emergencies.

FIGHT

If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, as a last resort when confronted by the shooter, **adults in immediate danger** should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as fire extinguishers, and chairs. In a study of 41 active shooter events that ended before law enforcement officers arrived, the potential victims stopped the attacker themselves in 16 instances. In 13 of those cases they physically subdued the attacker.

While talking to staff about confronting a shooter may be daunting and upsetting for some, they should know that they may be able to successfully take action to save lives. To be clear, confronting an active shooter should never be a requirement in any school employee’s job (Continued page 3)

Monthly Webinars!

First Wednesday of
Every Month at 10
am.

**Next Webinar -
February 5, 2014**

Each webinar has a round
table discussion at the
end. Questions are
always welcome!

To participate, you must be a
vetted member. For more
information please email
schoolsafety@isp.state.il.us

Preparing for an Active Shooter Situation (Continued from page 3)

description; how each staff member chooses to respond if directly confronted by an active shooter is up to him or her. Further, the possibility of an active shooter situation is not justification for the presence of firearms on campus in the hands of any personnel other than law enforcement officers.

Interacting With First Responders

Staff should be trained to understand and expect that a law enforcement officer's first priority must be to locate and stop the person(s) believed to be the shooter(s); all other actions are secondary. One comprehensive study determined that more than half of mass-shooting incidents—57 percent—still were under way when the first officer arrived; in 75 percent of those instances that solo officer had to confront the perpetrator to end the threat. In those cases, the officer was shot one-third of the time.

Students and staff should be trained to cooperate and not to interfere with first responders. When law enforcement officer(s) arrives, students and staff must display empty hands with open palms. Law enforcement may instruct everyone to place their hands on their heads, or they may search individuals.

To schedule free training contact:

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What 67 School Shootings Taught Us

http://www.heraldstandard.com/what-school-shootings-taught-us/article_0a0f6754-8f8c-5f4f-8bd4-24fe40293400.html?mode=jqm

The Massachusetts State Police Fusion Center analyzed 67 school shootings between 1992 and 2012. Here is what they found:

- 80 percent -- attackers were current or former students
- 82 percent --of attackers concealed weapons and entered the school without issue
- 9 percent -- Attackers used forcible entry
- 33 percent -- One or more people knew of the attacker's intent by direct statements or online posts
- 31 percent -- Resolved when shooter died by or attempted suicide
- 22 percent -- Resolved by law enforcement intervention
- 28 percent -- Resolved by non-law enforcement intervention
- 16 percent -- Resolved with no force involved

Source: Massachusetts State Police Fusion Center

Questions from School Safety Information Sharing Members

Schools and Campuses School Safety Information Sharing Members are welcome to ask questions. The following are a few that were brought to the program's attention you might be interested in.

Q: Is there any more information about the grant detailed in the September School Safety Information Newsletter?

A: Information pertaining to this grant will be detailed on the Illinois.gov School/Campus page. Please see page one of this newsletter for details.

Please feel free to send your comments, questions, concerns, ideas or feedback to Mia at schoolsafety@isp.state.il.us.

Do you have something to share? This is an invitation for anyone in the School Safety Information Sharing Program to submit lessons learned or success stories that could be helpful and shared with other schools and campuses in Illinois. Authors would be notified of acceptance if their story is selected for the monthly newsletter prior to publication. Questions or ideas, please contact Mia (information below).

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) FluView Week Ending January 11, 2014

According to the CDC, Illinois is currently depicted as having widespread flu activity. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/downloadimage.htm?w=2>, accessed on 1/22/2014.

School Safety Newsletter

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