

Just Some Safety Thoughts

Building Administrators, Teachers and Guidance Counselors

1. Consider beginning a **“Comprehensive Risk, Vulnerability or Threat Assessment.”**
 - a. Ideally, you should build your “Comprehensive Safety Plan” from the results of a “Comprehensive Assessment.”
 - i. However, as we know “ideally” does not always work.
 - ii. Your “Comprehensive Safety Plan” may be perpetually modified as new information is collected.
 - b. Do the “assessment” in pieces.
 - i. An assessment process takes time. As information is gleaned, adjust your “Comprehensive Safety Program” with results of the “assessment.”
 1. This is real progress!
 - c. Select a tool that closely meets your needs and modify it with your hands-on knowledge.
 - d. If you select an outside “Expert:”
 - i. Set the Expectations High
 1. Do not accept a “Facilities Assessment” as a “Comprehensive Safety Assessment.”
 2. Examples of Domains examined in a “Comprehensive Safety Assessment”:
 - a. School Community Safety Factors
 - b. Personnel Structure
 - c. Governing Body Role
 - d. Data From the School Community
 - e. Administrative Policies and Practice
 - f. Community Safe Education Efforts
 - g. Training Programs
 - h. Physical Site Examination
 - i. Etc.
 - ii. Supervise the “Expert’s Work Product”
 - iii. Incorporate Frequent Meeting with all individuals with a “vested interest”
 - iv. Ask for a “Management/Governing Body Exit Meeting”
 - v. Ask for an “Exit Community Meeting” with the “Expert”
 - vi. Ask for a “Follow up Meeting” to the Assess the Progress Made

2. Initial Response Options in an **“Active Attacker Event.”**
 - a. The **stimuli or conditions of the “Event” will dictate the most appropriate “Response Option”** found in your organization’s **“Active Attacker or Active Shooter”** program.
 - b. Education and practice will increase your chances of selecting and exercising the most appropriate **“Response Option”** found in your organization’s **“Comprehensive Safety Program.”**
 - i. When individuals view the “ISP Options” based model they may mistakenly assume that ISP is discounting the value of immediately going to a “Lockdown Option.”
 - ii. In **presentations provided by the Indiana State Police, it is made clear that the “ISP Model” is nonlinear. Nothing in the “ISP program” downplays the importance of going directly to the “Lockdown Option.”** Presenters always stress that individuals should not leave a secure lockdown situation for an **“Unknown.”**
 - iii. It is apparent to educators that an **“Active Shooter Attack” does not always occur when all students are in classrooms. An attack may occur during student arrival, at dismissal, at lunch, at Extracurricular Events, at convocations, etc. Because the environment in a school varies, the ISP model stresses the stimuli of the event dictates the appropriate response option.**
 - c. **Resources: FREE**
 - i. The ISP **“Unarmed Response to an Active Shooter Event”** program may serve as a resource when reviewing your **“active attacker”** programs.
 1. **Note the (ISP Website Posted) PowerPoint Presentation has matching “Presenter’s Notes” for each slide (FREE). The notes serve as a narrative explanation for each slide.**
 2. Additional Versions (**PowerPoints & Presenter’s Notes**) are posted on the ISP website:
 - a. Places of Worship
 - b. Business & Governmental Agencies
 - c. Terrorism Related
 - d. Schools
 - ii. The ISP **“Suggestions and Considerations for Guardian/Student Reunification”** (a thirty plus page document) may serve as a resource for reviewing your comprehensive reunification program.
 - iii. Additional Documents Posted on the ISP Website:
 1. Considerations for Guardian/Student Reunification
 2. Frequently Asked Questions
 3. How to Respond to an Active Shooter Event
 4. General Climate Survey for Staff

5. General Climate Survey for Students
6. A Guide to Indiana Law Related to School Safety
7. Intervention or Student Assistance Process
8. Indiana State Police: Unarmed Response to an Active Shooter Event

3. Evacuation and Reunification (See the ISP Posted Information)

- a. Updated information is critical to a successful “Evacuation and Reunification Event.”
 - i. **“Accurate and Updated Information”** is critical to have a comprehensive **“Evacuation Process.”**
 1. **See the “Guardian Information Card” Posted on the ISP Website.**
 - ii. Typically, evacuations are most effective when students and staff follow a secure path to a **vetted and secured safe area.**
 - iii. It is critical to involve “Transportation Department,” “Food Services” and “Maintenance” in the planning process.
 - iv. The posted ISP **“Suggestions and Considerations for Guardian/Student Reunification”** may provide information that will assist in reviewing your evacuation process.
 - v. Various Go-Kits must be created.
 1. **Go-Kits** must **have critical information** that will assist in accounting for evacuated students and supplies that will support them for an extended period of time (nutritional, medically, etc.).
 2. **Go-Kits** should be **constructed to meet the unique needs of the population the kit is intended to support.**
 3. EMT, health care providers, school nurses, special needs teachers, ESL staff, educators, etc. must be involved in the assembly of the “Go-Kits.”
 - a. **A common mistake is to develop a “General Go-Kit” for all populations of students.**

4. Copycat

- a. As soon as the “School Community” and general public receives notification of any crisis event, you can expect “Copycat” threats to emerge. This may occur in a bomb threat, active shooter event or threat, false fire alarm, etc.
- b. The threats often are made against other school buildings in the corporation.
 - i. A secondary attack or threat nearly always follows one of these catastrophic events.
 - ii. The possibility of a treat to the evacuation site is one of the main reasons why it is critical to vet and secure an “Evacuation Site” prior to moving students to the site.

- c. In advance of an event, you must have primary and secondary sites that can rapidly be vetted and secured.
- d. A **“Memorandum of Understanding”** must be established with the owner of the site if it is owned by an entity other than your organization.

5. Impact on the Corporation

- a. Other buildings will most likely receive threats.
- b. Remember: Other Buildings will be impacted by the event.
 - i. Parents of students in other buildings will want to pick up their children.
 - 1. Protocol should be in place for other buildings to follow in securing the children and staff in other buildings!
 - 2. **“Dismissal Procedures”** in other buildings must also be established.
 - a. Procedures must be in place to assist in dismissing children to their guardians.
 - b. Remember: Individuals other than the guardian may show up to pick up students.
- c. Resources to assist in the review of the corporation’s reunification policies may be found:
 - i. (See the ISP website: “Considerations/Suggestions on Guardian/Student Reunification”).

6. Media Coverage

- a. Providing the media with accurate and salient information.
 - i. This will assist in informing and calming all members of the school community.
 - 1. In a recent Indiana Event, the “Public Relations Officer” calmed the school community by communicating the statement, “If you have not been notified, your children have been secured at the reunification.” This announcement was made immediately after the guardians of the injured had been notified.
- b. It is recommended that you set up a **“Media Site”** away from the crisis event and away from the **“Reunification Site.”**
 - i. See the “Guardian/Student Reunification Considerations” information posted on the ISP website.

7. Assisting Families of the Injured

- a. It is critical to have a presence at the medical facility where the injured are transported.
- b. Some organizations find it extremely helpful to have a “Support Team” that can lend support to the families of the injured.
- c. The team may include counselors, clergy, educators, SRO, law enforcement, nursing/medical staff, etc.

- d. This team can provide support by comforting the family members, transporting family members, contacting family/friends, dealing with media, etc.

8. Legal Ramification

- a. In our society, you can expect legal action.
- b. It is often best to determine ahead of time who “speak for the corporation.”
- c. Your legal counsel may elect to provide a brief “Media Guide” for responding to media inquiries.
- d. An effective practice is to direct the media back to the PIO professionals.
- e. Keep accurate notes and memorialize actions taken.

9. Community Meeting (Update)

- a. Plan a “Community Meeting” following the event.
- b. The initial meeting should be held a few days after the event.
- c. In the meeting:
 - i. You should provide a brief statement vetted by your legal counsel.
 - ii. You should reassure the “School Community Members” and or the “Community” at large that measures were and are in place to promote the security of all members of the community.
 - 1. It is important to reinforce that measures were in place that assisted in mitigating the impact of the crisis events.
 - iii. You must take care not to disclose critical tactical information or confidential information.
 - iv. A list of facts may be discussed (Legal counsel should vet the information ahead of time).
 - v. You may want to provide “Future Plans.”
 - vi. You may wish to provide an overview of the programs in place for “Supporting Students, Parents, Staff” that will be provided by mental health professional staff, law enforcement, etc.
 - vii. You may want to cover ongoing programs that will be offered by health care professionals, school counselors, grief counselors, etc.
 - 1. **Vet ahead of time a group of professionals that will serve on “Support Team.”**

10. Organizational Debriefing (Debriefing Forms)

- a. Debriefing or “Hot Wash” Meetings should be held.
- b. You should utilize “**Debriefing Forms**” to garner critical information on the event.
- c. These forms are simple but they will assist the organization in learning from the event. (See the ISP Debriefing Forms) on the ISP Website.
- d. Anyone that may provide information on the event should complete a “Debriefing Form.”
- e. The “Form” simply asks:
 - i. What worked in the event?

- ii. What actions produced a positive impact on the event?
- iii. What actions may have produced a more positive impact or outcome on the event?
- iv. What advice can we give others caught in a “like event?”

11. Suggested Program Revisions

- a. It is important to review all information gathered from the event.
- b. The information may be submitted to the **“Event Review Group.”**
 - i. This group reviews the information and makes recommendations to the **“Comprehensive Safety Plan Committee”** for their consideration.
- c. The goal is simple: (Improve the “Comprehensive Safety Plan”)

12. Suggestions

- a. Create an Intervention Team.
- b. Develop a Reunification Process.
- c. Develop an overall corporation communication system.
 - i. **Only use the emergency notification system for “Emergency Announcements.”**
 - 1. **A common mistake is to utilize the “Emergency Notification System” for communicating noncritical information.**
 - a. **Parent become conditioned to disregard announcements.**
 - ii. Develop “Prewritten Communication Letters”:
 - 1. “Press Releases,” “Letters to Parents,” “Incident Updates,” etc.
 - iii. Establish Media Staging sites away from the event and reunification site.
 - d. Use the media to communicate programs established to aid members of the school community.
 - 1. Recovery Assistance Information
- ii. Conduct Community Informational Meeting

13. Tabletop Training Exercises

- a. Tabletop Exercise are helpful in examining the information gathered from the crisis event.
- b. Tabletop Exercises are especially helpful in applying the measures found in the “Comprehensive Safety Plan” to the circumstances of the crisis event.
- c. Each corporation should create tabletop exercises that should be conducted with all parties involved in the evacuation and reunification process.
- d. Tabletop Exercise are an excellent tool to review your “Comprehensive Safety Plan.”

14. Recovery

- a. Long Term Recovery
 - i. Establish an ongoing mental/emotional health care and grief counseling program.
- b. Establish Protocol for Retrieval of Personal Belongings
- c. Establish “Reopening of Schools Protocol”
- d. Scams and Vendor Contact
 - i. Make sure information is available to the general public relating the scams that accompany many catastrophic events.
 - ii. Convey to the school community that many programs have viable components but if a program claims to have all the solutions, the program should be viewed with a healthy degree of skepticism.
- e. Plan “Back to School Meetings”
 - i. Reassure students, parents and staff that the environment is safe.
- f. Establish Anniversary Date Recognition Programs

15. Anniversary Date

- a. Do not forget the importance of “Anniversary Dates”
 - i. The loss must be acknowledged.
 - ii. **“Emotional and Mental Health Services”** are critical.
 - iii. Measures must be taken to prepare for memorial activities.
 - iv. It is often best to plan a specific location and time for the ceremonies.