



Model Crisis Management Policy

District Name

Date Adopted by School Board

Date Revised

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.035, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is making this model crisis management policy available for school districts and charter schools to assist them in adopting a written policy governing crisis management planning.

This updated model crisis management policy is the result of a collaborative effort between the MDE’s Divisions of Compliance and Assistance and School Safety Technical Assistance Center, and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

As set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.035, each school board shall adopt a crisis management policy and it must include at least five school lock-down drills, five school fire drills consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 299F.30, and one school tornado drill.

Minnesota Statutes, section 13.37, allows security information to be classified as nonpublic data. A school crisis management policy, which contains security information, is considered nonpublic data or confidential information. Release of this information should be done at the discretion of the school/school district governing body.

A school board must develop policy in consultation with school administrators, teachers, employees, students, parents/guardians, community members, community emergency response agencies, including law enforcement and fire officials, county attorney offices, social service agencies, and any other appropriate individuals or organizations (such as bus contractors).

This model policy’s purpose is to act as a guide for school district and building administrators, school district employees, students, school board members, and community members to address a wide range of potential crisis situations in the school district. For purposes of this policy, the term “school districts” shall include charter schools.

The step-by-step procedures suggested by this model policy will provide guidance to each school building in drafting crisis management plans to coordinate protective actions prior to, during and after any type of emergency or potential crisis situation. Each school district should develop tailored building-specific crisis management plans for each school building in the school district, and sections or procedures may be added or deleted in those crisis management plans based on building needs.

The school district will, to the extent possible, engage in ongoing emergency planning within the school district and with emergency responders and other relevant community organizations. The school district will ensure that relevant emergency responders in the community have access to the school district's building-specific crisis management plans and will provide training to school district staff to enable them to act appropriately in the event of a crisis.

The model policy follows:

I. PURPOSE

- A. Policy. The school district's crisis management policy has been created in consultation with local community emergency response agencies and other appropriate individuals and groups that would likely be involved in the event of a school district emergency. It is designed so that each building administrator can tailor a building-specific crisis management plan to meet that building's specific situation and needs.
- B. Building Level Plans. The school district's administration and/or the administration of each building shall present building-specific crisis management plans to the school board for review and approval. The building-specific crisis management plans will include general crisis procedures and crisis-specific procedures. Upon approval by the school board, such crisis management plans shall be an addendum to this Crisis Management Policy. This policy and the plans will be maintained and updated on an annual basis.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Elements of the District Crisis Management Policy

- 1. General Crisis Procedures. The Crisis Management Policy includes general crisis procedures for securing buildings and classrooms, classroom evacuation, building evacuation, campus evacuation and sheltering. The policy designates the individual(s) who will determine when these actions will be taken. These district-wide procedures may be modified by building administrators when creating their building-specific crisis management plans.
 - a. Communication System. A communication system will be in place to enable the designated individual to be contacted at all times in the event of a potential crisis, setting forth the method to contact the designated individual, the provision of at least two designees when the contact person is unavailable, and the method to convey contact information to the appropriate staff persons and/or community partners. The alternative designees may include members of the school district's emergency/first responder response team. A secondary method of communication should be included in the plan for use when the primary method of communication is inoperable (i.e. power loss).
 - b. Resource. The most recent edition of the [Comprehensive School Safety Guide](#) can be used to assist in the development of building-specific crisis management plans.

- c. Special Needs Procedures for Staff and Children. All general crisis procedures will address specific procedures for children and staff with special needs such as physical, sensory, motor, developmental, and mental health challenges. [Recommended Language: “The school’s crisis management team will meet in the fall of each year to ensure that there are specific procedures for the safe sheltering/evacuation of each student and staff member with special needs. If an emergency situation/crisis occurs at [name of School], all staff should be trained on specific procedures for evacuating students and staff with special needs.”]
- i. The evacuation or sheltering procedures should include specific procedures for children with special needs, including children with limited mobility (wheelchairs, braces, crutches, etc.), visual impairments, hearing impairments, and other sensory, developmental, or mental health needs. This may include students who do not have a 504 plan or an individualized education program.
- ii. The evacuation or sheltering procedures should also address transporting necessary medications and medical equipment used by students and staff during the school day.

Note: More specific information on planning for children with special needs can be found in the attached [Comprehensive School Safety Guide’s Preparedness/Planning Section](#), and the United States Department of Education’s document entitled “[Practical Information on Crisis Planning, a Guide for Schools and Communities](#).”

- d. Lock-Down Procedures. Lock-down procedures will be used in situations where harm may result to persons inside the school building, such as a violent incident, hostage incident, trespass, disturbance, or when determined to be necessary by the building administrator or his or her designee. The building administrator or designee will announce the lock-down over the public address system or other designated system.

Each building administrator will develop, maintain, and train staff on lock-down procedures for their building as part of the building-specific crisis management plan.

Emergency responders use plain language when responding to emergencies/crisis situations, and it is recommended that school district staff also use plain language rather than code words.

- e. Lockdown Drill Schedule: A record of lockdown drills conducted at the building shall be maintained by building administrator or designee.

Note: State law requires a minimum of five school lock-down drills each school year. See Minn. Stat. §121A.035. The Comprehensive School Safety Guide’s Preparedness/Planning Section has a sample lockdown schedule and log.

- f. Evacuation Procedures. Evacuations of classrooms and buildings shall be implemented at the discretion of the building administrator or his or her designee. Each building's crisis management plan will include procedures for transporting students and staff a safe distance from harm to a designated safe area until released by the building administrator or designee. Safe areas may change based upon the specific emergency situation. The evacuation procedures should include planning for students and staff with special needs related to evacuation as addressed in section c of this policy.
- g. Procedures. Sheltering provides refuge for students, staff, and visitors within school buildings during an emergency. Shelters are safe areas that maximize the safety of inhabitants. Safe areas may change based upon the specific emergency. The building administrator or his or her designee will announce the need for sheltering over the public address system or other designated system. Each building administrator will develop, maintain, and train all staff on sheltering procedures for his or her building as part of the building specific crisis management plan.

Note: The [Comprehensive School Safety Guide's](#) Response Section has sample procedures for lock-down, evacuation, "sheltering in place," and severe weather shelter.

- 2. Crisis-Specific Procedures. The Crisis Management Policy includes crisis-specific procedures for crisis situations that may occur during the school day or at school-sponsored events and functions. These district-wide procedures are designed to enable building administrators to tailor response procedures to their building when creating building-specific crisis management plans.

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide's Response Section includes crisis specific procedures.

3. School Emergency Response Teams

- a. Purpose. The school's emergency response team serves as a first responder for school emergencies and assists building and district administration in developing and revising district and building level emergency plans. The school emergency response team implements the building level crisis management plan to respond to threats and active emergency situations. A school, depending upon its size and individual need, may have more than one team to manage various responsibilities and needs in an emergency.
- b. Composition. The building administrator in each school building will select a school emergency response team that will be trained to respond to emergency situations. All school emergency response team members will receive on-going training to carry out the building's crisis management plans and will have knowledge of procedures, evacuation routes and safe areas. For purposes of student safety and accountability, to the extent possible, school emergency response team members will not have direct responsibility for the supervision of students. Team members must be willing to be actively involved in the

resolution of crises and be available to assist in any crisis situation as deemed necessary by the building administrator. Each building will maintain a current list of school emergency response team members which will be updated annually. The building administrator, and his or her alternate designees, will know the location of that list in the event of a school emergency. A copy of the list will be kept on file in the school district office or in a secondary location in single building school districts. The list may be in an electronic and/or paper format, but must be accessible in the event of a power outage.

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide’s Preparedness/Planning Section provides a description of the national incident management system and school incident command system for school emergency response teams. It also includes a school incident command structure for school and guidelines.

- c. Leaders. The building administrator or his or her designee will serve as the leader of the school emergency response team and will be the primary contact for emergency response officials. In the event the primary designee is unavailable (e.g. out of the building), the designee list should include more than one alternative designee and may include members of the emergency response team. When emergency response officials are present, they may elect to take command and control of the crisis. It is critical in this situation that school district officials assume a liaison role and be available to emergency response officials.

III. PREPARATION BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

A. Communication of the Crisis Management Plan

1. District Employees. Teachers generally have the most direct contact with students on a day-to-day basis. As a result, they must be aware of their role in responding to crisis situations. This also applies to non-teaching school personnel who have direct contact with students. All staff shall be aware of the school district’s crisis management policy and their own building’s crisis management plan. Each school’s building-specific crisis management plan shall include the method and dates of dissemination of the plan to its staff. Employees will receive a copy of the relevant building-specific crisis management plans and shall receive periodic training on plan implementation.
2. Students and Parents. Students and parents shall be made aware of the school district’s crisis management policy and relevant tailored crisis management plans for each school building. Each school district’s building-specific crisis management plan shall set forth how students and parents are made aware of the district and school-specific plans. Students shall receive specific instruction on plan implementation and shall participate in the required number of drills and practice sessions throughout the school year.

B. Visitors

1. Entrance Procedures. The school district shall implement procedures mandating visitor sign-in and sign-out at a specific location as well as the use of an identifying visitor badge while in school buildings.
2. Building Entrances. The school district shall implement procedures to minimize outside entry into school buildings except at designated check-in points and assure that all doors are locked prior to and after regular building hours.

C. Facility Diagrams and Site Plans

1. Individual School Building Diagram and Site Plan. All school buildings will have a facility diagram and site plan that includes the location of primary and secondary evacuation routes, exits, accessible egress routes, areas of refuge, and the location of fire alarm control panel, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, fire hydrants, hoses, water spigots, emergency vehicle access and utility shut-offs. All facility diagrams and site plans will be regularly updated and whenever a major change is made to a building. Facility diagrams and site plans will be available in the office of the building administrator and in other appropriate areas and will be easily accessible and on file in the school district office. Facility diagrams and site plans will be provided to first responders, such as fire and law enforcement personnel.
2. Districts with Single Sites. For single building school districts, such as charter schools, a secondary location for the diagrams and site plans will be included in the district's crisis management policy and may include filing documents with a charter school sponsor, or compiling facility diagrams and site plans on a server and distributing copies to first responders or sharing the documents with first responders during the crisis planning process.

D. Emergency Contact Information

1. External Communication
 - a. Emergency Response Contact Information. Each building will maintain a current list of emergency contact information and the names and addresses of local, county, and state personnel who may be involved in a crisis situation. The list will include telephone numbers/contact information for local police, fire, ambulance, hospital, the Poison Control Center, county, and state emergency management agencies, local public works departments, local utility companies, the public health nurse, mental health/suicide hotlines, and the county welfare agency. A copy of this list will be updated annually and kept on file in the school district office, or at a secondary location for single building school districts.
 - b. Staff Training on Making Emergency Calls. District employees will receive training on how to make emergency contacts, including 911 calls.

Internal Building Communication. School district plans will set forth a process to internally communicate an emergency, using telephones in classrooms, intercom systems, two-way radios and other electronic devices, as well as the procedure to enable the staff to rapidly convey emergency information to a building designee. Each plan will identify a primary and secondary method of communication for both internal and secondary use. It is recommended that the plan include several methods of communication because computers, intercoms, telephones, and cell phones may not be operational or may be dangerous to use during an emergency.

Note: The Comprehensive Safety Guide’s Preparedness/Planning Section has a sample Emergency Phone Number list.

E. Warning and Notification Systems

1. Maintenance of the District Warning System. The school district shall maintain a warning system designed to inform students, staff, and visitors of a crisis or emergency. This system shall be maintained on a regular basis under the maintenance plan for all school buildings. The school district should consider an alternate notification system to address the needs of staff and students with special needs, such as vision or hearing and translated as needed.
2. Notification of the District Warning System to Staff and Students. It shall be the responsibility of the building administrator to inform and train students and employees of the warning system how the system is used to identify a specific crisis or emergency situation and the procedures to follow based on the warning. Each school’s building-specific crisis management plan will include the method and frequency of dissemination of the warning system/procedure information to students and employees in the most common languages spoken in the school.
3. Notification of Crisis or Emergency to Parents/ Guardians. It shall be the responsibility of the building administrator to inform parents/guardians of communication methods that will be used in a crisis or emergency to relay information. Each school’s building-specific crisis management plan shall include the communication methods and frequency of dissemination of the communication methods to parents/guardians.

F. Early School Closure Procedures

1. Decision Making by Superintendent. The superintendent will make decisions about closing school or buildings as early in the day as possible. The early school closure procedures will set forth the criteria for early school closure (e.g. weather-related, utility failure, or a crisis situation), will specify how closure decisions will be communicated to staff, students, families and the school community (designated broadcast media, local authorities, email, or district or school building websites), and will discuss the factors to be considered in closing and reopening a school or building.

2. External Communication Methods for Parents and Guardians. It shall be the responsibility of the building administrator to inform parents and guardians of communication and notification methods and media outlets that will be used in in the event of early school closure.

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide’s Response Section provides universal procedures for severe weather shelter.

- G. Media Procedures. The superintendent or director has the authority and discretion to notify parents or guardians and the school community in the event of a crisis or early school closure. The superintendent or director will designate a spokesperson who will notify the media in the event of a crisis or early school closure. The spokesperson shall receive training to ensure that the district is in strict compliance with federal and state law relative to the release of private data when conveying information to the media.

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide’s Response Section has a sample Media Procedures’ form.

- H. Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention Procedures
 - a. Short-Term Intervention Procedures. Behavioral health crisis intervention procedures will set forth the procedure for initiating behavioral health crisis intervention plans. The procedures will use available resources including the school psychologist, counselor, social worker, community behavioral health crisis intervention counselors, or others in the community. Counseling procedures will be used whenever the superintendent, director or the building administrator determines it to be necessary, such as following an assault, a hostage situation, violence incident or suicide. Administrator will meet with relevant persons, including school psychologists, counselors and social workers to determine the level of intervention needed for students and staff.
 - b. Designate specific rooms as private counseling areas.
 - c. Escort siblings and close friends of any victims as well as others in need of emotional support to the counseling areas.
 - d. Prohibit media from interviewing or questioning students or staff.
 - e. Provide follow-up services to students and staff who receive counseling.
 - f. Resume normal school routines as soon as possible.
1. Long-Term Recovery Intervention Procedures. The following components may involve both short-term and long-term recovery planning:
 - a. Physical/structural recovery
 - b. Fiscal recovery
 - c. Academic recovery
 - d. Social/emotional recovery

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide's Recovery Section addresses recovery components in more detail.

IV. PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR FIRE

Fire evacuation plans shall include the following:

- Emergency egress routes.
 - Procedures for assisted rescue for persons unable to use the general means of egress unassisted.
 - Procedures for accounting for employees and occupants after evacuation has been completed.
 - Identification and assignment of personnel responsible for rescue or emergency medical aid.
 - The preferred and any alternative means of notifying occupants of a fire or emergency. Note: activation of the building's fire alarm system, where provided, will be the primary means of notification.
 - The preferred and any alternative means of reporting fires and other emergencies to the fire department or designated emergency response organization. Note: Do not assume that the fire alarm system is monitored and the fire department will be notified automatically.
1. Safe Area. Designate a safe area at least 50 feet away from the building to enable students and staff to evacuate. The safe area should not interfere with emergency responders or responding vehicles and should not be in an area where evacuated persons are exposed to any products of combustion.
 2. Accessibility of Building Facility Diagram and Site Plan. Each building's facility diagram and site plan shall be available in appropriate areas of the building and shall identify the primary and secondary evacuation routes, areas of refuge where applicable, accessible egress routes and areas of exterior assisted rescue where applicable. (See III. C. above).
 3. Staff Training on Evacuation Routes. Teachers and staff will receive training on the location of the primary emergency evacuation routes and alternate routes from various points in the building. During fire drills, students and staff will practice evacuations using primary evacuation routes and alternate routes. Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC) (15), Sec. 406.2 requires that employees receive training in the contents of fire safety, evacuation plans, and their duties as part of new employee orientation and at least annually thereafter. Records shall be kept and made available to the *fire code official* upon request.
 4. Additional Staff Training. Employees, such as those who work in hazardous areas in the building, shall be apprised of the fire hazards of the materials and processes to which they are exposed. Each employee shall be instructed in the proper procedures for preventing fires as they conduct of their assigned duties (MSFC 406.3.15).
 5. Conducting Fire Drills. Fire drills will be conducted periodically without warning at various times of the day and under different circumstances (e.g., lunchtime, recess and during assemblies). State law requires a minimum of five fire drills each school year, consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 299F.30. See Minn. Stat. §121A.035. The first emergency evacuation drill of each school year shall be conducted within 10 days of the beginning of classes.

Note: The State Fire Marshal Division advises schools to defer fire drills during the cold weather months. It is recommended that schools complete three fire drills by the end of November, with the remaining two drills conducted in early spring, or as soon as conditions allow.

6. Fire Drill Schedule and Log. A record of fire drills conducted at the building will be maintained in the building administrator's office.

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide's Preparedness/Planning Section has a sample fire drill schedule and log.

7. Preparation and Planning for Sites. The school district will have prearranged sites for emergency sheltering, relocation and reunification, and transportation as needed.
8. Essential Staff Functions. The school district will determine which staff will remain in the building to perform essential functions if safe to do so (e.g., switchboard, building engineer, etc.). The school district also will designate an administrator or his or her designee to meet local fire or law enforcement agents upon their arrival.

Note: The Comprehensive School Safety Guide's Response Section includes a sample fire procedure form, evacuation/relocation and student reunification/release procedures, and planning for student reunification.

V. SAMPLE PROCEDURES INCLUDED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY GUIDE

- A. Purpose. A template for universal and emergency specific procedures for the various hazards/emergencies can be found in the Comprehensive School Safety Guide. These templates can be used by schools when drafting specific crisis management plans. After approval by the school board, an adopted procedure will become an addendum to the crisis management policy.
- B. Universal Response Procedures for All Types of Emergency Response
 1. Evacuation/relocation
 2. Lock-down
 3. Reverse evacuation
 4. Severe weather shelter
 5. Shelter-in-place procedures
 6. Student reunification/release
- C. Emergency Specific Response Procedures:
 1. Assault (physical and sexual)
 2. Assessments of threats of violence

- a. Bomb threat
 - b. Cyber
 - c. Suspicious package or email: chemical/biological threat
 - d. Terrorism
 - e. Threat
 - f. Threat incident report form
3. Death: natural/traumatic
 4. Demonstration
 5. Fight/disturbance
 6. Fire
 7. Hazardous materials
 8. Hostage
 9. Intruder
 10. Media procedures
 11. Medical emergency
 12. Severe weather: tornado/severe thunderstorm/flooding
 13. Sexual assault
 14. Shooting
 15. Suicidal threat or attempt
 16. Weapons

VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES:

- A. Chemical Accidents. Procedures for reporting chemical accidents shall be posted at key locations such as chemistry labs, art rooms, swimming pool areas, and janitorial closets.

Note: School buildings must maintain material safety data sheets (M.S.D.S.) for all chemicals on campus. State law, federal law, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration require that pertinent staff have access to M.S.D.S. in the event of a chemical accident.

- B. Radiological Emergencies at Nuclear Generating Plants [OPTIONAL]
- C. Required Plan. School districts within a 10-mile radius of the Monticello or Prairie Island nuclear generating plants will develop radiologic specific plans in the event of an accident or incident at the plant.

D. Plan Evaluation. The plan is evaluated by the radiological emergency planning unit of the Division of Homeland Security at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Legal References:

42 U.S.C. § 5121 et seq. (Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 12 and 12A (Emergency Management and Natural Disasters)

Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Government Data)

Minn. Stat. § 121A.06 (Reports of Dangerous Weapon Incidents in School Zones)

Minn. Stat. § 121A.035 (Crisis Management Policy)

Minn. Stat. § 326B.02 subd. 6 and 326B.106 (Fire Code and General Powers Comm. Labor and Industry)

Minnesota Rules Chapter 7511 (Minnesota State Fire Code)

Minn. Stat. § 299F.30 (Fire Drill in School)

Minn. Stat. § 609.605 subd. 4 (Trespass on School Property)

Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532, and 20 U.S.C. § 7912 (Unsafe School Choice Option)

Assistance in Drafting a Crisis Management Plan

Resources are available to assist school districts in drafting a Crisis Management Policy and/or building-specific crisis management plans. For assistance, please contact any of the individuals or organizations that follow:

Minnesota Department of Education
Division of Compliance and Assistance
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
Phone: 651-582-8705

Minnesota Department of Education
School Safety Technical Assistance Center
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
Phone: 651-582-8364

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
School Safety Center
445 Minnesota St., Suite 223
St. Paul, MN 55101-6223
Phone: 651-296-2233
TTY: 651-282-6555

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
State Fire Marshall Division
445 Minnesota St., Suite 145
St. Paul, MN 55101-5145
Phone: 651-201-7200
TTY: 651-282-6555

County Emergency Manager

Your designated county emergency manager can assist with assessing your district's buildings and in drafting or revising your crisis management policy to make it more effective. [Find your county's emergency manager](#).

Other Resources/Publications

U.S. Department of Education [website includes crisis planning resources for schools](#), including institutions of higher learning.

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) [provides support, advice, and assistance for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery](#). It also coordinates outside mental health resources.

Minnesota Department of Human Services website [provides information on 24/7 crisis services that are available for children and youth](#) having a psychiatric or mental health crisis.

[Federal Emergency Management Resources Agency \(FEMA\) resources:](#)

[Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#)

[ready.gov](#)

[Ready.gov/kids](#) (Child-friendly website)

[Comprehensive School Safety Guide](#)