
INCIDENTS INVOLVING VIOLENCE, USE OF WEAPONS, HOSTAGES, ETC.

1. The following is quoted from: School Safety--National School Safety Center News Journal, Fall, 1992.

" Violence within the schools of America has increased dramatically over the past decade and continues to escalate at an alarming rate. Gang encroachment, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, child abuse and neglect, overcrowded classrooms and lack of parental supervision and discipline have rendered the once safe harbor of the classroom a microcosm of today's social ills. Most people equate school violence with large urban areas such as New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. While there has been ample reporting of the violence plaguing big-city schools, violence has invaded suburban and rural schools with little notice by the national media."

- . Nearly 3,000,000 crimes occur on or near school campuses every year.
- . One-fourth of the major school districts now use metal detectors in an attempt to reduce the number of weapons coming to schools by students.
- . The despair brought on by poverty and disenfranchisement that affects millions of our youth is rapidly entering the schools.
- . Schools are being asked to take on responsibilities that society as a whole has neglected, forcing teachers to referee fights rather than teach.

The following relates to potentially violent acts which might occur in any school. These guidelines reflect the thinking of the Englewood Schools administration and the Englewood Police Department SWAT Team Leader and refer to several different situations.

2. Situations developing while school is in session

A. General information

- 1) Each school will have a signal system which would indicate a "lock-down" procedure, where teachers/staff lock all doors and maintain control of students. Some schools will incorporate into their fire alarm systems 3 short beeps repeated, a recognized distress signal. Other schools will plan other signal systems.
- 2) The district will provide to the Englewood SWAT Team, a division of the Englewood Police Department, a floor plan of each building to assist the SWAT Team should it need to respond to the facility.
- 3) It is recommended that teachers keep their classroom doors in the "locked" position. While this is an inconvenience and a source of disruption, teacher reaction would be swift if a lock-down procedure is necessary.
- 4) In a major crisis, the administrator or person in charge will call ---911--- which will bring the Englewood Police Department to the location in force, typically in less than 3 minutes.
 - a) If possible, remain on line and describe the situation, location of the crisis in the building, hostage situation, number of known perpetrators, and as many of the specifics as possible.
 - b) However, if that is not possible, do not hang up. The call will be monitored and will provide information to the police department.

- B. Hostages Taken -- Group or individual isolated in a specific location. Each school will have a plan for dealing with this possible event. Different procedures will be called for depending upon the size of the school and the communications system. The administrator or person in charge should:

- 1) Use the general fire alarm system to evacuate the building appropriate.
- 2) Call ---911---
- 3) If appropriate have all students lie flat on the floor with no one in front of windows or doors.
- 4) Attempt to engage the perpetrator in indirect conversation, not face to face.
- 5) Attempt to gain as much information as possible--size, shape, description, reason, while attempting to keep the perpetrator talking in an effort to keep him/her from becoming too organized.
- 6) Follow through with evacuation and dispersal of students in the most expeditious means possible. Each school should identify a specific location where all students and staff assemble upon leaving the campus: i.e., a park, open area, parking lot area, etc.
- 7) Assist the police department as much as possible once they arrive on the scene.

***** Remember--help/assistance is only 180 seconds away but this is a crucial and critical time.

- C. Hallway or outside situation during school hours. It is assumed that the perpetrator is armed and has either taken hostages, wounded students and/or school personnel, and is still on the premises.

- 1) Use the pre-designated special alarm system or communicate as possible the universal distress signal -- three short beeps repeated.
- 2) Use the P.A. system with an announcement if possible.
- 3) "Lock-down" all classroom doors.
- 4) Have students lie on the floor so they will not be visible through doors or windows. Any student not in a classroom or secure location should report immediately to a pre-designated, outside location, out of harm's way.
- 5) The administrator or person in charge should call ---911--- using the procedures above and the following suggestions:
 - a) Not attempt to contact the perpetrator, but keep track of his/her location in the building or premises and if he/she attempts to leave the building, not interfere.
 - b) Continue to monitor the situation.
 - c) Attempt to assist injured victims if this can be done safely.

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- d) Not release students from classrooms nor open classroom doors until the situation is under control.
 - e) Attempt to have affected adults and/or students remain in one location until released after police contact.
 - f) Organize the information and assist the police department when feasible, including making available a school two-way radio or cellular telephone if needed.
- D. School Activity and/or Athletic Event -- Major disruptions involving extreme violence and/or use of weapons. An immediate decision must be made to either evacuate or isolate. Some of the above information will be helpful. It is recommended that:
- 1) A school administrator or designated person with training be in charge at all major school functions.
 - 2) District-approved security personnel be in attendance at all major school functions.
 - 3) Above personnel have access to two-way radios or cellular telephones. Cellular telephones should be considered in buildings known to have a number of evening activities so that an administrator can speak directly with the police department and not be dependent upon relaying information with two-way radios.
 - 4) Custodial staff be knowledgeable about the location of the nearest telephone and instructed about their specific roles.
 - 5) Coaches and/or activity sponsors be directed about their role and responsibilities.
 - 6) Preplanning and prepared strategies be established to alleviate much of the disruption and minimize injury and damage.
 - 7) Typical responses include the following:
 - a. Stop the activity.
 - b. Have all participants lie flat on the field, floor, or activity area.
 - c. Contact ---911--- identifying him/herself, stating administrator (by name) or designated person in charge, etc., then identifying the situation, location, etc. and maintaining both radio and telephone contact with ---911--- if possible.
 - d. Attempt to make certain no one tries to take matters into their own hands.
 - e. Assist with the evacuation if appropriate.

- f. Gather as much pertinent information as possible: description, size, age, ethnicity, clothing, weapon description, etc.
- g. Not attempt to detain the perpetrator, rather monitor exit used, direction, street, vehicle, on-foot, etc.
- h. Attempt to detain some persons in a safe location to debrief with the police.
- i. Assist, when safe, any injured victims.

***** Remember: help and assistance is on the way within minutes of the ---911--- telephone call. The universal distress signal is three short beeps repeated.

- E. Scheduled School Function -- without an administrator or person-in-charge present such as booster club meetings, alumni meetings or activities, night school activities, parent group meetings, etc.
 - 1) Most of the above is pertinent.
 - 2) The individual in charge of the meeting assumes responsibility and makes the decisions.
 - 3) The person in charge takes responsibility for contacting ---911---.
 - 4) Custodial staff will assist as outlined above.

ADOPTED: March 18, 2008