

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

**Emergency Preparedness Guidelines
Chemical, Biological, and/or Radiological Incidents**

The following definitions and response/action guidelines have been developed by the Department of School Safety and Security in conjunction with the Montgomery County Fire and Explosive Investigation Section of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services to assist school system administrators in responding to a chemical, biological, or radiological incident.

Terms

- A chemical incident is defined as the release of toxic industrial chemicals and/or other agents that are capable of causing bodily harm or death.
- A biological incident is defined as the release of bacteria, viruses, and/or toxins that are capable of causing bodily harm or death.
- A radiological incident is defined as the release, exposure to, and/or dispersal of radioactive materials that are capable of causing bodily harm or death.
- Shelter-in-place means that in certain situations it may be necessary to hold students and staff indoors. This concept is known as *shelter-in-place*, which is very similar to the procedures used during Code Blue. Shelter-in-place can be used in weather-related emergencies; chemical, biological, or radiological incidents, and other emergencies. The nature and duration of the shelter-in-place will be determined by the emergency situation or at the direction of public safety officials and/or MCPS officials.

**Chemical, Biological, or Radiological
Incident Response/Action Guidelines**

In response to a suspected incident, the following steps/actions are to be initiated immediately:

- Implement Code Blue procedures, activate the on-site emergency team (OSET), and activate the school's emergency crisis plan.
- Depending on the evolving nature and scope of the emergency, it may be necessary to implement a Code Red.
- Contact public safety operators via 911 to report the incident by providing any and all pertinent information.
- If students or staff need emergency medical attention, contact public safety operators via 911 and describe the nature of the illness or injuries.

- Contact the Office of School Performance as soon as possible with incident details and periodic updates.
- Bring all students and staff who are involved in outdoor activities into the main building.
- Initially, keep all students and staff in relocatable classrooms in place until public safety officials and/or MCPS officials advise the best course of action, such as moving inside the main building or evacuating to a safer location.
- Ensure all exterior doors are secured/locked and windows closed.
- To reduce the risk of potential exposure to students, staff, and visitors, administrators must ensure that no one leaves or enters the building unless directed otherwise by public safety officials and/or MCPS officials.
- Take steps to shut down the HVAC systems.
- To ensure students and staff are accounted for, hold students in their current location
- Anticipate further information and instructions from public safety officials.

Principals also are directed to address the following security measures in order to be better prepared for an emergency/crisis. Principals must ensure that:

- Code Red and Code Blue drills are pre-announced and conducted no later than Friday, February 21, 2003. These drills can be achieved by initiating a Code Blue and escalating to a Code Red within the same drill. An evaluation should be conducted upon completion of the drill to detect areas that need improvement in order to ensure operational readiness and efficiency.
- All school-based staff members are familiar with the school's emergency/crisis plan and Code Red and Code Blue procedures.
- All on-site emergency team (OSET) members are familiar with and understand their primary and secondary roles and responsibilities.
- The school administrative team is familiar with the MCPS communications protocol for notifying schools of an emergency.
- Building service staff members, building administrators, and designated OSET members know the locations and the procedures to shut off the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and utilities. These utility cutoff locations must be clearly marked.
- The school's emergency generators are regularly tested.

- The special needs of students and staff are being addressed as identified in the school emergency/crisis plan.
- Parent reunification plans are in place.
- Student emergency information cards (yellow cards) are up-to-date to include any additional adults who are authorized to pick up students on behalf of parents/guardians.
- The Nextel emergency phone is fully operational and readily accessible to be used in the event of an emergency. Staff responsible for using the Nextel phone must know how to operate the phone. The Nextel emergency phone is to be secured in its charger, turned on, and at all times accessible to designated staff in order to receive emergency information. Identified staff members must be trained to operate the Nextel emergency phone.
- The NOAA weather-alert radio that was issued to each school is operational, equipped with extra batteries, turned on at all times, and located in a position that is monitored by a staff member at all times.
- Any suspicious situation is reported to local law enforcement officials.

During emergency situations, it is important to share accurate and timely information with public safety officials. This sharing of information will facilitate appropriate directions and instructions from public safety officials in responding to the emergency. Administrators must notify the Office of School Performance of any emergency situation and must furnish continual updates for the duration of the emergency.

Administrators should hold periodic staff and OSET meetings in order to discuss the school's readiness to respond to an emergency/crisis. Additional emergency preparedness information can be obtained from the following web sites:

- www.mcps.k12.md.us
- www.fema.org
- www.montgomerycountymd.gov
- www.dhs.gov
- www.redcross.org

In the event of a serious emergency or critical incident affecting schools or a tragedy impacting the school community, the MCPS Emergency Response Plan would be activated to provide support and assistance to schools and the community.

Additional information pertaining to parent reunification and shelter-in-place guidelines and procedures will be forthcoming to assist administrators. Attached is an emergency/crisis preparedness checklist for use in determining readiness to respond to an emergency/crisis. The Department of School Safety and Security staff can be contacted, 301-279-3066, to answer questions or provide additional information.

Attachment: Emergency/Crisis Checklist



Department of School Safety and Security
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Emergency/Crisis Preparedness Checklist

The following checklist is provided to assist principals/directors in being better prepared to respond to emergency/crisis situations.

On-Site Emergency Team (OSET) Planning	Yes	No
Has the school/facility emergency/crisis plan been updated for 2002-03 and submitted for approval to the Department of School Safety and Security?		
Has the school/facility emergency/crisis plan been reviewed with all staff members?		
Has staff received emergency/crisis preparedness training by the Department of School Safety and Security?		
Are staff and students familiar with Code Red/Code Blue procedures?		
Have Code Red and Code Blue videotapes been shown to staff?		
Has a meeting been held with the OSET to discuss the emergency/crisis plan and the roles and responsibilities of the OSET members?		
Have OSET meetings been scheduled to occur regularly throughout the year?		
Do the back-up OSET members know their roles and responsibilities?		
Has the OSET been provided with a copy of the approved school/facility emergency/crisis plan?		
Have additional incident commanders been identified who will coordinate the crisis response in the absence of the primary incident commander?		
Have interior and exterior command posts been identified?		
Has the staff been made aware of the locations of the command posts?		
Have on and off-campus multi-hazard evacuation locations been identified?		
Has a parent reunification plan been developed and shared with parents, staff and students?		
Have on and off-campus parent information/reunification staging areas been identified?		
Have parents/guardians been notified as to the locations of the parent information/reunification staging areas?		
Is the emergency kit checked regularly to ensure readiness of supplies?		
Are the yellow emergency cards up to date to include the names of additional adults who are authorized to pick-up students?		
Is your staff familiar with shelter-in-place procedures?		
Are joint-occupancy users (daycare centers) included in the emergency/crisis plan?		

	Yes	No
Have staff members been assigned to assess mental health needs following an emergency/crisis?		
Have the counselor, psychologist, and PPW been involved in crisis response planning?		
Has a meeting been held with the guidance counselor and crisis team to discuss mental health strategies?		
Is there awareness of students and staff who may be vulnerable in a crisis because of past loss experiences or unique needs?		
Is staff aware of the MCPS Employee Assistance Program?		

(as of 2-13-03)

Practice Drills	Yes	No
Are staff and students familiar with evacuation procedures?		
Have fire evacuation drills been practiced?		
Have Code Red/Code Blue drills been practiced?		
Are regular debriefing meetings held after practice drills or actual emergencies/crises?		
Is the appropriate staff aware of the locations of the emergency gas, HVAC, water, and electric cut-off valves?		
Are the emergency cut-off valves clearly marked for identification purposes?		
Do designated staff members know how to shut-off emergency gas, HVAC, water, and electric cut-off valves?		

Medical/Special Needs	Yes	No
Have staff members who are certified in first aid/CPR been identified?		
Has the staff been notified of the locations of the first aid kits?		
Have primary and back-up staff members been identified to handle medications for those students who require medications?		
Have provisions been made to address the special needs of disabled students, limited-English-proficient students, and other student/staff populations?		
Has a staff member been designated to be responsible for regularly checking the first aid kits?		

Communication	Yes	No
Is the administrative team familiar with the MCPS communications protocol?		
Are accurate student lists including emergency contact information accessible?		
Are backup communications procedures in place in the event of the loss of telecommunications or power?		
Is the NOAA weather radio operational, equipped with batteries, and turned-on?		
Is the Nextel emergency phone charged, operational, and accessible to designated staff?		
Have all designated staff been trained and know how to operate the Nextel emergency phone?		
Is the emergency cell phone that is kept in the principal's office charged, operational, and turned-on at all times?		
Are the learning cottage cell phones operational and fully charged?		
Is the school communication process (phone tree, listserve) in effect to inform parents/guardians of emergency information?		
Are plans in place to disseminate information to students, staff, parents, and administration?		
Is there an updated staff phone tree that has been tested for accuracy and effectiveness?		
Is a system in place for PTA/community communications?		
Is there an updated list of emergency contact numbers, including all necessary public safety and central administration numbers?		
Is there a plan to monitor access to the building and securing doors when appropriate?		
Is there a clearly identified visitor sign-in and identification procedure in place?		
Are all portable communication devices, including two-way radios, maintained in proper working order?		