

RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE ON BASIC SCHOOL SAFETY PROTOCOLS



A PUBLICATION OF THE RHODE
ISLAND POLICE
CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION



INTRODUCTION

School shootings have an enormous impact on our communities and our children. These events and the impact on our communities often lead to calls for school administrators and law enforcement officials to “do something” quickly to protect our children in school. Hasty and reactive decision-making often results in the implementation of new policies and the adoption of new equipment and technology based on emotion without guidance from law enforcement professionals. One thing is abundantly clear: we all want to do something in response to the mass killing of our children in schools. However, as a collective body of law enforcement professionals and dedicated educators and administrators we need to ensure we get it right.

Understanding this challenge, the Rhode Island Police Chiefs’ Association established the Basic School Safety Committee to offer this law enforcement perspective. The intent of the Committee is to provide guidance for the most essential actions school districts and law enforcement agencies can take to reduce the risk of attacks in our schools. The cost and ability to implement some of these strategies may vary between districts.

The Committee acknowledges that school safety is a much broader topic than the actions outlined in this report and may also include mental health services, counseling resources and parental involvement. This resource is focused on the actions related to the physical security of school buildings. The best practices delineated in this guidebook represent the collective sense of a body of professionals convened under the direction of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs’ Association who hear the call to do something. Our schools need not be a fortress, but they must be safe.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Committee is comprised the following representatives of partner organizations:

RI POLICE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

Chief Sean Corrigan - Narragansett Police Department - President RIPCA
Chief Edward A. Mello - Jamestown Police Department
Colonel Michael Winquist - Cranston Police Department - Secretary RIPCA
Colonel Brad Connor - Warwick Police Department - Sergeant at Arms RIPCA
Chief William Kewer - Middletown Police Department
Sidney Wordell (Chief Ret.) - Executive Director RIPCA

RHODE ISLAND STATE POLICE

Corporal Nicholas Rivello

RI ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

Chief Scott Kettelle - North Kingstown Fire Department - President RIAFC
Richard Susi (Chief Ret.) - Executive Director RIAFC

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Dr. Lawrence P. Filippelli - Lincoln School Department
Dr. Peter Cummings - Narragansett School Department

US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Brian Pires - Counter Terrorism Specialist

RI LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS

Shawn Lacey - Westerly Town Manager

OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Deputy State Fire Marshal David Pastore

PHYSICAL SECURITY

The actions described below represent measures that can be taken to improve the physical security of school facilities. These actions are based upon best practices, and it is recommended that they be considered when assessing current facilities, considering improvements to facilities or during the construction of new facilities.

I. EXTERIOR DOORS

- a. Equipped with functioning lock
- b. Equipped with self-closing devices
- c. Equipped with open/ajar alarm or alert
- d. No attached doorstops
- e. Discourage and/or prohibit the use of door chocks
- f. Visitor entrance configured with double locking door vestibule
- g. Integrate doors with keyless locking system with camera systems
- h. Assess and evaluate the number of staff entrances based upon need versus convenience
- i. Provide/coordinate key fobs for local law enforcement. Consider use of single master key system and use of key access systems accessible to law enforcement.
- j. Label building sides, exterior doors and windows; seek guidance from local enforcement

II. EXTERIOR WINDOWS AND GLASS

- a. Install ballistic resistant film on glass that may allow physical access
- b. Install rescue windows with new facility construction or remodel

III. CAMERAS AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

- a. Integrate video systems with door access control system and open/ajar alerting systems

- b. Pre-coordinate and develop memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement to allow remote access when needed i.e., view from command center

IV. INTERIOR DOORS

- a. Classrooms with climate control doors should remain closed in the locked position
- b. Classrooms without climate control doors should remain closed in the locked position or chocked open in locked position with no attached doors stops
- c. Doors with windows should have ability to cover glass
- d. All interior classroom doors should be on master key system
- e. Door with electronic doorstop should be connected to active threat alerting system with automatic release

V. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Install in-building alerting systems through use of audible devices, strobe lighting and/or the use of mobile device applications
- b. Create direct notification process to law enforcement
- c. Verify law enforcement and fire officials have in-building radio coverage - enhance as needed with the installation of in-building radio repeaters
- d. Conduct annual tabletop exercises with law enforcement and first responders
- e. Employ student, staff and parent notification system. Pre-plan/pre-record important message(s) to be used during an incident. Plan with law enforcement to determine responsibility of delivery and content of messaging
- f. Provide local law enforcement with current building floor plans, in digital format if possible

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION ACTION ITEMS

The action items listed below are recommended to be taken by the administration of each school district.

I. GO KITS

- a. Create go kits for each classroom to include rosters, first aid supplies and essential comfort items
- b. Create building go kits to be made available to responding law enforcement to include master keys(s), key fob(s), rosters and building plans

II. THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

- a. Establish and use a Threat Assessment Team as specified in RIGL 16-21-23.2
- b. Identify through policy the roles and responsibilities of Threat Assessment Team members

III. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

- a. Districts are encouraged to use school resource officers
- b. Districts employing school resource officers should require a clear memorandum of understanding between district and local law enforcement
- c. Officers should be required to receive specialized training under a curriculum as approved by the Rhode Island Police Officers Commission on Standards and Training

IV. SOCIAL MEDIA

- a. Provide students and staff with annual social media training related to expected and appropriate conduct
- b. Employ filtering/monitoring across district networks to alert staff of conduct concerns and/or threats

V. RESPONSE TO ACTIVE THREAT TRAINING

- a. Conduct school and police leadership meeting(s) on periodic basis
- b. Provide age-appropriate active threat training to students
- c. Provide FEMA-based Incident Command System Training to ALL staff
- d. Collaborate with law enforcement to provide ALL staff and students with age-appropriate active threat response training, recruit school staff to become instructors
- e. Provide in-service training to all staff relative to responding to emergency and/or crisis
- f. Provide one-sheet guidance for substitute teachers; include basic “must know” information for incidents within the facility
- g. Provide one-sheet guidance for bus drivers; include basic “must know” information for incidents

VI. FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

- a. Create facilities “checklist” for each site. Task staff member with conducting weekly inspection of security points i.e., door locks, cameras and communications. Create a reporting mechanism to repair/resolve deficiencies

ACTION ITEMS BY THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The action items listed below are recommended to be taken by the Rhode Island Department of Education to provide necessary support and resources for school districts.

I. PARENT RESPONSE TRAINING VIDEO

- a. Create and publish video tool for parents that covers scenario-based direction on active threat in a school building. Include expected communications, police response, reunification process, what to do, what not to do and where to go.

II. STAFF TRAINING

- a. Provide in-service training to all staff relative to responding to emergency and/or crisis
- b. Create one-sheet template for districts to use as guide to develop guidance for substitute teachers; include basic “must know” for incidents within the facility
- c. Create one-sheet template for districts to use as guide to develop guidance for bus drivers; include basic “must know” for incidents
- d. Require teacher certification curriculum to include FEMA-based Incident Command System Training
- e. Coordinate with Rhode Island School Superintendents Association to develop “new” superintendent training program

III. FUTURE BUILDING PROJECTS

- a. Require districts receiving school funding through RIDE to review proposed building plans with local law enforcement prior to approval

IV. POLICE AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

- a. Encourage and/or require school and police leadership meeting(s) on periodic basis
- b. Create pathway for retired officers to be employed as school resource officers by eliminating conflict with current pension restrictions