

## **Warning: Your School Safety Plan May Fail**

Having a school safety and crisis response plan (SSCRP) in place may not be enough: The plan could be inadequate, or might fail upon implementation. How can you know?

Warning signs can be seen at three levels of the response: pre-incident, during the incident, and post-incident.

### **Pre-incident warning signs**

- Your school administrators and key support staff are unaware of the SSCRP or took no part in its development.
- Your SSCRP is more than one year old and/or is incomplete, meaning it does not include an All Hazards comprehensive mitigation approach.
- Your key support staff do not have immediate, 24 hours a day, seven days a week access to the SSCRP.
- Your school does not have a complete and accurate file on each staff member's address, phone, and emergency contact information.
- Your key support staff have not been assigned to specific critical incident response roles.
- Your key support staff are in disagreement as to the incident command structure or the SSCRP protocols.
- Your key support staff are untrained or in disagreement regarding evacuation, lockdown barricading, and sheltering procedures.
- Your key support staff have received no training using the SSCRP protocols.
- Your staff have recently responded unsuccessfully to a school crisis and no corrective action plan has been implemented.
- Your students and parents are unaware of your SSCRP or are confused about your emergency protocols.
- Your school administrators have not contacted and reviewed your SSCRP with local emergency management such as fire, police, EMS, Public Health Commission, and Department of Mental Health.

### **During the incident warning signs**

- Key school staff are confused and conflicted over the chain of command and their specific role.
- Key staff response times are inadequate.
- Communications between school staff and first responders (fire, police, etc.) are delayed, incorrect, or incomplete.
- When first responders arrive on campus, key staff are unable to cooperate and assist with defined tasks.
- SSCRCP action steps are too general and do not mitigate defined dangers of specific incidents (e.g., immediate evacuation of entire student body during bomb threat).
- Classroom-based personnel leave children unattended in the class in an effort to “help out” in the emergency.
- Pre-designated staging and triage areas are not utilized during the crisis.
- Media and parent inquires during the emergency are not coordinated by an appointed school official.
- Coordinated efforts to reduce eyewitness exposure to the impact scene are not implemented.

### **Post-incident warning signs**

- Key school staff are confused and conflicted over the chain of command and their specific role.
- Key staff response times are inadequate.
- Communications between school staff and first responders (fire, police, etc.) are delayed, incorrect, or incomplete.
- When first responders arrive on campus, key staff are unable to cooperate and assist with defined tasks.
- SSCRCP action steps are too general and do not mitigate defined dangers of specific incidents (e.g., immediate evacuation of entire student body during bomb threat).
- Classroom-based personnel leave children unattended in the class in an effort to “help out” in the emergency.

- Pre-designated staging and triage areas are not utilized during the crisis.
- Media and parent inquiries during the emergency are not coordinated by an appointed school official.
- Coordinated efforts to reduce eyewitness exposure to the impact scene are not implemented.

### **Post-incident warning signs**

- Hospitalization and patient condition notifications are not coordinated by the designated incident manager.
- Media and parent inquiries are not coordinated by an appointed school official.
- Coordinated efforts to reduce eyewitness exposure to the impact scene(s) are not implemented.
- Coordination with law enforcement officials to protect the crime scene is not supported.
- Impact areas are not cleaned and reconstructed in a timely fashion.
- Standard defusing the debriefing protocols are not employed for staff and students.
- Referrals to outside agencies for students and staff requiring additional mental health services are not made, or are not made in a timely fashion.
- Preparation for anniversary reactions to the incident are not implemented.
- Post-incident performance review for all staff involved is not conducted, or is not conducted in a timely fashion.

This checklist can be used as a quick reference guide for your key support staff as they review not only your current SSCRP, but also past critical incidents your school has been involved in.