

Crisis Action Plan Regarding Military or Terrorist Activity

The Edmond Public School District takes its responsibility to our community seriously. As such, we have developed a plan of action that will be instituted should any crisis related to military or terrorist activity occur during the school day. Responses to such activities depend upon two key variables-- the nature of the act itself and the amount of warning time involved. We encourage you to share this information with your children in a way that you find appropriate for their age and development. In the event of an emergency, we encourage you to check the EPS website at edmondschools.net or the local media stations for continuing updates on any situation that may arise. If you should have any questions about your child's school plan, please contact the site administrator. Other questions may be directed to David Barnes, Director of Central Communications and Emergency Management with the City of Edmond, or Mr. Brett Towne, Associate Superintendent for Edmond Public Schools.

Summary of Crisis Action Plan:

Scenario 1- Military action (war) limited to the Middle East

- Maintain business as usual.
- Heighten campus security.

Scenario 2- Terrorist action here in the US

- Heighten campus security.
- Restrict campus access.
- Suspend off-campus privileges
- Allow children to leave with parental permission only.
- Make decisions regarding extra-curricular activities.

Scenario 3- Terrorist action here in the metro area`

- Heighten campus security.
- Restrict campus access.
- Suspend off-campus privileges
- Allow children to leave with parental permission only.
- Make decisions regarding extra-curricular activities.

- Be prepared to completely lock down the campus.
- In the event that a campus evacuation is ordered the relocation information will be posted on the front door of the school and made available through the media.

Scenario 4- Terrorist action here in Edmond involving biological or chemical weapons

- Lock down campus immediately.
- Suspend classes, seal and lock down classrooms and buildings, students may be directed to the gymnasium or other designated areas.
- Shut off all HVAC units immediately.
- Suspend off-campus privileges.
- Allow children to leave with parental permission only.
- Suspend all extra-curricular activities.

Preparation

- The school will have on hand, stored amounts of water, battery-powered radios and first aid kits.

Defense Against Various Types of Terrorist Attacks:

According to FEMA, weapons of mass destruction likely to be employed by terrorists fall into four basic categories: *Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Conventional*. The following explains what will be done to protect students and faculty should such attacks occur while school is in session.

Chemical-- Defense against chemical agents is generally limited for civilian populations. The non-military use of gas masks is impractical because such devices are not easy to use effectively and require training and regular practice. When time is short, the best immediate defense against a chemical attack is to quickly call all children and adults into buildings and attempt to limit air from being drawn inside. This is accomplished, albeit imperfectly, by shutting off all HVAC systems (air handlers and window units) and closing all windows and doors. While buildings do offer filtration against such elements, the possibility of some portion of those inside becoming ill remains a definite reality. Basements should *not* be used when seeking protection against chemical agents because they may cause vapors to become trapped. Spaces at ground level are preferable. The question of whether to allow parents to pick up their children during a chemical attack is a difficult one. Opening and closing doors would allow for

penetration of airborne substances. The Emergency Management Services with the City of Edmond will be consulted to assist decision-making in such a situation.

Evacuation of the school after a chemical attack is another possibility. Such a move requires a decision from Emergency Management Services and reliable information on the point of release. It also requires a high degree of confidence that no more attacks are imminent. Such decisions will certainly have to be made quickly and take into account wind speed and direction. If, for example, it is known that a chemical agent was released 3 miles away and the winds are moving in the direction of the school at 3 mph, we will have one hour to successfully escape. This could be accomplished on foot, moving as rapidly as possible in a direction away from the source of the release. If time allows the school system's buses will be utilized to transport students to a relocation site.

Biological Weapons—Defense against biological attacks (e.g. anthrax, smallpox) is difficult at best. Awareness that such attacks have been launched is usually not possible for days or weeks. The first signs may emerge as primary care doctors and emergency room personnel notice a higher than usual incidence of various types of symptoms. Should such an attack be discovered while it is still in progress, the school will immediately shut down all HVAC systems. Buildings will be secured by having windows and doors closed as quickly as possible. In this case, immediate evacuation offers little or no advantage. Once pathogens are released, their invisible damage is already occurring. It is most logical to stay inside buildings and allow parents to pick up their children at their own discretion. Guidance from Emergency Management Services will also be essential.

After a biological attack has occurred, school would have to be suspended until health service officials give clearance. This is due to the fact that some, although not all, biological agents such as smallpox are extremely contagious. Anthrax cannot be spread from person to person; rather, the danger is from inhalation of airborne spores. To the extent possible, decisions will be informed by knowledge of the particular agent that is released as obtained by ongoing communication with community emergency management personnel.

Nuclear Weapons—Defense against nuclear weapons is extremely limited and survival depends largely on distance from the point of detonation. Even at a distance, radiation exposure poses a threat. It generally makes sense to move students and faculty to specifically identified basement or lower level rooms. If this is not possible, the interior hallways of buildings are the best option. One must ensure, however, that classroom doors opening into the hallways are closed to minimize the danger of flying glass. In either case, persons should kneel on the ground in the classic "duck and cover" position to limit the amount of body area exposed to flying debris. All building systems will be shut down to avoid gas explosion. Flooding from water line breaks poses a less significant threat. If such an attack has occurred far enough away that fallout alone is the issue, students will be kept indoors and parents will be allowed to pick them up at their discretion.

Conventional Weapons—The danger from the blast effect of conventional weapons such as bombs and other forms of explosive devices presents similar challenges although with a higher rate of survivability. The same procedures outlined for nuclear weapons will be followed. Seeking shelter in predetermined rooms or hallways makes the most sense. Should the school itself be a target, off-campus evacuation is desirable. Arrangements have been made with

institutions (e.g. churches and community centers) away from the school, should these become danger zones. Use of school athletic playing fields as an evacuation point might also be appropriate under certain circumstances. Here, too, parents will be allowed to pick up children at school as their own judgment dictates.

Decision Making and Communication In Event of Attack:

Perhaps the first step in prudent decision-making in emergencies involves the securing of reliable information. It is important to be able to quickly separate rumor from reality. Contacts within our community's police and fire stations will be regularly maintained to enable school officials to be included in the communication loop when determining the precise nature of the crisis. Such persons will also be used to summon help in the event of a localized attack. As mentioned earlier, Emergency Management Services will confer with the school administration in case of a biological or chemical event. Upon receiving news of any attack, identified school administrators will immediately contact various sources of information for confirmation and updated information. We have been included in drills and planning sessions with the City of Edmond officials to work together as part of the emergency management team in any crisis situation.

Once the nature of a threat has been determined and all outside sources have been consulted, an appropriate course of action will be determined according to response plans identified and trained through the Emergency Management Plan at each site.

Once a response has been decided upon, school administrators will instruct all persons in their buildings about the plan of action. All school personnel will then move into place according to their training pertinent to the School's Emergency Management Plan.

Evacuating, Securing and Seeking Shelter in Specific Building:

There are numerous reasons why evacuation under a chemical, biological or nuclear threat seems ill advised. Even if the release of such agents is far removed, wind speed can increase and move substances rapidly in the direction of evacuees. Exposure is, of course, always possible for people walking out in the open. Further, the ability to move hundreds of people in an orderly fashion *on foot* must also be considered, as should the possibility of subsequent attacks while an evacuation is in progress.

As discussed above, the principal means of securing school buildings consists of immediately closing all doors and windows and shutting off HVAC systems and window units. As part of the planning process, individuals will be assigned to oversee door and window closings and to assist in moving people along to the prescribed locations.

Should an evacuation be ordered, the method of achieving this is included as part of the Emergency Management Plan.

Bibliography for Further Reading:

There are many good sources of information regarding security procedures in the event of a crisis. For additional information, we recommend the guidelines for National Security

Emergencies entitled *Are You Ready?* prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency which can be read at: www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/security.pdf. FEMA also produces an excellent publication for children addressing this topic. This document can be viewed at: www.fema.gov/kids/nse. We also suggest an informational alert prepared by the National School Safety and Security Services that can be accessed at www.schoolsecurity.org/terrorist_reponse.html. David Barnes with City of Edmond Emergency Management Department also suggests good information may be found through the Red Cross at www.redcross.org and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at www.ready.gov.