

Lesson Overview

Schools play a unique role in emergency management. Charged with the safety and care of our children, school personnel have the moral obligation to ensure that they are able to respond appropriately in an emergency situation.

This lesson will introduce you to some fundamental planning concepts. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the distinction between emergency planning and crisis intervention.
 - Describe the hazards that should be addressed in a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan.
 - Explain the benefits of emergency planning.
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Planning versus Crisis Intervention

Keep in mind that:

- **Crisis intervention** is reactive, occurring after an emergency event.
- **Emergency planning** is proactive, enabling schools (and communities) to reduce the frequency and magnitude of emergencies and to respond faster and more appropriately.

Effective planning (including exercising the Emergency Operations Plan, also referred to as the Plan in this course) helps prevent emergencies from becoming crises.

An All-Hazards Approach

Planning issues are the same, regardless of the type of emergency. A comprehensive Plan should address all hazards including:

- Natural hazards (earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, etc.)
 - Technological hazards (nuclear accidents, power outages, etc.)
 - Humanmade hazards (hazardous material spills, terrorism)
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Benefits of School Emergency Planning

Some of the benefits of emergency planning include:

- Actions taken to increase safety can be worthwhile on a daily basis, not just in an emergency.
 - Planning is an excellent opportunity to involve students, parents, and the entire community.
 - Families and the community can learn from the school's planning efforts.
 - Rapid response to an emergency situation can prevent injuries, save lives, and allow for a more rapid return to normal school operations.
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Lessons Learned

Ensuring that everyone involved is aware of what to do in an emergency situation has proven to be critical to students and school personnel surviving an emergency. School personnel have reported the following additional lessons learned:

- Emergency situations develop more quickly than anyone thinks they can.
 - Emergency responders may not be available to assist the school immediately. Schools must develop the capability to be self-reliant until professional response personnel can help.
 - Communication is a key factor in knowing how and when to respond.
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Web Resources

- U.S. Department of Education: Emergency Planning Resources (<http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan>)
 - American School Safety (www.americanschoolsafety.com)
 - National School Safety Center (www.nssc1.org)
 - National School Safety and Security Services (www.schoolsecurity.org)
 - Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office (www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety)
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Summary

Multi-hazard emergency planning can help reduce the magnitude of an emergency by saving lives and protecting property.
