

SVRC

Fact Sheet

School Preparation to the Terrorist Threat

In the changing world since September 11, 2001, it seems that everything is a viable target for terrorists. Schools are not immune to this threat of violence. According to the U.S. Department of Education, about one-quarter of the U.S. population is located on a school campus during the day. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, in an FBI bulletin released in October 2004, stated that school safety plans and school building schematics were found in terrorist materials confiscated during a raid in Iraq. This clearly shows that American schools are planned targets for terrorists.

To assist schools in preparing for a terrorist attack, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education compiled the following list of “lessons learned.”

- **Have a comprehensive school safety plan**
- **Develop plans with input from public and private agencies**
- **Include a strategy to overcome potential communications difficulties**
- **Include strategies to address short and long-term health needs of students, faculty, and parents**
- **Develop detailed procedures to provide accurate and timely information to students, faculty, and parents**
- **Work with mental health service providers, teachers, and parent groups to determine appropriate actions to take after a trauma occurs**
- **Conduct practice drills on a regular basis**
- **Review plans and policies on a regular basis**
- **Initiate relationships with local health and mental health providers**
- **Include a process for screening volunteers**
- **Designate and train a person or groups to act as a leader in a crisis situation**

By incorporating these “lessons learned,” schools can better prepare for a crisis event. These lessons can help schools better identify appropriate actions for school personnel to take in the event of a biological, chemical, or radiological attack. They can assist in preparing school emergency response plans that will address various crisis scenarios, while promoting ongoing collaborations with state and local service providers. A viable crisis response capability is essential in the ongoing efforts to provide a safe learning environment for all students, teachers, staff, and administrators.

*Source: CDC and U.S. Department of Education Collaborate to Help Schools Prepare for Possible Terrorism. Web Broadcast on May 16, 2002

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