School Safety Assessment Guide

This guide helps school leaders evaluate both physical security and operational readiness. A strong safety program examines facilities, policies, Emergency Operations Plans, and training together. The goal is not compliance alone. The goal is capability.

Step 1: Review Physical Security

Access Control:

- Are entry points limited and monitored?
- Do staff consistently follow visitor procedures?
- Are doors secured and functioning properly?

Infrastructure:

- Is lighting adequate around the building and parking areas?
- Are cameras positioned effectively and reviewed regularly?
- Are radios or communication systems reliable and tested?

Supervision and Visibility:

- Are there blind spots in hallways, stairwells, or common areas?
- Is supervision assigned during high traffic times?

Key Question:

Can someone enter, move through, or exit the building without being noticed?

Step 2: Evaluate Emergency Operation Plans

Accessibility:

- Can staff access procedures immediately?
- Are plans available during movement and not just in binders?

Role Clarity:

- Is it clear who initiates lockdown, evacuation, or shelter in place?
- Who calls 911?
- Who communicates with families and district leadership?

Alignment:

- Do administrators, School Resource Officers, and staff describe roles consistently?
- Are plans aligned with incident command principles?

Key Question:

If an emergency occurs tomorrow, would everyone know their responsibility?

Step 3: Examine Training and Drills

Consistency:

- Are all staff trained annually?
- Are new employees trained promptly?

Reinforcement:

- Are drills followed by discussion and documented improvements?
- Do staff demonstrate confidence when describing procedures?

Age Appropriateness:

- Are drills developmentally appropriate for students?

Key Question:

Does training build confidence or simply meet a requirement?

Step 4: Assess Technology Integration

Ask the following:

- Are camera systems referenced in emergency procedures?
- Do staff know how to use communication systems during an incident?
- Is technology practiced during drills?
- Is there a backup plan if systems fail?

Key Question:
Is technology part of the response process or just equipment on the wall?

Step 5: Confirm Continuous Improvement

Ask the following:

- When was the last plan revision?
- What was changed after the most recent drill or incident?
- Is there documentation of lessons learned?
- Are updates communicated to staff?

Key Question:
Is emergency planning treated as a living process?

Strong schools do not assume readiness. They *verify* it.

A comprehensive safety assessment should identify strengths, highlight vulnerabilities, and close gaps before a crisis exposes them. Move from asking, "Do we have a plan?" to asking,

"Can we execute our plan under stress?"

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