

All Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Standards

July 2024

Recognizing the need for an “all-hazards” emergency preparedness and response capability for schools, Connecticut state government has expanded its role as a partner in ensuring the safety, security, and emergency preparedness of the state’s local educational facilities. In keeping with Public Act 13-3, Section 86, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DESPP/DEMHS), in consultation with the Department of Education, re-convened a multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary working group to review and revise as needed the School Security and Safety Plan Standards and the accompanying School Security and Safety Plan Template which were released last year to help schools and the surrounding communities meet all-hazards threats. The requirements for a plan and for plan standards are now codified in Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-222m and 10-222n.

Those individuals charged with the development of local all-hazards school security and safety plans should also review the *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, released in June of 2013 by a consortium of federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Education and FEMA. In addition, we have reviewed and revised the template for an all-hazards approach to emergencies at public schools to address these Standards, including those identified in Public Act 13-3, Section 86:

1. Involvement of local officials, including the chief executive officer (CEO) of the municipality, the superintendent of schools, law enforcement, fire, public health, emergency management, and emergency medical services, in the development of school security and safety plans;
2. An organizational command structure based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), including the Incident Command System (ICS), and a description of the responsibilities of the different parts of the command structure. NIMS includes the establishment of common nomenclature, and the municipalities shall work together through their Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Regional Emergency Planning Teams to implement the standard language and definitions found in the attached template plan. Basic NIMS training for school employees may include ICS 100 C, which can be taken online at <http://training.fema.gov>;
3. A requirement that a school security and safety committee be established at each school. This committee can be combined with an existing school committee provided that the following requirements are met:
 - a. Each local and regional board of education annually establishes a school security and safety committee at each school within its jurisdiction. The Committee is responsible for assisting in the development of the school security and safety plan for the school and administering the

plan. The Committee members shall include a local police officer, local first responder, teacher and administrator from the school, a mental health professional, a special education department representative, a parent or guardian of a student at the school, and may include any other person deemed necessary, such as a school nurse, custodian or property manager, local emergency management director, local public health director, information technology manager, and transportation coordinator. The school security and safety committee should also invite subject matter experts to participate as needed, including, for example, the local public works director, high school student council president, and/or food service director.

4. Annually, each local and regional board of education shall review, update as necessary, and submit a school security and safety plan for each school under its jurisdiction to its DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator, based on the standards listed here and further provided in the attached template, and any updated template, as well as on the results of the assessment described in Number 8, below. By November 1st of each year, local and regional boards of education must submit to their DEMHS Regional Coordinators an electronic copy of their plan(s) for that year;
5. The school security and safety plans shall be an annex to the municipality's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), filed with the DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator under Connecticut General Statutes Section 28-7. The school security and safety plans do not have to be physically attached to the LEOP; they may be referenced in the LEOP but kept in a separate binder;
6. Procedures for managing various types of emergencies, including crisis management procedures;
7. A requirement that local law enforcement and other local public safety officials (including the local emergency management director, fire marshal, building inspector, and emergency medical services representative) evaluate, score (assess), and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills. This means that each of the named officials should evaluate and provide feedback on at least one fire drill and one crisis response drill each year. While it is of course impossible for every official to attend every drill at every school, it is a best practice to have the town public safety team (fire, police, emergency management, etc..) attend at least one drill per year as a team. That way, team members can share observations and ideas with each other. The feedback is critical to maintaining and enhancing your school's preparedness.

¹ November 1st has been set as the filing date for school plans/revisions in order to give school districts time after the beginning of each school year to convene their committees to review and make any changes to the plans.

The board of education shall annually submit a report to the DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator by July 1 of each year, regarding types, frequency, and feedback related to the fire drills and crisis response drills. This report provides an opportunity for the development of best practices and lessons learned. The report template is located in Appendix 14 of the plan templates. **If your school district has not yet filed its report for the 2023-2024 school year, please do so as soon as possible. The report for the 2023-2024 school year was due by July 1, 2024.** If you have any questions about how to fill out this report, please contact us at SchoolSecurityPlanStandards@ct.gov.

8. A requirement that each local and regional board of education conducts a security and vulnerability assessment for each school under the jurisdiction of such board every two years and develop a plan as described in Number 4 above, based on the assessment;
9. A requirement that the safe school climate committee for each school collect and evaluate information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying, and report such information, as necessary, to the district safe school climate coordinator and the school security and safety committee described in Number 3, above (See Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222k);
10. A requirement that the school security and safety plan for each school provide an orientation on the plan to each school employee at the school, and provide violence prevention training in a manner described in the plan. Training to the plan is critical. This training should be conducted in cooperation with the school safety and security committee, including local law enforcement, fire, emergency management, public health, and emergency medical services. This will give the school community and municipal officials an understanding of the need for unified planning, preparedness, and response;
11. A requirement that each school construct a reference kit available for first responders, which includes several copies of laminated easy-to-read floor plans; master keys to interior and exterior door locks, and; other items determined as needed, after consultation with school officials, local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction, emergency management director, and first responders; and
12. A requirement that each school security and safety plan follow the format of the All-Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Templates, as released and revised by the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in consultation with the Department of Education, including the use of standard terminology. The purpose is to have each school plan achieve the objectives outlined in the Plan Templates. In addition to preparedness and response, it is important for the plan to provide guidance on recovery from any emergency incident. See, for example, the “Accounting for All Persons and Family Re-Unification” Annex (Functional Annex G),

and “Recovery and Continuity of Operations” (COOP) Annex (Functional Annex H) in the plan templates. Also, schools can take actions to mitigate potential issues through preventative planning. See, for example, guidance provided in the “Mental Health” Annex, (Functional Annex J), in the plan templates.

13. Per Public Act 19-184, each school security and safety plan shall contain a plan to provide emergency communications developed for any student identified as deaf, hard of hearing or both blind or visually impaired and deaf, including procedures for alerting such students of an emergency situation and ensuring that the specific needs of the students are met during the emergency situation (A new annex was added to the template July 1, 2021, titled Annex M, Emergency Plan for Students with Disabilities).
14. Per Public Act 21-92, each school security and safety plan shall contain emergency action plans for Interscholastic and Intramural Athletic Events. In July 2022, a new annex, Annex N, was added to the template to address this requirement.