

School Preparedness Exercise

Narrative

During the course of the school day, an explosion occurs in the cafeteria. One of the cafeteria staff has advised that there are many injured and/or dead, and that they need help. Before emergency responders arrive, it is learned that one teacher, one school staff member, and an unidentified body has been found. Twenty-three additional students and staff have suffered injuries of varying severity. An unorganized group of students and staff are attempting to care for the injured. Individual students are in hysterics, and others have fled unsupervised from the scene. As police, fire, and ambulances arrive, you notice that local media representatives are also arriving and attempting to interview students and staff. Responders ask that a high ranking member of the administration report to the command post. They also want blueprints of the facility.

Exercise Presentation

During the course of the school day, an explosion occurs in the cafeteria. One of the cafeteria staff has advised that there are many injured and/or dead and that they need help.

Discussion Points

- Who is responsible for calling for emergency assistance, and is the person(s) responsible aware of that duty? What information would be included in the call for help? Who else would be contacted?
- Would school staff/teachers/administrators respond to the scene of the explosion to offer assistance? Are they trained in first aid? Are they aware of procedures to be followed concerning the possibilities of a secondary device?
- Would the school be evacuated? Who makes that decision and how is the decision implemented? Would the fire alarm be activated? If so, by whom? Would this evacuation be conducted just like a fire evacuation? How would students be tracked and order maintained?

Before emergency responders arrive, it is learned that one teacher, one school staff member and three students are dead, and an unidentified body has been found. Twenty-three additional students and staff have suffered injuries of varying severity. An unorganized group of students and staff are attempting to care for the injured. Individual students are in hysterics, and other have fled unsupervised from the scene.

Discussion Points

- Again, with a concern about secondary devices, what initiatives would you take related to evacuation?
- What could be done for the injured? The dead? The hysterical? By whom?
- Would any supplemental calls be placed to the emergency responders? By whom? Are there ways that school staff could assist emergency responders (cleared room identification)?

As police, fire, and ambulances arrive, you notice that local media representatives also are arriving and begin to interview students and staff. Responders ask that a high ranking member of the administration report to the command post. They also want blueprints of the facility.

Discussion Points

- What are the implications of the arrival of the press? Is the school prepared to deal with those issues?
- Why is it important for the school administration to be represented in the command post? What are some of the things that emergency responders can help you with?
- Do you have quick access to plans or blueprints of the building(s)?

Some students have been removed by parents and others have simply left the property. Parents begin arriving in large number, demanding to know what's going on and demanding that they be allowed to take their children home. The media becomes more intrusive, attempting to question school staff, students, and arriving parents. As a result and overcrowding at the local hospital and specific severity of injury in isolated cases, casualties are being transported to hospitals in other communities.

Discussion Points

- What are the responsibilities in this emergency to students, staff, parents and the media? How do you balance these responsibilities? Where could you go for assistance in dealing with these issues?

Seventy-two hours have passed since the incident. The explosion was determined to be a pipe bomb, and a radical group claiming to be the Idiots Against Education (IAE) has announced responsibility for the attack. One teacher, one staff member, and three students were killed immediately by the blast, and two additional students have died in the hospital as a result of their injuries. The investigating law enforcement task force has announced that the unidentified body found at the site has been identified as an IAE radical, and is suspected of planting the bomb. The school has not yet reopened, with adequate temporary repairs estimated to take an additional week to make the building safe.

Discussion Point

- Are there additional responsibilities regarding the victims?
- Who are the victims?
- Where can you locate the resources to deal with these issues?
- Where can you turn for help?

Overriding Issues

Is this exercise scenario high on your school's "threat list?" Are there other threats that are more realistic in your community? Have you considered these possibilities? Exercises are designed around two main issues, threat analysis and established plans and procedures. From

tornado to fire drills and everything in-between, your school should prioritize the threats and establish plans and procedures to respond to those threats.