

## **Acts of Nature Safety Standard**


**Colorado Springs School District 11**

# **SAFETY STANDARD**

### **Acts of Nature**

- 1. This Safety Standard was developed by the Safety Office, Risk Related Activities Department.**
- 2. A technical review and content acceptance was performed by:**
  - **The Executive Director of Facilities, Operations and Transportation**
  - **The Chief Communications Officer**
  - **The Director of Transportation**
  - **The Director of Facilities**
  - **The Commander, Security Operations**
  - **The Executive Directors of School Leadership**
- 3. This Safety Standard was reviewed and accepted by the Director, Risk Related Activities Department.**

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

2/15/22

**Glenn Gustafson**

**Deputy Superintendent/Chief Financial Officer**

## **Acts of Nature Safety Standard**

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### **Purpose and Scope:**

The purpose of this safety standard is to provide students, staff and visitors of Colorado Springs School District 11 with procedures to protect health and safety when encountering weather related hazards, and the specific procedures for each identified hazard.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Risk Related Activities Department:**

- Develop and administer the standard.
- Assist all District locations in the implementation of this standard.
- Coordinate with all parties involved in the initial technical review of this standard to complete an annual review of this standard.

#### **Security Department:**

- Ensure the contents of this standard reflect current information in the District's Emergency Operations Plan and Crisis Management Plan.
- Communicate with schools and District Communications Department when alerted to a weather hazard.
- Coordinate with Transportation Department should the decision to evacuate a campus arise.

#### **Transportation Department:**

- Coordinate with schools and Security Department should the decision to evacuate a campus arise.
- Coordinate with Security Department should a weather emergency arise during student arrival or dismissal times at a particular location or set of locations.

#### **Facilities Department:**

- Prepare in advance when possible to protect District properties from freezing conditions, wildfire smoke and other airborne risks, high winds, flooding, and other forecasted natural and weather-related risks.
- Response as soon as possible to protect and restore District properties from damage related to natural and weather-related events.

#### **Communications Department:**

- Coordinate with schools to alert them of an identified weather hazard.

## **Acts of Nature Safety Standard**

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- Communicate with Central Administration on the appropriate course of action if required.
- Communicate hazard and appropriate response information with appropriate involved parties utilizing official District channels.
- Communicate weather hazards to employees and parents.

### **District 11 Schools and Other Buildings:**

- School Principals, Assistant Principals, and Building Administrators are responsible to ensure compliance with this standard.
- Employees, students, and visitors are responsible for complying with this safety standard.

### **Procedures:**

#### **A. General Provisions**

For all weather-related emergencies, the following provisions should be followed:

- Acts of nature response plans for each District building shall be developed and maintained at the building. Development of these plans shall be in coordination with the Security Department.
- Students in portable classrooms will be moved to permanent structures.
- The best protection, inside of a permanent structure, is near an inner wall on the lower floors and away from windows. Auditoriums and multipurpose rooms with high ceilings should be avoided.
- Only the District Superintendent or designee is authorized to dismiss students and staff early.

#### **B. Communications**

- All District buildings will be informed of weather-related emergencies through the Security Department in coordination with the Office of Communications and Community Relations.
- Parents and the local community will be informed through the Office of Communications and Community Relations.

#### **C. Cold Weather**

- Students will be allowed entry into school buildings ten minutes before classes convene when outside air temperatures at the school site are less than fifteen (15) degrees Fahrenheit and/or conditions of precipitation are present.
- Wind chill must also be considered under all conditions.

## Acts of Nature Safety Standard

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- Elementary-level students will be permitted to remain indoors during recess and lunch periods.
- Parental requests to remain indoors for student health reasons during school hours will be honored.
- Employees who are issued personal protective equipment (PPE) for icy conditions must wear the PPE.

### D. Earthquake

Earthquakes, though rare in the Pikes Peak Region, can occur without warning. Immediate and appropriate actions are necessary to minimize the risk of injury during an earthquake. The following actions should be taken if any shaking begins to occur:

- If indoors, drop, cover your head and hold on until shaking stops. Avoid exterior walls, windows, hanging objects, mirrors, tall furniture, large appliances, cabinets, and any other overhead hazards. Do not move more than 5-7 feet before dropping, covering and holding on. Do not be surprised if sprinkler systems and/or fire alarms activate.
- If in a classroom environment, beware of overhead hazards such as laboratory equipment. If possible, seek cover underneath a firm surface like a desk or table.
- If outdoors, move to a clear area if possible. Avoid power lines, trees, signs, or other overhead hazards. Then, drop, cover your head and hold on until shaking stops.
- If driving, pull over off of the road or onto the shoulder area, stop, and set the parking/emergency brake. Avoid overpasses, power lines, bridges, signs, and other overhead hazards. Stay inside of the vehicle until the shaking stops.
- If using a walker/wheelchair: lock the device, cover your head and hold on.
- If in a stadium setting (auditorium, etc.): drop to the ground in front of your seat or lean over as much as possible, cover your head and neck and hold on until shaking stops.

### E. Flooding

Flash flooding is the most common natural hazard in Colorado Springs. Flash floods tend to occur from May through September and are usually caused by thunderstorms that are out of the sight and hearing range of people downstream. Runoff from the mountains can quickly cause the water levels of small creeks and dry streambeds to rise to unsafe levels. These walls of water are fast-moving and can easily reach heights of 10-20 feet.

- Persons should never attempt to cross an area that is flooding. It only takes six inches of fast-moving water to knock someone off of their feet...just 10 inches of moving water can move a vehicle, and two feet can float a vehicle. The best course of action is to immediately seek higher ground.

## Acts of Nature Safety Standard

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- A flash flood watch means that flash flooding is possible. Persons should be alert and prepared to move to higher ground and watch for rising water levels or unusual street flooding. Persons should listen to local radio or television stations or a Weather Service radio for possible flash flood warnings and bulletins. District buildings should have battery-operated devices prepared in the event of a power outage.
- A flash flood warning means that a flash flood is or is about to occur. Persons should evacuate the flood hazard area immediately. Persons should keep a radio tuned to a local station and follow all emergency instructions provided.
- An urban and small stream advisory means that flooding of streams, streets and low-lying areas, such as railroad underpasses and urban storm drains is occurring.
- In the event of flooding at our District buildings, all occupants should be moved to high ground. Staff members should have radios, class rosters (if applicable) and medications kept in the office with them. Staff members should follow those procedures at the final high ground site that are done in an off-site evacuation. Arrangements will be made to transport building occupants to a safer area by the Security Department in conjunction with the Transportation Department as well as emergency responders.
- District buildings must plan for possible locations to evacuate to in case of flooding. This planning should be coordinated with the Security Department.

### F. Lightning

Lightning can be extremely dangerous, and is most often associated with a thunderstorm. Whenever there is a thunderstorm warning in effect, the following actions should be taken:

- Move all persons indoors. Outdoor activities should cease for 30 minutes after the last audible sound of thunder.
- If you observe lightning, count the number of seconds until you hear thunder. If the time between them is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter.
- Persons outside should not carry anything that can act as a lightning rod such as an aluminum bat or a golf club.
- Bus drivers who observe lightning should follow the Transportation Standard Operating Procedure Handbook procedures.
- District buildings should monitor a weather radio or local news media or local weather app on their cell phone for updates on the thunderstorm.

### G. Tornado

A tornado watch indicates that tornados are possible in and near the watch-issued area. District buildings should monitor either a weather radio or local news media for updates. No classes should be allowed outside during a tornado watch.

## Acts of Nature Safety Standard

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A *tornado warning* indicates that a tornado has either been sighted, or has been indicated by weather radar. District buildings should take the following actions when a tornado warning is declared for their area:

- Principals/building management should initiate the steps to move all building occupants to places of shelter.
- Building occupants in portable classrooms shall be brought inside permanent structures.
- Students are to remain in the building unless called for by an authorized adult. In this situation, the Principal should encourage the adult to remain with the student in the shelter area until the “all clear” is announced.
- Persons in places of shelter should kneel down, draw knees up under body, cover the back of the head with hands, and face the wall.
- Persons in places of shelter must remain in these places until an “all-clear” signal is received. The “all clear” message may consist of a news media announcement or building a public address system announcement.
- Elevators shall not be used during a tornado warning situation until the “all-clear” message is delivered.

### H. Wildfire

Wildfires are a weather emergency without a season, as they can occur at any point in a given calendar year when environmental conditions are met. They can spread quickly, and can be very unpredictable. The following actions should be taken by District building personnel:

- If under a wildfire warning, communication of the situation could come from District Administration, District Security, or local First Responders.
- If the building is given orders to evacuate, immediately begin procedures to do so. Schools should follow the off-site evacuation procedures that are in their School Crisis Plan.
- If trapped and unable to evacuate, contact 9-1-1 immediately.
- If ordered to evacuate by First Responders, ensure someone has contacted District Security to make them aware.
- District personnel should listen for emergency information and alerts via a weather radio or local news media outlet if available.