



**Substitute Teacher's
Quick Reference Guide
To Understand
A School Lockdown Drill**

OVERVIEW OF the NORTH CAROLINA CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE CURRICULUM

Three Main Response Actions

Taking action before an emergency occurs can save lives, prevent injuries, and minimize property damage in the first moments during a crisis situation, whether this results from a natural disaster or a manmade crisis. Schools should update and practice crisis plans each year. Teachers should understand these plans and their roles within them, allowing them to implement emergency response protocols with confidence and structure.

Although every school's needs and circumstances are different, based upon their layout, location, and population, there are three basic response actions available in an emergency situation: **Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter in Place** – or a combination of these actions.

A very effective way to prepare to use one or more of these actions is to fully participate in the fire, lockdown, tornado, and earthquake drills schools conduct, and to practice them in varied settings to identify what vulnerabilities exist before an emergency occurs.

Lockdown

The first of the three actions is Lockdown. In a school setting there are several reasons a school might need to lockdown. One might be a visitor to the school who becomes irate and a danger to the school's occupants. Another might be a non-custodial parent or former spouse of a staff member who attempts to obtain access to a facility and do harm to others. Yet another, but highly unlikely, reason is an armed intruder or Active Shooter who may be a student, former student, parent, or indeed someone who is not affiliated with the school at all.

Tips for Lockdown drills: Ask division staff, school resource officers, or other first responders to observe lockdown drills and provide constructive feedback and recommendations for improvement. Timing drills and working to improve times so that responses are both fast and effective are highly recommended. Teachers might also practice locating room keys quickly.

Evacuate

The second main response action to an emergency is to Evacuate. Schools have long practiced evacuating by way of fire drills. Evacuations occur when the school building is not safe, or they can occur once a lockdown situation is resolved.

Tips for Evacuation Drills: Ask division staff or fire department officials to observe evacuation drills and provide constructive feedback and recommendations for improvement. As with Lockdown, timing and working to improve response capabilities can increase confidence. You should again time drills and work on improving times so that you can respond quickly and with confidence. Conducting drills at inopportune times such as during lunch or break periods, or during an assembly are encouraged so that any vulnerabilities or hindrances can be identified before an actual emergency. Reverse evacuation drills can be practiced right after a fire drill. Reverse evacuation means to re-enter the building as quickly as possible after evacuation procedures are completed and students are accounted for, or while staff and students are outside on athletic fields or playgrounds.

Shelter in Place

The third option is to Shelter in Place. Sheltering in place is necessary when external conditions make it unsafe to leave the building, but where locking down in a classroom is not necessary. **A special shelter in place is conducted for tornadoes and severe weather conditions.** This is called *duck, cover, and hold*. A combination of shelter in place and then evacuation may be necessary during such situations as earthquakes.

Tips for Shelter in Place (Tornado or Earthquake) Drills: Participating in the statewide Tornado drill which is conducted each March provides an opportunity to practice sheltering in place by simulating a tornado. Further practice for this type of response action is for a school administrator to announce and verbally simulate an earthquake drill. Staff and students should then shelter in place, pausing to ensure conditions (described over the intercom by the school administrator) are safe before evacuating. First responders and division staff can make recommendations about specific places to evacuate to during an earthquake in order to avoid danger from overhead power lines, broken lights, or fallen trees. Also, to avoid further safety hazards avoid evacuating to locations near water pipes, which may burst.

ACTIVE SHOOTER PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

The term “Active Shooter” is used by law enforcement officials to describe a situation where a person participates in a random or systematic shooting spree in a confined or populated area. In most cases, the Active Shooter uses firearms and there is no pattern or method to the selection of their victims. Active Shooters can include unstable persons, whether they are unknown to the school, or are other students, armed criminals, or in rare cases domestic or international terrorists.

Active Shooters can target a school, university, or childcare center. Active Shooters can also target social venues such as sporting events, museums, rail and bus stations, and recreational facilities where students may visit during field trips. As such, staff must be vigilant and aware of their surroundings and understand how to respond should a physical threat occur, whenever and wherever that may happen.

While Active Shooter situations are very rare, staff should be prepared to respond appropriately and effectively if they ever find themselves in such a situation, to protect students and themselves should a physical threat occur. Active Shooter situations are seemingly unpredictable and often evolve quickly. Rarely do individuals simply “snap” and there are signs that staff can be aware of to potentially prevent an attack. This can include suspicious people watching a facility or taking photographs, or strange calls and unusual behavior by students, staff, parents, or visitors. You should never feel embarrassed to report this information.

Hide, Run, Fight

There are three steps to survival that have been provided nationally in response to the Active Shooter events that have occurred in schools, universities, movie theatres, shopping malls and work places in recent years are **Hide, Run or Fight**.

The standard lockdown procedure is to remain in a secured classroom, or to find one quickly and go into the lockdown protocol. However, if you are alone or have no other alternative, you should be aware of the other options of evacuating yourself and students to safety, or, as the **very last resort**, fighting to protect them and yourself.

Hide

Hide is essentially an extreme version of a routine lockdown procedure and the recommended action to take in a no warning incident, versus a lockdown that is announced over an intercom. If evacuating is not possible, then you and your students should find a place to hide where the Active Shooter is less likely to find you. You may be at the school or sports field, or you may be on a field trip. Your hiding places should:

- Be out of the Active Shooter’s view.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction,
- Be away from doors and windows as bullets can pass through these easily.
- Not trap you, or restrict your options for escape if that is possible.
- To prevent an Active Shooter from entering your hiding place, you should:
 - Lock the door.
 - Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

If the Active Shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door.
- Silence your cell phone or pager.
- Turn off any source of noise, such as radios and televisions.
- Hide behind large items such as cabinets and desks.
- Remain quiet and ask those around you to also remain quiet.

If evacuation and hiding are not possible, then:

- Remain calm.
- Dial 911, if possible in order to alert police to the Active Shooter's location. If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen to what is happening.

Based on the plans in place in your locality you can use the *notification card system* as well to alert the responding police to your situation. Placing a **RED** colored card under the door or in the window can convey predetermined alerts, as indicated below. For uniformity and consistency, no other colored cards should be used due to confusion caused as multiple colored cards get spread around hallway floors during response.

- **RED Card** – there is a casualty and medical treatment is required, or there is an immediate threat from the Active Shooter.

Run

Typically, students and staff should only deviate from the practiced lockdown procedure when instructed to by law enforcement officers, or other first responders that it is safe to do so. However, in an extreme case when there is no other option and the threat is imminent and unavoidable, the situation may dictate that you "run".

If it is safe to do so, you should seek to evacuate the premises, telling your students which route to take, where they should go, and moving them well away from the school to a safe location. You should be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in your mind before you start to move.
- Ensure you account for all of the students, having a teacher's aide lead the students out, while you check the last student out of the room or area, if possible.
- Leave your belongings behind, telling students to do the same.
- Break windows to escape if you are on the ground floors, clearing away glass and laying mats or clothing over the windowsill to prevent injury.
- You should have an adult climb out first to help students exit the window safely if this is possible.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where an Active Shooter may present a threat.
- You should warn people to stay away without endangering yourself or your students.
- Keep your hands visible if police officers are outside.
- Follow the instructions of any police officer.
- Not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 911 when you are safe.
- Listen for special instructions over the intercom.

Fight

As the very last resort, and only when your life or the lives of those around you are in imminent danger, you may decide to attempt to disrupt or incapacitate the Active Shooter by attacking or distracting them. Some options may include:

- Throwing items and improvising weapons such as a chair, a phone, laptop, tablet, stapler, file, book, or another easily accessible object.
- Yelling or shouting at the aggressor in order to distract or frighten them.
- Seeking control of the aggressor's hands in order to limit their ability to use a weapon.
- Briefing the students to escape while you are attacking or distracting the Active Shooter.

When Law Enforcement or Other First Responders Arrive

When the police or other first responders arrive, it is important to respond in a manner which does not present a risk to yourself or the students.

Police officers will proceed directly to the area where the last shots were heard. Teachers or others with student responsibility should brief students, especially if they are older, what to do when the police arrive. In such incidents, it is important:

- To remain calm, and **follow the officers' instructions**.
- To avoid startling the officers or taking actions that might be misinterpreted as being hostile.
- To put down any items in your hands and tell students to do the same.
- To immediately raise hands and spread fingers, instructing the students to do the same.
- To keep hands visible at all times as the police will not know who the threat is and they are trained from the perspective that "hands kill".
- To avoid making quick movements toward officers and do not attempt to hold on to them for safety.
- To avoid pointing, screaming, or yelling.
- Not to stop and ask for help or directions when evacuating.

Summary

In summary, there are things that can and should be done *before, during, and after* an emergency to lessen the impact. Key **BEFORE** actions include **PREVENTION** and **TRAINING**. Important things to note regarding prevention include:

- Not dismissing something that doesn't seem right. As we encourage students with bullying prevention, it is important not to be a bystander!
 - **If you see something that does not look right, tell someone.**
- Being very cognizant of the climate within the school.
 - **Being aware of changes in student and staff behavior can prevent violence. Please report to a member of your threat assessment team if someone exhibits a behavior or series of behaviors that is concerning to you.**

BEFORE actions also include **TRAINING**. This curriculum is an important element of training and should be part of a larger discussion with school administration and local first responder partners. For instance, an emergency planning in-service might include an overview of the procedures and then an open discussion imagining an emergency occurring while staff and students are outside or in the cafeteria, then what you would do. Deepening discussions about each response action, including Active Shooter, is an important next step in preparing for an emergency.

Important **DURING** actions are the Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter in Place **RESPONSE** actions previously discussed in this training.

AFTER the emergency there will be special considerations such as activating a reunification plan, setting up a Family Assistance Center, and facilitating physical and psychological recovery. Getting families reunited and getting back to the business of work and school as quickly as possible is a key step in recovering from an

emergency. Readers of this manual are encouraged to also view the accompanying [Critical Incident Response](#) video training. Use the password: *rsmaccess*.

The North Carolina Center for Safer Schools seeks to provide a safe and positive school environment for all students. Although none of us likes to think about anything bad happening, planning for emergencies, and training and partnering with others is the best way to ensure that the emergency is resolved as quickly and safely as possible.

While every emergency situation will be different, knowing what the threat is and whether to lockdown or hide, evacuate or shelter in place and in an extreme emergency to hide, run or fight is critical in keeping yourself and others safe.