

*Current Laws, Trends, Best Practices
and Recommendations
For
School Safety
in
Rhode Island Schools*

*A Presentation for the Special Legislative Study Commission
to Evaluate and Provide Recommendations on Mandated
Safety Protocols for Rhode Island Schools*

Respectfully Submitted By:

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And

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Student and Staff Emergency Egress (Fire) Drills and Evacuation Drills

RIGL

16-21-4

- *There shall be not less than one emergency egress drill conducted every month the facility is in session with all occupants of the building participating in said drill.*
- *At least one out of every four (4) emergency egress drills or rapid dismissals shall be obstructed by means of which at least one or more exits and stairways in the school building are blocked off or not used.*
- *There shall be two (2) evacuation drills*

Student and Staff Emergency Egress (Fire) Drills and Evacuation Drills

RIGL

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Best Practices for fire/egress/evacuation drills:

- Drills are often timed by the building principal so that efforts can be made to get the entire building evacuated and to safety in an orderly manner
- There are designated evacuation locations for each classroom for accountability purposes
- There is typically an accountability process in place so that administrators will know that all students are accounted for (green card/red card, electronic methods, accountability attendance sheets etc..)
- Drills are reviewed by district crisis response teams and changes are made to increase efficiency as necessary.
- Drills must be recorded at RIDE
- Drill planning always involves first responders and EMS.

Lockdown Drills

RIGL 16-24-2

- Two (2) lockdown drills.
- *Lockdown drills shall be designed and conducted for use to protect school building occupants from potential dangers in the building.*
- *One shall be held in September and one in January, and in conjunction with the local police whenever possible.*

Lockdown Drills

RIGL 16-24-2

It's important to remember that lockdowns have varying degrees:

1. Low level: Restricted Movement (child may be sick in the hallway or a physical altercation may be taking place.
2. Moderate Level: Shelter In Place (threat outside but doors/windows locked/teaching continues)
3. High Level: Full lockdown
There is a threat in the school and students/staff are in danger (irate/unreasonable parent looking for teacher or child, active threat in building.

Current Best Practices for School Lockdown Drills:

- *Principal, police or designee will broadcast in plain language (no codes) “lockdown, lockdown, we are in lockdown.”*
- *Notify law enforcement by dialing 911.*
- *Order all doors locked, stay away from windows, doors and turn out the classroom lights.*
- *All areas must remain locked and secured until the administrator gives the “all clear.”*
- *School volunteers and visitors with appropriate passes should proceed to the closest safe space.*
- *Take a roll to determine missing students.*
- *Report any missing students to administration.*

Lockdown Drills

RIGL 16-24-2

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Current Best Practices for School Lockdown Drills:

- *Remain calm and wait for further instructions.*
- *Students should move away from windows and doors.*
- *Students in hallways should go immediately to the nearest classroom.*
- *Look in the hallways for students. If you see them, instruct them to come into your room immediately. (Record their name, teacher and class period.)*
- *The bells may be shut off. Do not dismiss students until you receive official instructions from a school administrator or law enforcement personnel.*
- *If you hear sounds like gun fire or firecrackers, stay quiet and stay away from windows and glass enclosed areas.*
- *If instructed to leave the classroom with your students, listen to the exit instructions carefully. Be sure to take your grade book, attendance information, seating chart, keys and belongings with you if possible.*



Rhode Island School Safety Committee

RIGL 16-21-23

Roles and Responsibilities:

- *Establish best practices on school safety.*
- *Provide trainings and professional development.*
- *Support and Promulgate state laws on school safety.*
- *Assist with and assess All Hazards School Site Surveys (every 3 years)*
- *Communicate best practices to school districts.*
- *Assist school districts with school crisis plans, lockdown drills, evacuation drills etc.*
- *Created All Hazards Site Survey for Schools (shown later in presentation)*

After Action Strategies post evacuation drill and post lockdown drill

Proposed Best Practices:

- *Create a time to debrief with staff especially after a critical incidents such as off site evacuations, a true lockdown, or a true mass evacuation. Staff and students need this debrief.*
- *When planning evacuation drills and lockdown drills, create survey for staff to fill out to get feedback.*
- *Assemble planning committee after evacuation and lockdown drills to discuss timing, egress, discipline issues, attendance issues.*
- *Modify plan accordingly after feedback and data analysis has taken place.*

Rhode Island Department of Education Roles and Responsibilities for School Safety



- *Verification of School Building Safety Assessments*
- *Verification of School Safety Plans*
- *Verification of Evacuation, Fire and Lockdown Drills.*
- *Assist in Professional Development and Planning on School Safety.*

Recommendations for future thought leadership on school safety in Rhode Island Schools

- *There needs to be mandated hours or coursework in teacher preparation courses in RI colleges and universities to expose our future teachers to basic school safety procedures.*
- *Districts should have mandatory training programs for ALL staff on a yearly basis. This can be done in an online course much like courses on cyber security.*
- *Rhode Island school administrators required to take the FEMA ICS-100 course – Introduction to Incident Command.*
- *Social/Emotional considerations must be brought into future drill planning.*
- *Remove two evacuations drills and replace with two lockdown drills.*

*Thank you for your Kind Attention
and Support for School Safety in
Rhode Island Schools.*

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