

Complex Operating Environment—Educational Facilities: Primary and Secondary Schools

The physical characteristics of the estimated 98,000 public, and 33,000 private schools in the Homeland create a complex environment for emergency personnel responding to calls for service in the event of a terrorist attack. Internal and external security measures and rapid and comprehensive emergency response plans must take into account a variety of factors, such as the institution's student body, faculty and staff, physical characteristics and layout, institutional guidance, policies and procedures, and the local government's laws and ordinances. Primary and secondary schools differ from post-secondary institutions in several ways, and emergency response plans should consider those differences. This product encourages coordination among all stakeholders in advance of a terrorist incident, so that specific vulnerabilities and gaps are identified and appropriate plans are developed. It is part one, of a two-part series on educational facilities.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

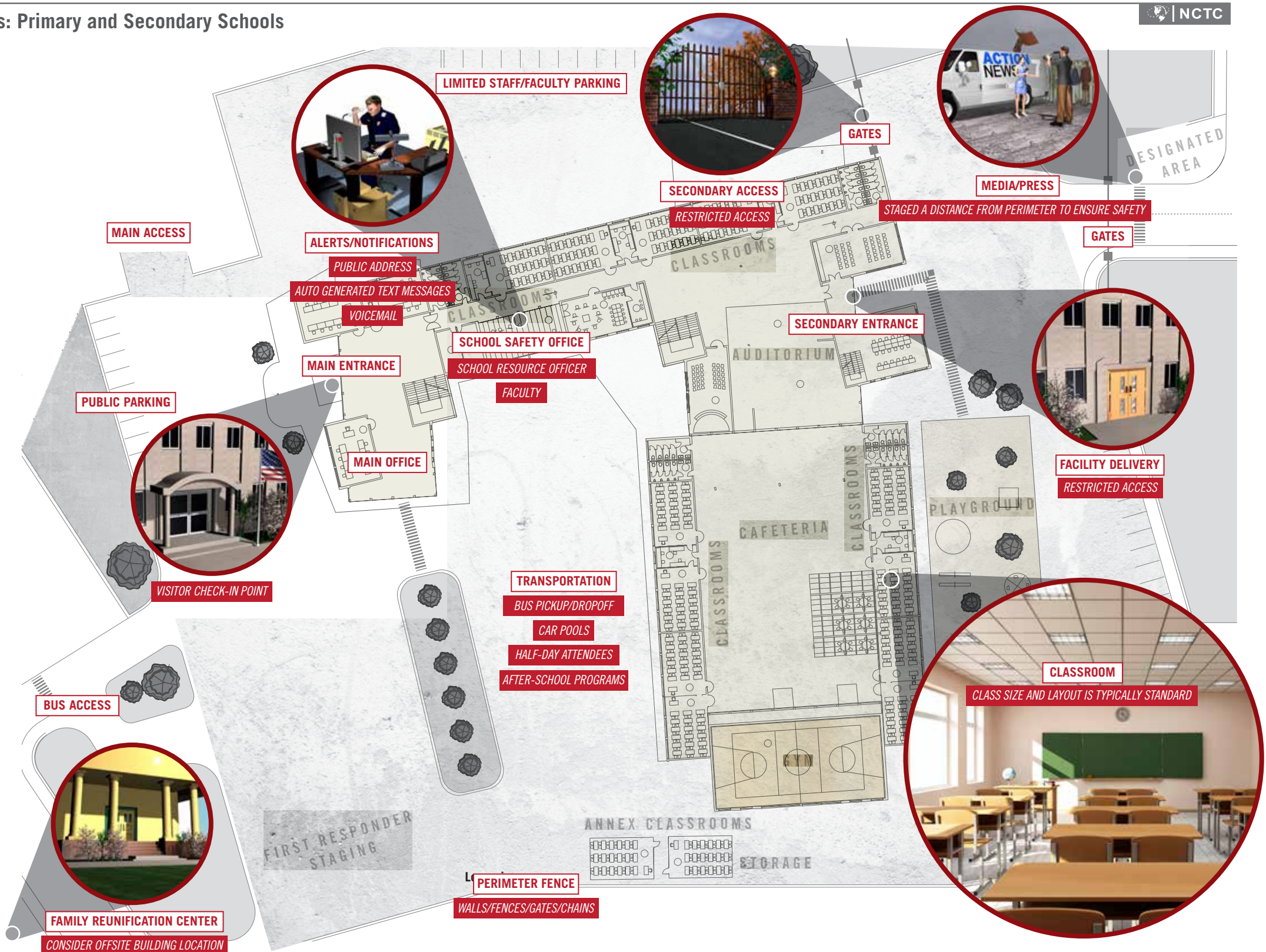
**POPULATION/STUDENT BODY/FACULTY/STAFF/VISITORS** The school population may vary from day to day and is typically diverse, including individuals with significant age differences, those with special needs, and international students with limited English proficiency.

- Students are under adult supervision, a factor that assists in accountability.
- Class size and layout are typically standard.
- Methods differ for readily identifying faculty, staff members, students, and visitors.
- Parents and family members increase the population of a school during before-school dropoff/after-school pickup, special events, or an emergency incident.
- Students may have means of electronic communications, including cell phones, and other electronic devices.
- Students may use personal transportation, including bicycles, motorcycles, and cars.
- Schedules, including opening, closures, transportation, and dropoff/pickup, are publicly available.
- Generally, visitors are screened when entering the school premises.

**PLANNING** Ensure that criteria for evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down have been established and that each plan has been clearly communicated and understood by all stakeholders. Exercise plans periodically, integrating all partners.

- Establish evacuation plan.
- Establish shelter-in-place plan.
- Establish lock-down plan.
- Establish communication plan.
- Establish reunification plan.

**FACILITY** The facility may consist of a main building, possibly with other outlying structures, such as sports fields/courts and storage shelters. The physical layout may be concentrated with well-marked interior locations. Schools may also consist of several main buildings connected by a quad and outdoor walkways.



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**Complex Operating Environment—Educational Facilities: Primary and Secondary Schools** *(continued)*

Terrorists have frequently targeted educational facilities probably because of their symbolic value, the potential for broad media coverage, and the level of security normally associated with such institutions. Previous attacks have included the use of small arms, explosives, arson, chemicals, and sharp-edged weapons.

- In December 2014, Tehrik-e-Taliban militants armed with automatic weapons and explosives entered the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan, targeting staff and students in one of the worst school attacks in history. The Peshawar attack was compared to the school hostage siege in Beslan, Russia, in September 2004, during which gunmen of the Riyadus-Salikhin Battalion attacked and captured staff and students in a three-day stand-off, resulting in Russian security forces storming the building.
- In April 2014, Boko Haram gunmen, impersonating security guards, entered the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, evacuated it, and kidnapped 276 female students.
- In March 2012, a violent extremist, armed with handguns, arrived by motorcycle at the front entrance of the Ozar Hatorah School in Toulouse, France. The gunman disembarked, opened fire on staff and students in the school yard, and escaped by motorcycle before authorities arrived.

Effective protective measures and response plans are contingent on interagency coordination and robust partnerships among school faculty, staff, and security personnel, and with federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners. In addition, training across disciplines and jurisdictions can greatly enhance preparedness, increase early incident stabilization, and ultimately prevent loss of life.

**SECURITY:** Ensuring security for a facility and safety for its diverse population is essential.

- Coordination of primary and secondary response protocols across all potential responders and stakeholders, including rapid initial sweep by law enforcement of entire area, to track down secondary attackers or ambush teams and secondary explosive devices.
- Ensuring the safety of civilians in the active/unsecure area, establishing and monitoring evacuation areas, coordinating response assets, to include command posts, specialty/technical units, treatment and transport areas, resource staging areas, and officer safety and wellness sites.
- Cascading effects across sectors (public and private), transitioning from emergency response to investigation, and continuing local and regional emergency services.
- Introducing first responder familiarization with school facilities and surrounding areas by conducting routine visits.
- Joint planning, training and exercise practice by school faculty, staff and security personnel with first responders.
- Training and education for school faculty, staff, and security personnel on emergency incident protocols, including administering emergency first aid.
- Continuing education for school faculty, staff, and students.

**STAFF:** It is critical to identify key faculty, staff members, and facility security personnel, and to assign roles and responsibilities, as they may potentially assist and advise first responders during a crisis incident.

**SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORTING:** Ensure that all partners understand the importance of documenting and reporting observed behavior that is reasonably indicative of preoperational planning related to terrorism or other criminal activity and the mechanisms by which to report such activities. Call 9-1-1 for suspicious activity in progress. Ensure that

suspicious activity reporting (SAR) includes your local law enforcement, FBI Field Office, Joint Terrorism Task Force, and fusion center.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Emergency response plans must establish primary and alternate methods of communication among first responders, school staff and security personnel, and other stakeholders, as communication infrastructure may become overwhelmed during an event. In addition, an incident may require communication among federal, state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector stakeholders with disparate communications capabilities, a complexity that must be reconciled to ensure interoperability. Effective real-time communication using multiple platforms (email, text, social media, and website), to alert, advise, and/or instruct faculty, staff, students, and family, can ensure a common message, and potentially reduce confusion and requests for information.

**INFORMATION SHARING:** Timely and accurate information sharing among all stakeholders is critical to developing a common threat picture, ensuring collaborative planning and preparations, and expeditious detection of suspicious activity. Regular, planned information sharing meetings that include school authorities and federal state, local, tribal and territorial partners, and the private sector become even more critical as such exchanges can piece together through the smaller elements a plot that otherwise could go unnoticed. Implementing and following such protocol is the most effective strategy for providing timely and relevant information to partners to assist in preparedness and mitigation efforts, which could potentially disrupt attack planning. In addition, threat assessments help to identify, assess and manage the risks of terrorist attacks and threat actors.

**PRESS/MEDIA:** Consider how best to control media access to and distance from the event, crime scene, first responders and other public safety personnel, victims, and family members.

- Press to be directed to a designated area, a significant distance away from the event, that does not interfere with first-responder or incident command operations.
- A Press Information Officer (PIO) to establish contact with the media and provide timely information as appropriate, at a distance from the event or operations.
- Provide the media with the communication platforms (toll free numbers, websites and/or social media) used to deliver public updates (incident status, road closures) for the public to report suspicious activity or event related or other relevant information.

**COORDINATION:** Coordinated response protocols are especially critical during an attack. Real-time and accurate situational awareness and warning information improve responsiveness by cutting through the “fog of war” to correctly assess the incident and address it as quickly and effectively as possible. Such information is critical to making appropriate decisions regarding tactical and medical responses, including resource allocation, technical deployments, and evacuations.

**EVACUATION:** Planning for an evacuation requires close coordination, communication, and cooperation between the school staff and first responders. Evacuation requires comprehensive planning and must address:

- Criteria for evacuation versus lock-down or shelter-in-place must be established. Ensure that all responding agencies understand the difference between lock-down procedures (threat outside the school facilities) and shelter-in-place procedures (threat inside the school facilities).
- Interior, building, area, and sectional/limited evacuation plans.
- Public access to the premises from surrounding areas.
- Activation, staging, and mobilization of specified areas and personnel during an evacuation.

- Evacuated classrooms that are likely to contain left-behind bags may need to be cleared by bomb-squad personnel.
- The school's location, traffic patterns, and egress points from the premises and surrounding areas.
- Designated emergency response routes.
- Collection and relocation points for populations with special needs.
- Surrounding transportation infrastructures.
- Primary and alternate evacuation routes and sites for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Family reunification.

**INFRASTRUCTURE:** Access to school infrastructure which includes fire alarms; fire suppression; security; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; electrical, telecommunications, plumbing, and sewage systems, is generally restricted. Facilities personnel may need to provide access and support to first responders. Consider implementing/providing security video monitoring with remote access to video feeds and providing/enabling access and support to first responders.

**MEDICAL:**

- A mass-casualty incident can rapidly overwhelm local hospitals requiring continuing and close coordination of resources, including bed capacity, consumables, and specialty, burn, and surgical services.
- Triage may complicate evidentiary and forensic collection requiring close coordination with law enforcement.
- Evacuating faculty and students may leave behind prescription medications and medical equipment.
- School medical personnel need to operate under the same guidelines as first responders and other medical personnel to ensure seamless patient treatment.

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:** All stakeholders within a particular jurisdiction must operate under fully coordinated and mutually accepted plans, policies, and procedures to ensure the most effective and efficient response possible.

- **THE FINAL REPORT AND FINDINGS OF THE SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF SCHOOL ATTACKS IN THE UNITED STATES:** <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.pdf>
- **PRACTICAL INFORMATION ON CRISIS PLANNING: A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES:** <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>
- **GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/rems\\_k-12\\_guide\\_508.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/rems_k-12_guide_508.pdf)
- **PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF POTENTIAL SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE: INFORMATION STUDENTS LEARN MAY PREVENT A TARGETED ATTACK:** [https://rems.ed.gov/docs/doi\\_bystanderstudy.pdf](https://rems.ed.gov/docs/doi_bystanderstudy.pdf)
- **READY.GOV:** <https://www.ready.gov/campus>
- **SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE, AN INTERIM REPORT ON THE PREVENTION OF TARGETED VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS:** <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=448529>
- **FBI: PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SCHOOLS:** <http://cjis.gov> (FBI-LEEP), <http://hsin.dhs.gov> (DHS-HSIN)
- **FBI: THE SCHOOL SHOOTER—A THREAT ASSESSMENT PERSPECTIVE:** <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/stats-services-publications-school-shooter-school-shooter>
- **DOMESTIC SECURITY ALLIANCE COUNCIL:** <https://www.dsac.gov/topics/active-shooter-resources>
- **IMPROVING SURVIVAL FROM ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENTS: THE HARTFORD CONSENSUS:** <https://www.bleedingcontrol.org/about-bc/hartford-consensus>
- **PREPAREDNESS IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS: A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS IN AMERICA'S TWENTY LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICTS:** <http://www.workplaceviolence911.com/docs/20040916.pdf>
- **SCHOOL'S MESSAGING:** <https://www.schoolmessenger.com/>
- **UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION:** <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/college.html>
- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE:** [www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS), [www.keepschoolsafe.org](http://www.keepschoolsafe.org)



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## PRODUCT FEEDBACK FORM

(U) JCAT MISSION: To improve information sharing and enhance public safety. In coordination with the FBI and DHS, collaborate with other members of the IC to research, produce, and disseminate counterterrorism (CT) intelligence products for federal, state, local, tribal and territorial government agencies and the private sector. Advocate for the CT intelligence requirements and needs of these partners throughout the IC.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, OR QUESTIONS. HOW DOES JCAT MAKE PRODUCTS BETTER?

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WHAT TOPICS DO YOU RECOMMEND?

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