North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Lockdown Drills

As a result of HB 1215, introduced and passed during the 2011 North Dakota legislative session, every school building in North Dakota must conduct a lockdown drill.

> **15.1-06-12. Emergency and disaster drills - Implementation.**
> Each public and nonpublic school shall conduct fire, tornado, and other emergency or disaster drills, including lockdown drills.

While no timeframe, tracking or penalty was identified in the state law, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI) advocates annual drills, at a minimum, which ensures the intent and outcome of safe students and staff. This fact sheet provides guidance for districts in meeting this requirement and is not intended to be inclusive of all that schools need to know. Resources are listed at the end of this fact sheet and DPI is available to provide technical assistance as warranted.

What is a lockdown?

A school lockdown confines all staff and students to the classroom due to a perceived or real threat; isolation of staff and students inside the school limits exposure to risk to outside contaminants: people, exposures or situations. The practice of lockdown drills acclimates both staff and students to the process and probability, and ultimately avoids unnecessary responses.

When should a school go into "lockdown" and who makes the decision?

There are several reasons for a school to determine that a lockdown status is most protective of its staff and students. There may be an unwelcomed person or persons on the campus grounds; local law enforcement has notified administration of a situation (i.e., chemical accident) or person of concern in the vicinity; or a menacing animal has been seen on the grounds. In short, there is some sort of event occurring, or threatening to occur, that the school believes can be mitigated by limiting access to staff and students.

Building principals, as the 'front line,' in concert with district administration, should make the determination as to lockdown drills. For actual incidents requiring lockdowns, building principals can initiate lockdown status or by the prompting/guidance of local law enforcement.

What are the procedures for how a school goes into "lockdown?"

Prior to drill implementation, school district and building staff should prepare for lockdown drills. The crisis management team at the district and building level should establish **protocol and process** with community law enforcement and other relevant personnel. The establishment of protocol and process should include an assessment at each school building to check how doors/windows lock, proximity of exits to classrooms, overall security, methods for teachers/staff to convey room security (i.e., red/green cards) and preparation of school maps (for distribution to responders). Defining the scope of the drills will assist administration in determining what function, personnel and resources are to be tested.

This should then be **conveyed to all staff** in written form and training, with protocol identified for substitute teachers and other key staff, in addition to district administration. Training is not a drill and a drill is not training. Everyone is to be trained on the lockdown procedures. Once the training has occurred, all schools should conduct a drill which offers each school the opportunity to assess its performance and make adjustments. Offer training on how to calm students during a crisis. It is important to note that while basic response steps may be similar, each building should consider its **unique circumstances**, location, grade level, and other relevant factors and identify accordingly in staff manuals and training. The **drill procedure should be completed** with students understanding the intent of the drill. The drill must be communicated to authorities, parents/guardians and others.

Schools may conduct drills more than once a year and should initiate as often as necessary to be both comfortable and proficient under a variety of circumstances, times of day, etc. with the notification to local law enforcement. Address other issues during a practice session. Look for ways to make the emergency plan better during the practice run. Take notes during the practice lockdown. Evaluate what needs to be changed, what works well and record any new ideas that come up through the drill.

Typical Lockdown Drill Process

Administrator or authorized person makes decision to implement lockdown drill.

COMMUNICATE LOCKDOWN STATUS (include non-adjacent buildings, outside areas).

Determine whether to use a predetermined code over the PA such as "John Henry report to the office immediately." (i.e., for elementary schools), or whether to promptly inform with, "Prepare immediately for LOCKDOWN status – this is/is not a drill, repeat – prepare immediately for LOCKDOWN status."

IMPLEMENT ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES (administrator stays in command center).

- ☐ **CALL 911** and request assistance as needed (caller must stay on the line).
- ☐ **LOCK** all outside doors (usually assigned to maintenance staff) as able.
- ☐ **NOTIFY** district office (usually assigned to secretary).
- ☐ **MONITOR** radio and main phone line (allay parent concerns).

RE-ASSESS SITUATION PERIODICALLY (summon help as warranted).

GIVE "ALL CLEAR" SIGNAL when the safety of the school has been assured.

Only listen to the directions given via the intercom system if codes or procedures instruct you to do so. Do not answer a class phone. Under no circumstances, is anyone allowed to leave the room to use the bathroom or for any other reason.

In the Classroom

DIRECT all students from hallways into classroom. Notify appropriate staff of primary classroom/location if/as possible that student is safe. Do not exit classroom for ANY reason.

Inform students that they are not allowed to use their cell phones for calls or for text messaging during a lockdown drill or situation. Hundreds of calls being made simultaneously will not only jam the system, but will result in parents arriving at the school, which only increases the danger to everyone.

In the Classroom (continued)

LOCK all exterior doors. If there is no lock on the door – move heaviest object in front if possible.
CLOSE windows and blinds. **STAY AWAY** from all doors and windows, move students towards walls away from door. **SHUT OFF LIGHTS**.
DO NOT OPEN exterior doors for any reason until an "all clear" is received.
DO NOT USE the telephone system to request information (follow pre-determined protocol).
Follow building protocol to communicate room status (i.e., red/green cards).
BE QUIET! Wait for further instructions.

CARE FOR THE STUDENTS IN YOUR SUPERVISION.

- ☐ Calm and reassure upset students.
- ☐ Use supplies in emergency kit as needed or necessary.

Recovery

RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
Assess the need for aftercare, counseling, or incident debriefing. Allow students time for physical activity or verbal stress relief.

COMMUNICATE STATUS.

- ☐ Notify district office when lockdown is terminated.
- ☐ E-mail staff an overview and de-briefing of the situation to minimize misinformation.
- ☐ Prepare a brief letter to parents explaining the situation.
- ☐ Consider a press release if event has drawn or may draw media attention.

Tips and Warnings

- ➤ All classrooms should have checklists posted or in a desk as reference so teachers won't have to rely on memory to know which necessary steps must be taken.
- ➤ Be aware that it is impossible to fully prepare for all possible scenarios with an internal threat. For instance, if an armed intruder enters the main office, it may not be possible to make an announcement.
- ➤ Get feedback from all staff about the lockdown procedure before the practice session. This will help give a feel for the building by the people who know it best.
- ➤ Notify local law enforcement prior to holding a drill. Determine what level of assistance, if any, you want from emergency responders.
- ➤ Administrators are encouraged to keep notes of drill dates, time, process, duration, community participants, etc. for reporting to district administration and evaluation of possible changes in process.
- ➤ Consider students with disabilities and plan accordingly.

Location Precautions

Gymnasium: Students should be moved into the locker room, lock all doors and seek shelter in pre-identified safe areas.
Lunch room: Students should be moved to the far side of the most open areas, turn tables on side if necessary.
Outside: Students should stop, drop and remain still or huddle around playground equipment; if/as possible, depending upon situation, attempt to move into building.
Bathrooms: Students/staff should move into a stall, lock the staff door and crouch on the toilet so feet, hands and head are hidden from view.
Hallway: Students should move into closest classroom immediately.
Library: Students should seek shelter under tables, or in aisles. Lock the door, turn out the lights.

Attendance
Just like a fire drill, a true lockdown is not complete until administration has accounted for everyone. Ensuring an accurate role count, not just each morning, but also accounting for students who have signed out for appointments, etc. is critical.

Visitors
Ensure all vendors, visitors and volunteers sign-in and out at the office and wear an identifying 'Visitor' or 'Volunteer' badge. This will limit the scope of an intruder. Allocating one primary entrance to a school building is also a discussion point for administration.

Considerations for Elementary vs. Secondary Schools
Student movement is different in an elementary school than the middle/high schools. This must be taken into account when planning your drill protocol and implementing a practice drill. Additionally, the ages of students will play into the decisions made as it relates to involvement of students in drills and announcements.

What To Tell Students
As appropriate, encourage staff to review the importance of emergency drills with students, as well as their role during drills. Provide students with specific instructions about each drill and include the drill objectives. Allow student feedback concerning lockdown drills. Provide drill information to all new students. Plan accordingly for students with disabilities.

What To Tell Parents
Parents should be informed of the requirement for all drills to ensure safe practices during emergencies in the school building. Schools need to inform parents, either before or after a lockdown drill; if after, commend student behavior and add any suggestions or changes for future drills.

During a lockdown drill or situation, parents must not attempt to enter the building until the area has been secured by local law enforcement or cleared by administration.

Resources
- **How to Develop Emergency School Lockdown Procedures**
  www.ehow.com/how_2048620_develop-emergency-lockdown-procedures-school.html#ixzz1SqwC8RxR
- **How to Lockdown Schools**
  www.ehow.com/how_8192747_lockdown-schools.html#ixzz1SqwNKG6L
- **How to Practice Emergency School Lockdown Procedures**
  www.ehow.com/how_2048623_practice-emergency-lockdown-procedures-school.html#ixzz1SqwYZrxA
- **Virginia Dept of Education**
  www.doe.virginia.gov/support/safety_crisis_management/emergency_crisis_management/model_plan.pdf

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