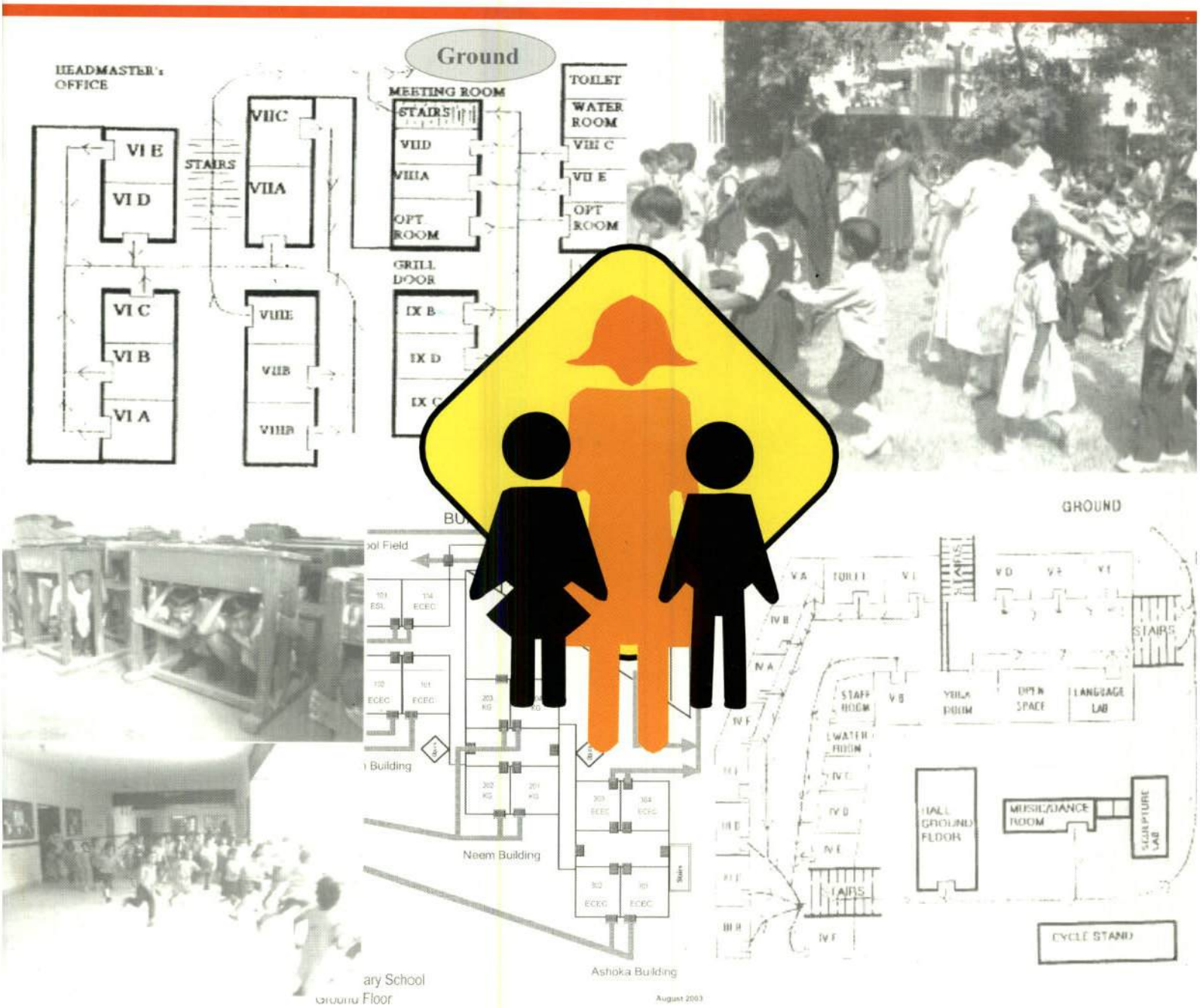
Version 1.0

SCHOOL SAFETY



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs
National Disaster Management Division

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A HANDBOOK FOR EDUCATION OFFICERS,
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS & TEACHERS
ADMINISTRATORS & EMERGENCY OFFICIALS.

This document is prepared by Prof A S Arya, G Padmanabhan and Anup Karanth under the GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme

Pancake collapse of 4-storey L-shaped RC framed school building in Ah medabad city, situated more than 245 kms away from the earthquake epicentre. The building collapse killed 32 children. The building had a weak structural system.

971 students and **31** teachers **died in the** 2001 **Bhuj Earthquake.**

1,884 school buildings **collapsed,** loss of **5,950** classrooms,

11,761 school buildings **suffered major to minor damages,** additional **36,584** rooms unfit **for ho lding instruction sessions.**

300 children **marching in the** Republic Day Procession in the narrow lanes were killed when buildings collapsed into the narrow street from both sides. There were reports of children running towards the school building from the open ground fearing a bomb blast when the ground started shaking.

Mamta Ramveer, aged 10, recovers from her injuries after her school collapsed

23 December 1995, nearly **425** people many of them school children perished as they tried to escape the flames during a school prize giving ceremony in the town of Dabwali, Haryana.

Kumbakonam fire tragedy .....

A deadly fire raged through Lord Krishna School killed **93** children, all below the age of 11 years.

Let us learn lessons from earlier tragedies & make our schools a safer place for children.

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INTRODUCTION

A step towards School Safety

No task is as important as creating safe learning environment for our nation's children. Recent events of children deaths due to building collapse, fire accidents and stampede bring to light the need to be continually vigilant to ensure for safety of students and staff in schools. The event that unfolded in the Kumbakonam fire tragedy which took the lives of 93 children reiterate the need to have school building level emergency preparedness and response plans, schedule time in the busy school day to practice drills to respond efficiently and effectively to occurrences that might be encountered, and to check plans to be sure that the information is complete and up-to date. For example, does the staff or the children know the chain of command in case of an incident? Does everyone know who is responsible for what in an emergency? Do all teachers know what they would do if confronted with a situation of fire in a classroom? Have the entrances and exit been checked to ensure clear access to open spaces? These are just a few of the questions to be revisited periodically.

Amongst all the public facilities, children in schools are among the most vulnerable groups during any disaster. A large number of municipal and privately managed schools operate in various urban centres, many of which are built in congested areas and are exposed to various hazards. Further adding to the vulnerability is the improper siting of these buildings. Inadequacies in the structure and lack of preparedness measures can have disastrous consequences in the event of an earthquake. Interventions both structural as well as nonstructural to reduce vulnerabilities thus become very important for schools as well as all lifeline structures. The non-structural measures include communicating the risk, creating awareness and building capacities in preparedness and mitigation, school and neighborhood preparedness plans, etc.

It has been identified that many of the schools do not address issue of safety. This document essentially highlights the ideas and activities that will work to create safer schools. Many of these ideas and concepts may be initiated and carried out by school authorities along with the district and local administration. The most important strategy is to place school safety on the educational

agenda. The state education department with the support from the district/local administration must adopt SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS at two levels:

- **A District-wide School Safety Plan**
- **A School Building-Level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan**

The concept of adopting School Plans at two levels is a suggestive model to carry the SAFETY initiative in Schools. The suggestive model is under implementation on a pilot basis in many parts of the country as part of ongoing initiatives in field of mitigation and preparedness measures under the GoI-UNDP Disaster Risk Management programme. These plans are an ongoing process that encompasses the preparedness and mitigation measures, interagency/ stakeholders cooperation and student/parent participation. An appointed School Safety Advisory Committee should develop and implement the plan with representatives from all sections of the school community – board members, administrators, teachers, staffs, students, parents, law enforcers, media and local residents. The Committee shall adopt a strategic approach to direct the ongoing efforts mitigation and preparedness efforts.

In a typical school environment, there are several areas where safety concerns exist. It may be possible to identify and list them, but specific actions require the attention of school managers and local authorities. There are several aspects to be addressed for school safety. The challenge is to build these aspects to the lives of children so that these become and inherent part of their culture towards safety. Partnerships with the local institutions need to be built up to initiate the process rather than wait for a disaster to occur. It is the moral obligation of the current generation to help create safe schools and take care of our future generation. The target people in the ***School Safety Programme*** will be essentially education department, administrators, emergency officials, teachers, students and the community by large. By educating children and building safety into their lives we are ensuring a generation of future disaster managers. By educating teachers and community we are ensuring sustainability and building of a disaster resilient society.

The School Safety Programme essentially targets in promoting a culture of disaster safety in school. Primary strategies are to help inform, persuade, and integrate the issues of safety to create safe schools. The ***goal*** of the programme is to promote a culture of disaster preparedness in the school community. The ***objective*** of the programme is to sensitize children and the school community on issues of disaster preparedness and safety measures and to motivate key stakeholders through direct participation in activities that would foster towards a disaster resilient community.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

School Safety Programme

The Primary Strategies under the programme are:

- Place school safety on the ***education agenda***. The basic understanding that school safety is a community concern needs to be highlighted and it requires a community response. School administrators should facilitate and coordinate the efforts to promote safe schools.
- Create a School Safety Advisory Committee at the district level. The School Safety Advisory Committee shall be headed by the District Collector and convened by the District Education Officer and shall include, but is not limited to, Key Administrator, Coordinator BRC/CRC, Representative of PTA/MTA, Municipal Commissioner, Vice Chairman Development Authority, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Medical Officer, School Principals and Teachers (Municipal/Private), representative from the students, emergency response agencies/officials, key institutions, Indian Red Cross, Civil Defence, ward representatives, committed youth groups, clubs, volunteers, representatives from corporate sector, NGOs and other stake holders.
- Develop a **District-wide School Safety Plan** (see *Annexure I*), as well as individual plans for each school in the system. The plans shall include systematic procedures for dealing with specific types of crisis and ensuring safety of students and staffs. ***District-wide School Safety Plan*** is to be developed by the School Safety Advisory Committee, and the *School Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan* is to be developed by an individual school - Building-level School Safety Team.
- The Building-level School Safety Team is appointed by the principal and shall include, but is not limited to, key administrators, teacher, parents, school personnel, community members, local law enforcement officials, local ambulance or other emergency response agencies/ officials, and any other representatives of the School Board, any other body deems appropriate.
- Each school should prepare a **School Building-Level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan** (see *Annexure II*). A copy of each School Building-level

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan should be submitted to the District Education Officer at an annual basis.

- Establish a district-wide incident reporting system for drawing in effective guidelines for safety regulations.
- Develop a school safety literature database on school safety issues. Prepare a school safety public information brochure. Explain important issues and specific roles individuals and groups need to perform during both peace and critical conditions.
- Develop safety policies and amendments towards adherence of safety norms through the regulatory body.
- Start a ***"Safe House"*** programme organized by local clubs and involve community residents. On Campus meeting with the parents will be favorable for implementation of such programme in the society.
- Establish disaster managers clubs in the schools and promote activities in the subject of disaster management and student volunteerism.
- Promote ***"adopt-a-school"*** programme with the other schools which have already set up the School Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan. Business community can also be called in for support. The business partnerships can support institutions and can provide services for building repairs, sponsor programmes, develop necessary IEC materials, professional instructions, training and skill up gradation of the students and the staff.
- Support – **"PREPAREDNESS MONTH for SCHOOLS"**. The month programme will initiate school safety plans in the city through various consultation, workshops, promoting awareness generation activities (parades, exhibitions, seminars, plays, radio and television shows, cycle rally, essay/poetry/ drawing competition etc), on campus meeting with the parents, mock drills, safety assessment of schools etc.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Suggestive Framework

The programme will be spearheaded by the School Safety Advisory Committee. The Committee will be headed by the District Collector and convened by the District Education Officer. Other members shall include Representative from the State Education Board/CBSE/other boards, Principal of Schools, Police, Fire, Civil Defence, Health and other emergency response agencies, institutions and experts.

The structure and the members listed in the model is for reference. The School Safety Advisory Committee will guide all schools in the district in the implementation of the School Safety Programme.

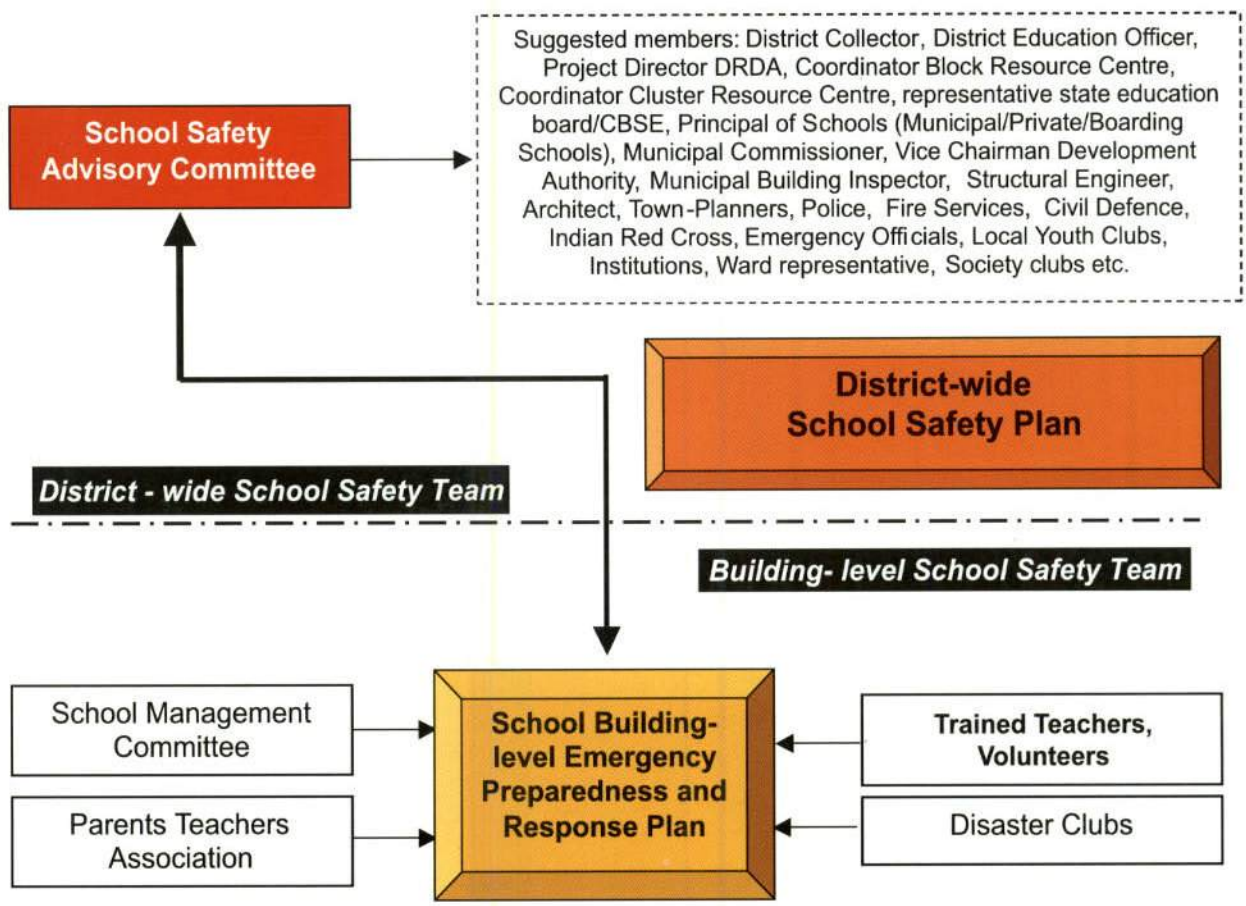


Figure showing proposed Management Structure for School Safety Programme

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAMME

Basic Components

The School Safety pogramme suggest a series of ongoing activity that includes identifying the hazards in the school and around the campus area, conducting drills, preparation of a plan by involving parents, teachers and students. The programme strives to build on the capacities of the institutions and the individuals to meet the challenges during an unforeseen event.

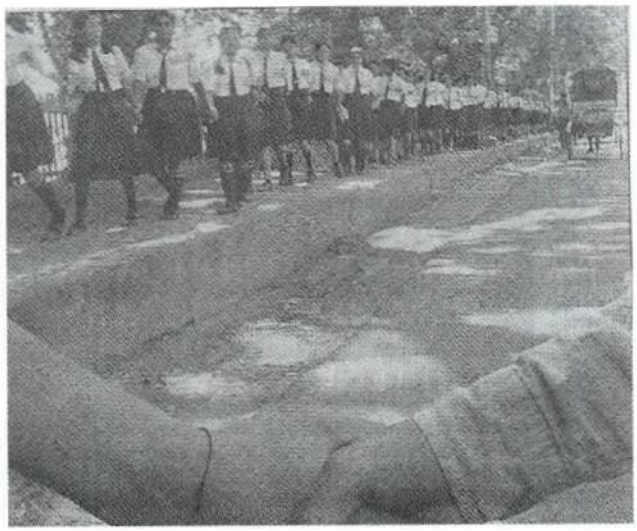
Schools and colleges need to prepare themselves for a major damaging event. Being prepared will improve the ability to respond to disaster. In such an event, school administrators and teachers will have to be self-sufficient — relying on their own resources to protect and care for the student population and the immediate surrounding communities until external assistance is available. Though the country does not have a stringent Code for School Safety, it is important that all schools develop emergency plans and conduct drills for various situations and hazards that are persistent in the region. School children and their families need more information and education on safety and preparedness measures. The safety programme should add into a dimension of carrying the initiatives forward to the community level.

Basic components under the School Safety programme are:

A. Promoting Awareness and Education Activities

School plays a very important role in dissemination of information among the masses. Disaster Management can be made a part of normal school activities like morning assembly, sports day and school day functions, art/science exhibitions etc. In order to mainstream these aspects NCC, NSS, NYKS Scouts and Guides, Civil Defence, Fire department, Police, Health sector etc. can be used for creating awareness on basic search and rescue, emergency medical response (first aid), post disaster counseling, mock drill for evacuation etc. Further, children may be used as an effective media to educate communities through awareness campaigns, rallies, street-plays, etc. as part of school activities.

Sensitization programme for school principals and teachers will be required to carry this initiative forward. Disaster Managers' Clubs may be initiated at school level on the lines of the eco-clubs or other similar clubs that already exist in schools. The focus shall also be on development of *Information Education Communication* materials in a wide possible range and initiate community based programmes. An enlightened society will be more receptive to risk-reduction measures.



Seen in the picture: Hand in Hand - School Children form a human chain around Dighalipukhuri in Guwahati on Oct 29 2003. Source: 30/10/2003 Assam Tribunal

In the picture: (left) Sensitization programme on safety aspects for children in the NCC camp; (right) student getting down from the upper floor in an evacuation drill.

One suggested activity to carry large scale awareness generation is to observe a month of safety in the year calendar of the schools. All schools shall take part in this unique and important public education campaign during the "***Preparedness Month***" and throughout the year. This challenge can be met through a partner network of institutions to facilitate actions for safer schools. A draft layout of the same is mentioned herewith.

Preparedness Month for Schools

- It is proposed to schedule a Preparedness Month for schools. This one month long School Programme shall be initiated as a means to increase awareness amongst school teachers, students, and their families, on preparedness and mitigation measures to be taken up against possible disasters. This observance shall be actively supported by the School Safety Advisory Committee.

- Significant progress need to be made to ensure that all of our nation's schools are safe, secure and productive. At the forefront of this movement of preparedness in schools the aim of this preparednes month should converge into a national observance wherein the society is encouraged to take part in the deliberations and impart safety into their lives. October month, can been proclaimed as Preparedness Month and this annual observance need to be carried out every year.

- The goal of this one month long programme is to motivate and involve education departments, policymakers, key stakeholders of the administration, police department, homegaurds, fire department, doctors, NYKS, NSS, Bharat Scouts and Guides, Red Cross, Civil Defence, CBOs, NGOs, local media, social service providers, youth workers, friends union, as well as students, parents and community residents, to vigorously advocate school safety.

- The expected outcomes of the programme include better prepared schools and communities, steps taken toward strengthening of existing school buildings and homes, enhanced knowledge on disaster resistant construction practices, better interface for disaster response between schools and communities on one hand, and government and civil society on the other.

The *Basic Components* and the *model layout* for the **"Preparedness Month"** is shown in the next page

Preparedness Month - Basic Components

- PROFILE GENERATION of SCHOOLS in the DISTRICT
- INITIAL CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS
- SETTING UP **SCHOOL SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
- DEVELOPMENT OF **DISTRICT- WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN**
- WORKSHOP for PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS and KEY STAKE HOLDERS
- SELECTION of KEY TARGET SCHOOLS
- DISTRIBUTION of IEC MATERIALS
- **SCHOOL BUILDING-LEVEL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPOSE PLAN**
  - A CHAIN OF COMMAND (ESTABLISH BUILDING-LEVEL SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM/ COMMITTEE)
  - A SET OF PROCEDURES FOR:
    - *DURING-EVENT AND POST-EVENT BUILDING EVACUATION – MOCK DRILL*
    - *STUDENT AND STAFF SAFETY (SEARCH AND RESCUE, FIRST AID, AND RECORD KEEPING)*
    - *BUILDING SECURITY (FIRE CONTROL, UTILITIES CHECK, DAMAGE ASSESSMENT)*
    - *COMMUNICATION PLAN (IN-SCHOOL and OFF-SCHOOL)*
    - *STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*
    - *SIMPLE LISTS OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY ALL STAFF MEMBERS DURING AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AN EVENT*
  - TRAINING OF TASK FORCES
  - DEMONSTRATION/MOCK DRILLS
  - DEVELOP EMERGENCY RESOURCE CONTACT INVENTORY for HUMAN RESOURCE, TRANSPORT AND TOOLS REQUIRED DEALING WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSE.
  - PREPARATION OF SCHOOL BUILDING-LEVEL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE PLAN DOCUMENT
- PARALLEL ACTIVITIES/ PROGRAMMES – HAZARD HUNT, EXHIBITIONS, PARADES, SEMINARS, DEMONSTRATIONS, PLAYS, MEDIA SHOWS (*SCREENING MOVIES*), SITE VISITS etc.
- TRAINING FOR FIRST AID AND SEARCH & RESCUE
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS
- AWARENESS RALLY – OBSERVANCE OF SAFETY WEEK/DAY
- PREPARATION OF DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN DOCUMENT *(INCLUDING SHELTER PLANS)*
- ASSESSING VULNERABILITY OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PREPAREDNESS
- IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARD REDUCTION PROJECTS – *EG: STRENGTHENING OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS ETC.*
- PROMOTION Of STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM

Preparedness Month Schedule of Key Events (Model sheet)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Events to be held Before Preparedness Month: ▪ Profile generation of schools in the city ▪ Initial consultations with all stakeholders ▪ Setting up of School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC) ▪ Orientation programme for Principal and Teachers of key target schools ▪ Finalization of IEC Materials					**Day 1** – 1st Workshop for principals, teachers and key stakeholders	**Day 2** – 1st Meeting of the SSAC and develop guidelines for District-Wide School Safety Plan *(9)*
Day 3 - 2nd Workshop for principals, teachers and key stakeholders (if required)	**Day 4** - *School assembly to discuss the effects of **earthquakes** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 5** - *School assembly to discuss the effects of **floods** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 6** - Consultation meetings for Parents to be organized by Local Clubs and other Associations including the PTA.	**Day 7**- Screening of the movie in the school / site visits to vulnerable areas.	**Day 8** - *School assembly to discuss the effects of **landslides** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 9** - 2nd Meeting of the SSAC for finalization of District-wide School Safety Plan *(24)*
Day 10 – 3rd Workshop for Principal and Teachers on developing of School Building-level Emer Prep & Resp Plan. *(19;26;28)*	**Day 11** - *School assembly to discuss the effects of **cyclones** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 12**- *School assembly to discuss the effects of **local hazards around the school** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 13** -Consultation meetings for Parents to be organized by Local Clubs and other Associations including the PTA.	**Day 14** - Screening of the movie in the school / site visits to vulnerable areas.	**Day 15** - *School assembly to discuss the effects of **fire hazards** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 16** – Day 1 Training of Children Task Forces and Staff (Master Trainers - MT) – in First Aid, Fire Fighting and Search & Rescue.
Day 17– Day 2: Training of Student Task Forces and Staff (MT) – in First Aid; Fire Fighting and Search & Rescue.	**Day 18** - Master Trainers to demonstrate the exercises to respective school staff and students – over a week	**Day 19** - *School assembly to discuss the effects of **chemical hazards** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 20** - Consultation meetings for Parents to be organized by Local Clubs and other Associations including the PTA.	**Day 21** - Screening of the movie in the school / site visits to vulnerable areas.	**Day 22** - *School assembly to discuss **crowd incidents** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 23** – 4th Workshop for Principals and Teachers on imparting GUIDELINES for MOCK DRILLS *(25)*
Day 24 – 3rd Meeting of SSAC and releasing of Final Report on District-Wide School Safety Plan Document	**Day 25** – District wide Earthquake Mock drill "DROP-COVER-HOLD" from 10:30-10:40am, followed by building evacuation	**Day 26** – *Submitting of School Building-Level Emergency Prep & Response Plan (BLERP) to the SSAC*	**Day 27** - *School assembly to discuss the **road safety and other hazards** and the importance of proper preparation*	**Day 28** – School to associate with the community visited earlier and initiate work on possible risk reduction measures.	**Day 29** - AWARENESS RALLY to observe SAFETY DAY.	**Day 30** - Exhibition/ Display of IEC materials developed/ Stage - Rescue Acts, Fire drill etc. at the venue.
Day 31 – 5th Workshop for all Stakeholders involved in the School Awareness and Safety Programme and sharing of the experiences; Exhibition and distribution of Prizes; Road Ahead – Identification of Hazard Reduction Projects and new partnerships.		**Events to be held Post Preparedness Month and throughout the year:** ▪ Training of Staff and Children Task Forces ▪ Working with the Media for public service announcements and coverage in the press ▪ Working with the Law Enforcers for enforcement of regulations in accordance to building safety ▪ Partnership with the business leaders and promote programs (such as "adopt -a-school") and activities ▪ Observe regular mock drills; up gradation of plan; initiate school safety ideas and safety workshops ▪ The fourth working week after the annual summer vacations to be observed as SAFE SCHOOLS WEEK.				

Note: Number in *(--)* essentially highlights the follow up dates for the event.

Street play to sensitize the community

Readying for the Rescue Act – Civil Defence personnel performs a mock-drill.

B. Demonstrating Disaster Risk Management

Students and staff (including the Physical Education Teacher) need to acquire skills in many aspects and this can be demonstrated through simulated mock drills such as "DROP-COVER-and HOLD" in case of an earthquake and also know about life saving aspects by participating in first aid training and in search & rescue operations. Practicing drills for safety and evacuation improves the efficiency and success in a real event.

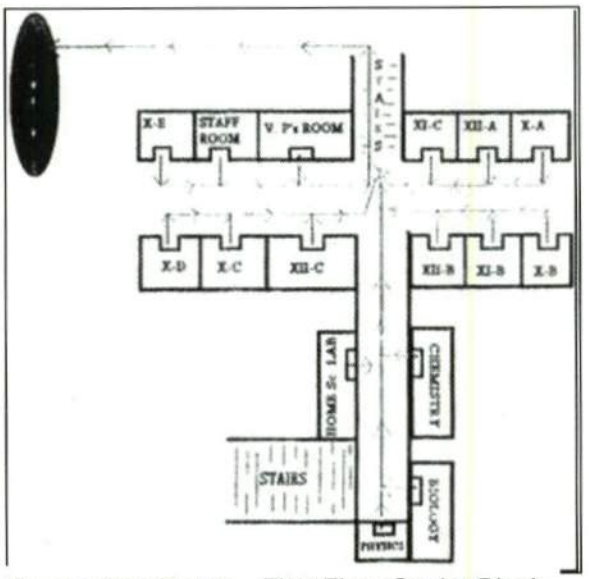
Simple well thought exercises such as conducting ***hazard hunt*** activity in school will help in mitigating risks to certain extent (simple example could be improper location of electricity panel in the school, open electricity panels, live wires if any, slippery floor, improper placing of cupboards and furniture, obstructions in the escape routes, sharp/heavy objects kept at height, flower pots on the balcony or on parapet, structural cracks in buildings, false ceilings, hazardous materials in laboratory etc). Simple mitigation measure could be securing and anchoring equipment and furniture - including bookshelves, cabinets, computers, flower pots - that may present a threat during ground shaking, provision of locked panels for housing electrical mains, repair of structural cracks in the building etc.

It is recommended to prepare a floor wise detailed evacuation plan and conduct a mock drill (for various hazards such as earthquake, fire etc) to test emergency plans and update the same. Make sure to test communication system, take training in search and rescue activities/first aid techniques and update the school plan atleast once a year. A Building-level School Safety

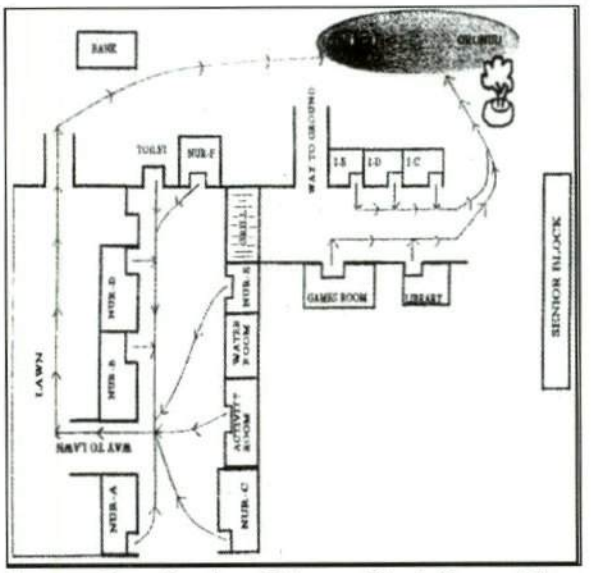
DROP COVER HOLD (DCH) demonstration to the school children in the morning assembly.

DROP COVER HOLD (DCH) mock drill performed inside the classroom.

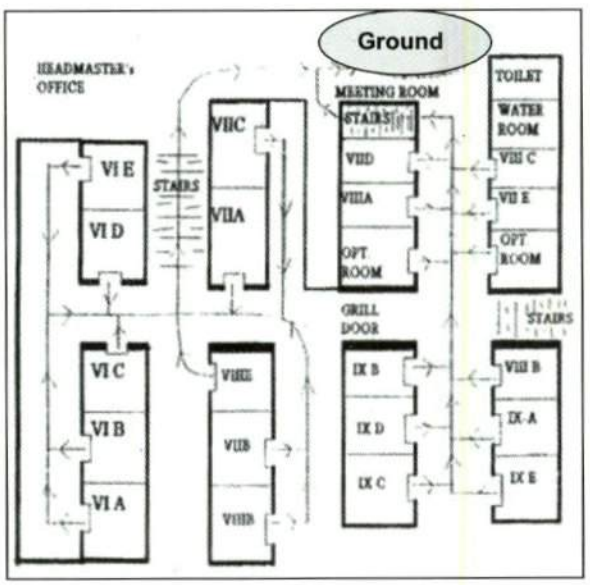
Team can be constituted to look into several aspects. Below is a Evacuation Plan of one of the School where the evacuation plan has been prepared and the committees have been constituted.



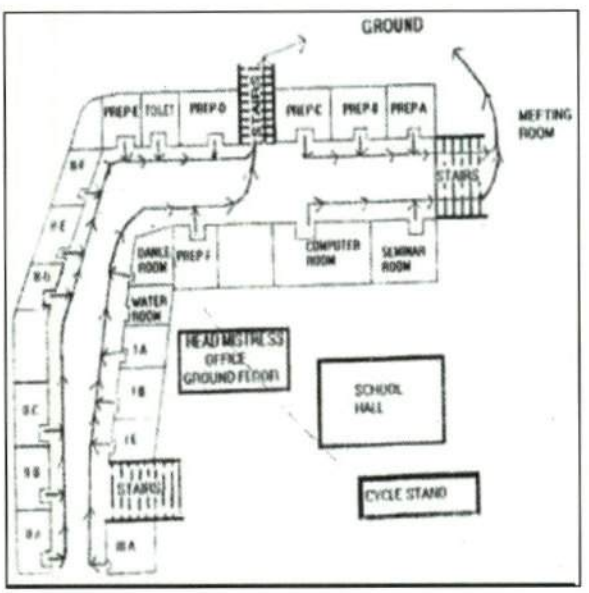
Evacuation Route – First Floor Senior Block



Evacuation Route – Primary Block Ground floor



Evacuation Route – Second Floor Senior Block.



Evacuation Route – Primary Block First floor

In the picture above is the *Evacuation Plan* prepared by a Public School in New Delhi. The evacuation plan preparation exercise was conducted prior to a successful mock drill for staff and students. The plan indicates the direction/path, the students have to follow during evacuation. The copies of the plan have been displayed at prominent places in each floor. The building was evacuated in five minutes after the raising of the alarm. The schools has set up the following committees: 1. Co-ordination Committee; 2.Awareness Generation Team; 3.Search Rescue and Evacuation Team; 4.Site Safety Team; 5.First Aid Team; 6.Warning and Information Team; 7.Bus Safety Team; 8.Water/Food Arrangement Team. All the teams participated in the drill.

In the picture ***School conducts mock drill (Fire Safety drill) in the school premises*** :

1. Artificial colored smoke created on terrace top and raising of the alarm; 2. Children getting out of the building from the floor/s as per the evacuation plan; 3. A closer view of children getting down the staircase and making way towards the safe exit point; 4. Fire department in action – performing a rescue act; 5. Rescued person being shifted into the ambulance; 6. Interaction session - Fire Department and the School students/staff.

C. Training and Capacity Building

Disaster Management in Education and formal training for the teachers, parents and administrators will yield effective results in mainstreaming the discipline of disaster risk management. Conducting in-service training workshops on first aid, shelter management, damage assessment and other related topics for school children and staff will build the capacity by large. Sending information home for parents on the school's emergency policies and procedures, dedicating a special or school assembly to the effects of hazards and the importance of proper preparation, organizing exhibits for schools, conducting group exercises amongst different stakeholders and similar other activities will build capacity at all levels.

Teachers attending the training programme on disaster management.

Students getting trained for DCH drill in the classroom.

School children getting down from terrace top into the open ground in an evacuation mock drill.

Fire personnel demonstrating the use of the fire extinguisher in training programme for school teachers and students.

D. Annual Safety Assessment

School buildings house in the most precious resource, the nation's future. Children and staff members occupying the school building at a significant time of an occurrence of the event are exposed to a considerable amount of risk. Many a places schools serve as multiple purposes in a community. During the day time, the schools house in the children. In addition to role as learning centers the schools also serve as gathering places for community events, important public meetings and storage places/public shelters in emergencies. A comprehensive assessment of the safety of the building including functional and preparedness observations need to be addressed annually. Simple structural and non-structural measures can be taken up to address various existing hazards. An inspection round by the building inspector and the fire officer from the fire department is recommended to take necessary steps to adhere life safety.

Key Points:

- Schools and colleges need to prepare for damaging events. In such an event, school administrators and teachers will have to be self-sufficient, relying on their own resources to protect and care for the student population and the immediate surrounding communities until outside assistance is available.

- Develop School Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans and conduct drills for typical hazards (say for earthquake - "Drop, Cover, and Hold") each school year. District wide school mock drill is good to hold and sensitize a large section of society.

- School children and their families need more information and education on safety and preparedness measures. Each school should develop its own resource material for school children and parents and educate the mass.

- It is ideal to take part in the unique and important public education campaign in the preparedness month and hold regular activities throughout the year.

- Assemble emergency kits and conduct fund raising activities to raise money to purchase preparedness supplies and equipment; retrofitting of school buildings.

- Provide parents with information on school's emergency policies and procedures; update information on "emergency notification cards."

DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Introduction

The likelihood of a natural occurrence such as earthquake and negligence related accidents are incalculable. Speculation may come without warning in spite of several measures being drawn. Past incidents have shown that the traditional ability of the schools to respond to crisis is very low. Many of the schools in rural areas, sub-urban areas and big cities are highly vulnerable to the effect of natural hazards and human induced hazards due to an absolute lack of preparedness and safety measures. The distance from the emergency services leaves many of the schools isolated from external assistance. The internal resource available for planning and training is nil in many of the schools. No special resource allocation is kept for these purposes and in many of the cases the building maintenance is completely ignored. The standard acceptable measures for safety are not drawn into the planning as well as the construction stage of the schools. The attention to the vulnerability of the building, surrounding environment and the in-house capacity to address any eventuality is completely ignored. The linkages between the institution and the external agencies in case of emergency have not been established by any means. Looking into all the above listed issues, a need is felt to address the issue of School Safety and mainstream the activities with appropriate linkages. It is also important to note that the School Emergency Preparedness and Response varies widely in a specific geographical area with varying vulnerability. To implement and build safety into the lives more thought, planning, resource needs, infrastructure support and funds will be required. What the schools require at the moment is to adopt an "***all hazard***" approach to emergency planning and an integrated approach to look in terms of additional support from agencies/departments to look into the array of complex issues such as skill development, training, planning, resource allocation etc. The issues are numerous and it is time to make a beginning. While school can play a vital role in spreading the culture of prevention, mitigation and preparedness they need help and support from the community in achieving it. School Safety should be on the top of the educational agenda in the 21st century.

Creating and maintaining safe learning environments is a task of various stakeholders. Time and again safety concerns have been raised amongst the teachers, education department, school administration, district administration setup and the general school community. The Education Department need to put in commitment to promote safe and healthy learning environments where students are secure in their pursuit of educational success. A continued positive approach focusing on development of an institutional mechanism at a district level may increase the safety of students and teachers and promote an improved climate for safe learning.

The *School Safety Programme* has been conceptualized to address issues of school safety. The idea is to set up an independent Task Force termed as a School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC) consisting of a broad range of people from the District including key government officials from the district administration and various departments, Coordinator BRC/CRC,

Representative of PTA/MTA, Municipal Commissioner, Vice Chairman Development Authority, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Medical Officer, School Principals and Teachers (Municipal/Private), representative from the students, emergency response agencies/officials, key institutions, Indian Red Cross, Civil Defence, ward representatives, committed youth groups, clubs, volunteers, representatives from corporate sector, NGOs and other stake holders.

Planning and promoting the programme

Recognizing that all children will need specific knowledge and skills to tackle various emergency situations a comprehensive safety strategy need to be put in place. Key steps to strengthen will include incorporation of safety issues in the education curricula and setting new learning standards, teacher training and certification requirements and a competent qualified teaching force.

The creation of safe schools will need greater support and concerted actions from various departments of the government and the community. Schools have to make an attempt to mobilize the resources available in the community. This sample plan outlines the planning processes and procedures that need to be set up at the district level across the country. The level of information and resources available for assisting schools and communities in school safety planning is low and hence strategies need to be formed in making the resources readily accessible to use.

SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAMME draws upon in formulating strategies for addressing school safety. The focus is on broad community participation and involvement in school safety planning, build model plans and dissemination/replication of best practices. The setting up of organizational set up at the district and school building levels is adopted herewith as an approach towards implementation of the programme. The SSAC will draw the District Wide School Safety Plan and set up guidelines for the School Building Level Emergency Response Plan. The District Wide School Safety Team shall basically consist of the SSAC. The committee will look into the overall implementation process and ensure sustainability of the programme. The SSAC shall assist the school in the district in the process formulation of the school safety planning and establishing linkages with various departments.

Information about the Plans

The plans shall be formulated at two levels, one at the district level, and the other is the individual emergency response plans for each school building in the district. The development of the school safety plans can be the framework for the district in managing its initiatives in creating a safe and orderly school environment in which learning can take place. The SSAC should begin their work with a meeting of all the stakeholders. Immediate action also need to be taken in ensuring the preparedness and mitigation measures. The following information provides important details concerning the planning requirements.

Who must adopt School Safety Plans?

Every district in the country must adopt:

- A District-wide School Safety Plan, and
- A Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for each school building in the district.

When do Plans have to be Developed?

Plans need to be developed and adopted by the District Administration and the Education Board. The Plan need to be reviewed and updated annually by July 1st of each succeeding year.

Who Develops the Plans?

The District-wide School Safety Plan is to be developed by the School Safety Advisory Committee, and the School Building-level plan is to be developed by a Building-level School Safety Team.

Who are on the Planning Teams?

The composition of school safety planning teams will vary as per the set up. District Administration and departments are encouraged to consider the inclusion of individuals who can contribute to ensuring continuity between the district plan and the building-level plans.

- The ***District-wide School Safety Team*** will consist of members forming the School Safety Advisory Committee. The School Safety Advisory Committee is headed by the District Collector and convened by the District Education Officer and shall include, but is not limited to, Key Administrators, Coordinator BRC/CRC, Representative of PTA/MTA, Municipal Commissioner, Vice Chairman Development Authority, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Medical Officer, School Principals and Teachers (Municipal/Private), representative from the students, emergency response agencies/officials, key institutions, Indian Red Cross, Civil Defence, ward representatives, committed youth groups, clubs, volunteers, representatives from corporate sector, NGOs and other stake holders.
- The ***Building-level School Safety Team*** The Building-level School Safety Team is appointed by the building principal and shall include, but is not limited to, teacher, administrator and parent organizations, school personnel, community members, local law enforcement officials, emergency response agencies, representatives of the School Board, any other body deems appropriate.

Where Plans Should Be Submitted?

A copy of District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments to the plan must be submitted to the Head-Directorate Education. A copy of each School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan and any amendments must be submitted to the District Education Officer. It is also advisable to make the summary Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan for public comment. The Building level plant must be approved by the various emergency and enforcement officials prior to adoption.

Guidelines for Developing School Safety Plans

The District-wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for a school to identify and implement appropriate strategies for creating and maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all its students. The District-wide School Safety Plan provides the overall guidance and direction for development of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for each of the school buildings in the district.

While the district-wide plan covers a broad scope of activities, including developing strategies, programme implementation and monitoring, the building plans focus more directly on critical actions that must be taken to protect the safety of students and staff in the event of an emergency. Taken together, the district and building plans provide a comprehensive approach to addressing school safety wherein all individuals understand their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safety of the entire school community. The key to success of School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is the school community's ability to build a mechanism for true collaboration through involving enforcement and emergency response agencies, nearby schools, and important stakeholders. A collaborative relationship is essential in order to promote safer schools. The guiding principles are as follows:

- Plans should be developed through an open process with broad participation. The development of the District-wide school Safety Plan should involve all the members of SSAC. Students, parents, teachers, emergency and enforcement agencies and other key stakeholders should be involved in School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan development in a meaningful way. Broad participation by the school community members will gain their acceptance and support of school plans. The planning process must include adequate time in order to ensure broad participation and active involvement of key partners in the development of plans.
- Formal agreements, if necessary can be agreed upon. Changes in personnel, new organizational arrangements or other factors within the schools and/or partner agencies may necessitate formal agreements with periodic review and updates to ensure the viability of plans over time.
- Planning should be comprehensive, encompassing activities from early prevention through crisis response. In addressing the programme, schools should focus on a process-driven approach to planning rather than on a checklist of activities that must be done. Checklist can be developed once the school develops the plan and submits it to the SSAC. The checklist will then serve as an indicator.
- Plans should be simple, easy to read, and understandable. The plans should be disseminated among the school children and among the stakeholders to foster broad acceptance and participation.
- Schools can build upon existing plans and activities, as well as draw upon the experiences of others who have developed and implemented effective plans.

- Plans should clearly define roles and responsibilities. It is crucial that all key people know their roles and responsibilities, as well as the roles and responsibilities of others in the event of a crisis situation. Plans should also include contingency provisions to enable implementation when key individuals are unavailable or not in a position to perform their roles.
- Training and Capacity Building should be included in the planning process. For plans to be effective, staff and other involved individuals need to develop their knowledge and skills in plan preparation and developing smaller components in the plan and actions to be taken for implementing the components in appropriate situations.
- Plans should be coordinated with the schools in the nearby vicinity. It is important to also recognize the needs of special school populations. Students in the primary section, students/staff who are physically/ mentally challenged also need to be addressed very specifically in the plans.
- Plans should be continually reviewed and updated to remain current. The District-wide School Safety Plan also needs to be updated annually by June 1st of each succeeding year. Changes in personnel, local conditions, resource additions & deletions and other factors necessitate periodic review and updating of plans.

Planning Framework

The following framework may prove useful for both the teams, one at the district level and other at the building level. The information mentioned in the outline can be a useful tool for ensuring that the plans cater to minimum requirements.

A sample outline for both, the district-wide and building-level school safety plans has been provided. Sample plans for both the District-wide School Safety Plan and the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan included in this document are organized according to the following five categories:

- **Section I:** General Considerations and Planning Guidelines
- **Section II:** Risk Reduction: Prevention/Mitigation
- **Section III:** Preparedness
- **Section IV:** Response
- **Section V:** Recovery

The outline document provides an easy reference guide for districts and schools to identify the minimum requirements for the implementation process. The SSAC may wish to add additional components to meet their individual needs. Depending upon the local needs, the SSAC members may wish to consider other than the five categories for grouping activities that may be more appropriate in the local setting. Sample outlines are provided as one way of organizing the information for presentation in the plan. These sample plans provide the structure for the information to be entered for each plan at the district and the building level. The same can be decided from the state/district requirement keeping in mind in terms of getting it under legislative/ regulatory requirements.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR District-wide School Safety Plan

Introduction

Districts are required to develop a District-wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of incidents or emergencies on students in particular and on school functioning in general and to facilitate the coordination with available local resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Looking into the vulnerability profile of the country, burgeoning rise in the population, the age factor of the children, vulnerability of the school building etc. the school children are at risk of a wide variety of acts of natural and man made disasters. To address these threats, the School Safety Programme is an effort that addresses comprehensive planning process, risk reduction, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the schools.

The District-wide School Safety Plan shall be used by the district in developing the plan, include strategies such as community involvement and collaboration with emergency/regulatory agencies. The SSAC will look into the implementation process of the plan and guide individual schools in implementation of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. The Head-Directorate of School Education will be the overall in-charge, ensure district-wide cooperation and advocate the School Safety Programme.

Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

Discussion: Section I provides information about key considerations and planning guidelines that need to be used in developing the district-wide plan. The sample format shown below, for example, includes the purpose of the plan; an identification of the District-wide School Safety Team; an identification of the concepts of operation included in the plan. In the plan, specific information should be provided, such as the names of individuals in the SSAC, other support agencies; how this plan supports the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan in the entire district. The SSAC after a preliminary analysis of the existing situation shall describe which problems need to be resolved, and what implementation and evaluation strategies need to be developed. At the state level the Directorate of School Education shall look into the adoption of the plan. Any other information deemed important should be included in this section.

A. Purpose

The _____ *(name of the District)* District-wide School Safety Plan was developed under the School Safety Programme and the District Administration has appointed a District-wide School Safety Team (SSAC).

The SSAC shall look into the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

B. Identification of School Teams

The _____ *(name of the District)* District has appointed a SSAC consisting of, but not limited to, District Collector, District Education Officer, Key Administrators, Coordinator BRC/CRC, Representative of PTA/MTA, Municipal Commissioner, Vice Chairman Development Authority, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Medical Officer, School Principals and Teachers (Municipal/Private), representative from the students, emergency response agencies/officials, key institutions, Indian Red Cross, Civil Defence, ward representatives, committed youth groups, clubs, volunteers, representatives from corporate sector, NGOs and other stake holders.

The members of the team and their details are as follows: _____ *(name, designation - department/organization/ agency, address, contact number, fax number & email)*

C. Concept of Operations

- Describe the linkage of the District-wide School Safety Plan to the individual School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans for each school building.
- Modus operandi reflected in the District-wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of individual School Building-level Emergency preparedness and Response Plan.
- Describe the methodology used to develop the district-wide plan, including the involvement of the key stakeholders, community and determine the key elements of the plan.
- Indicate that in the event of an emergency or incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the Building level School Safety Team, and the processes need to be highlighted in the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan.
- Indicate that upon the activation of any response activity, the District Administration and DEO or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.
- Describe how the mapped resources could supplement during the response phase.
- Maintain information describing certain information about each educational institution located in the district, including information on: school population, number of staff, transportation needs, and the office/school and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such educational agency. Key numbers of emergency agency should also be a part of the database.
- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the District Administration. The annual review will be completed on or before June 1 of each year. A copy of the plan will be available at_____ *(name, designation – Office of the District Administration/DEO, address, contact number, fax number and email)*

Section II: Risk Reduction: Prevention and Mitigation

Discussion: Section II of the plan is used to identify and describe the procedures for reducing the risk; implementing programs and activities for prevention/mitigation and establishing clear descriptions of actions. The strategies highlighted below provide an example for consideration by districts in organizing the plan.

Strategies

Describe the programs and activities the district need to take for improving the school environment incorporating all necessary safety measures in the school premises. The information should be bridged across the school community, key stakeholders, staff, students and the parents. Key points are mentioned as follows:

- The SSAC may describe what strategies it may develop, based on its needs assessment, to create a positive, safe learning environment for students.
- SSAC should provide a description of the existing regulations (General Development Control Regulations, Existing Guidelines for School Buildings, Fire Safety norms etc), existing policies if any and procedures related to school building safety requirements, structural and non-structural mitigation measures.
- Provide a description of the duties for officials from various departments and the required training for taking initiatives towards the mitigation measures.

Safety Assessment of Schools

The District-wide School Safety plan shall address into very specific identified institutions which are living at risk. These potential vulnerable schools need to be looked on top priority. Potential hazards and emergency situations should be identified. Based on this important areas could be selected for carrying out mitigation activity.

Resource Mobilization

Mitigation activities require funds for taking immediate actions. The expenses have to be met by individual school annual budget. Set of important instruction should be laid down by the SSAC in regard to the existing regulations and the Committee shall ensure compliance within a specific time period.

Section III: Preparedness

Discussion: Section III of the plan is used to identify and describe the procedures for specific preparedness activities to be transformed into actions. Training through a skill-based approach can increase the safety of students and teachers in school, as well as improve the community knowledge towards disaster management. The strategies highlighted below provide an example for consideration by districts in organizing the plan.

Strategies

The components under this section will essentially highlight in imparting training, simulation drills and exercises through the emergency departments and officials. The departments will draw in plans to conduct the drills and other exercises and support the schools in the implementation as part of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. The components of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan and activities dealing under each section will undergo a test exercise/tabletop review in coordination with officials for inclusion under School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan. The SSAC shall draw out the guidelines for the submission and approval.

The district shall establish procedure for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staffs and students and also develop inter-linkages between the schools. The district shall describe programs to prepare for specific incidents and lessen their impact, by conducting staff training in identifying potential threat, early intervention/prevention strategies, and instruction to the education department.

The District-wide School Safety Plan will describe the procedure for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staffs and students especially the Master Trainers (both staff and students). The training will explain the procedure for various mock drills (simpler ones such as *early go-home drill*; complex ones such as simulated fire drill followed by evacuation etc), CPR *(CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION)* and team exercises.

Section IV: Response

Discussion: Section IV of the plan is used to identify and describe the procedures for responding to any emergency. The sample plan format below provides one way for organizing important information about the districts plan for response, communication network, response protocols and procedures for obtaining emergency assistance in cooperation with the government departments/officials.

A. Notification and Activation (Communications)

External Communication

- Describe the procedures for contacting appropriate emergency officials in the event of a emergency situation. The procedures might include maintaining a list of agencies, and the designation of the individual who is authorized to contact and take necessary action.
- Describe the system that has been established for informing all educational agencies within the district affected by a disaster or an incident. The system could include the following forms of communication:
  - Telephone
  - Fax/Email
  - Local Media
  - Radio or local cable network

  The system may specify that in the event of an emergency, the district will notify all principals/ designees of educational institutes within the district to take appropriate action.

Internal Communication

Describe the procedures to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in case of an event. The district might include using local media in case if the near and dear ones are untraceable. The schools should maintain the Emergency Contact Card of the students.

B. Situational Responses

Multi-Hazard Response

Describe the district's multi-hazard response school safety plans for taking actions in an emergency that may include the following situations:

- Natural Disasters (earthquakes, cyclones, floods etc)
- Weather related
- Fire
- Falling Hazards
- Chemical Accident
- Stampede/ Crowd incident
- Civil Disturbance
- Medical Emergencies
- Explosive/Bomb Threat
- School Bus Accident
- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Act of terror or war
- Others as determined by the District School Safety Team

Response Protocols

The SSAC will select appropriate agencies, including protocols for responding to different situations highlighted above. The following protocols are provided as examples:

- Identification of decision makers.
- Procedure to evacuate the building
- Procedure to evacuate the premises
- Procedure for shifting to temporary shelter
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- Procedures to notify parents.
- Procedures to notify media.
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Debriefing procedures.

Arrangements for obtaining emergency assistance from administration

Provide description of the arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergency from various agencies (examples include the Medical team of the Hospitals, Red Cross, Fire department, Police, Civil Defence, Industries, Individuals, and others).

The types of arrangements should be part of the District-wide School Safety Plan and notified to all the members of the SSAC and the educational institutions.

District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency

Identify the district resources which may be available during an emergency, which could include the identification of resources. For the District Administration IDRN (India Disaster Resource Network) portal would be a key to identify the resources. Procedures for coordination mechanism have to be laid down for use of resources and manpower during emergency.

Action Options

Describe plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate: school cancellation, early dismissal, evacuation, and sheltering. Examples of actions could include the following and could be made in cooperation with local emergency responders:

- School cancellation
  - Monitor any situation that may warrant a school cancellation and inform in advance
  - Inform local media, if decision is taken in advance.
- Early dismissal
  - Monitor situation
  - If conditions necessitate, close school
  - Contact the transport department if transportation need to be arranged
  - Inform parents of early dismissal
  - Set up an information center in the school so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation
  - Retain appropriate personnel until all students have been returned home
- Evacuation (before, during and after school hours)
  - Determine the level of threat
  - Clear all evacuation routes and sites prior to evacuation.
  - Evacuate all staff and students to pre-arranged evacuation sites.
  - Account for all student and staff population. Carry out a head count. Report any missing staff/students to School Principal.
  - Make determination regarding *Early dismissal.*
  - If determination was made to dismiss early, follow the section early dismissal mentioned above.

- Ensure adult supervision
- Contact the transport department if transportation need to be arranged

- Sheltering sites (internal and external)
  - Determine the level of threat
  - Determine location of sheltering depending on nature of incident.
  - Account for all students and staff. Report any missing staff /students to Building principal.
  - Make appropriate arrangements for basic food and shelter/human needs.
  - Take appropriate safety precautions.
  - Establish a public information officer to provide information and current status of the situation to parents and other inquiring parties.
  - Retain appropriate personnel until all students have been returned home.

Section V: Recovery

Discussion: Section V of the plan is used to identify and describe the district's actions that will be taken after incident or other emergencies that have had a major effect on the well being of students, school staff and the community at large. The trauma/mental health service need to be assured to the schools from the district.
Overall guidance for recovery should facilitate in the evaluation of the current plan and develop additional strategies to restore safe school environment.

A. District Support for School Buildings
Describe how district resources will support the Recovery process of providing immediate shelter to the affected school(s).

B. Trauma/ Mental Health Services
Describe how the district will assist in the coordination of Mental Health Resources, in supporting Recovery process, in the affected school(s).

C. Reevaluation
The district may describe how the recovery phase will result in reevaluation of current school safety activities and what the school can do to improve its plan.

SUGGESTED APPENDICES

Appendix 1:
Listing of all school buildings covered by the *District-wide School Safety Plan* with addresses of buildings, and contact names and telephone numbers for building staff.

Appendix 2:
Listing of members part of the *School Safety Advisory Committee* (SSAC). Identification of state and local emergency/ enforcement agencies that are part of the District School Safety Team.

Appendix 3:
Agreements if any, relating to the implementation of the *District-wide School Safety Plan* and, *School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans.*

Appendix 4:
Copies of all School Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plans.

SCHOOL BUILDING-LEVEL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

Introduction

Many of us trust schools to take care and keep children safe during the day. All the schools remain a safe home for the youth till a tragedy occurs. The unfortunate reality is that many of the schools can be touched either directly or indirectly by an emergency situation of some kind at any time. A sudden, generally unanticipated event in a school severely and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death. These events could be either a natural or a man-made. Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, fires, cyclones can strike a community with little or no warning. Bomb threat, school violence, kidnapping, are rare but are shocking when they occur. The collapse of the school buildings in an earthquake, fire accidents in the school, stampede cases etc have ushered the school community across the country to understand and avert such disasters from happening. There is no dearth of examples to say that *many of the schools are not prepared.* The casual approach of not attending this problem has taken the life of many innocent children and school staff. Teachers, school staff primarily must know how to help their students through a crisis and ensure that they return home safely. Knowing what to do when faced with a crisis can be the difference between calm and chaos, between courage and fear, between life and death. In many of the developed and developing countries where the Crisis Planning has been dealt at the school level, the loss of lives and property has been minimal. It is noted that there are thousands of fires in schools every year in the developed countries, yet there is minimal damage to life and property because staff and students are prepared. This level of preparedness needs to be extended to all the schools in our country. Schools and district administration need to be ready to handle emergencies, small or large, and also keep our children and staff safe and teach the children how to be safe.

Emergencies especially in schools must be addressed in a speedy and effective manner. EMERGENCY RESPONSE is a central component of the SCHOOL SAFETY. The most important consideration that needs to be addressed is the *health, safety* and the *welfare* of the student community. To address the EMERGENCY RESPOSE one should,

- **ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS** and
- **ESTABLISH A COORDINATED RESPONSE.**

The time to have an *EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS and RESPONSE PLAN* is now. If the school does not have a *PLAN* in place, develop one. If the school already has a plan, review it, update and practice your plan through *MOCK DRILLS*. Update school response plans annually.

Purpose

The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is a guide for providing a response system, to possible major disasters occurring on the controlled premises of the institute. The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is designed to help prepare for and effectively coordinate the use of school and community resources to protect life and property immediately following an event. The purpose of the plan is to insure effective and coordinated response during the time of an emergency and ensure proper recovery and restoration of formal education process and equilibrium. The emergency response to any major disaster will be conducted within the guidelines of this plan. The Safety Coordinator (Incident Commander) who shall be leading the School Safety Team must approve all changes to the procedures before implementation.

It is placed into operation throughout the year and will be functioning for Preparedness/ Mitigation and Emergency Response. In case of emergency affecting the institution and its surrounding area the School shall deal with the situation with its own capabilities and trained human resources. When an emergency cannot be addressed by the School Safety Team, external help (facilities, equipment & personnel) and resources need to be put into action. This plan is a guide for emergency operations and is intended to assist the students and the staff of the school/ college to carry out their responsibilities for the protection of life and property under a wide range of emergency conditions.

This document does not provide cooked solution for an approach to Emergency Response Plan. Each community has its own history, culture, and way of looking at things. Each district in the country is at risk for different type/s at different time throughout the year. Emergency Response Plans need to be customized to communities, districts, and schools to meet the unique needs of local residents and students. The plans also need to address the local school safety rules and regulations. Replicating plans from other schools is recommended to start with if conditions are similar. Some plans can serve as useful models, but what is effective for a large city school in a district where the population is concentrated may be ineffective for a rural community where schools and first responders are far apart.

Important Note

The work presented here is a suggestive one. The contribution should be from a growing body of research and literature made available in the coming years. There is little hard evidence to quantify best practices. Few incidents can be formally evaluated and much highlights on the fact that we need to start from the scratch. Much of the information in this document draws heavily from practices carried in the developing and the developed countries wherein CRISIS MANAGEMENT has its setting in overall SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN. These promising practices could effectively be adapted and applied to our school settings. To start with it is proposed to develop a simpler approach in schools and streamline some important initiatives and linkages which basically address the preparedness, mitigation and response strategies at each Building Level. Once the Sample Plan are ready for each school in the district its better to explore more on similar lines and address critical issues such as LEGISLATION REQUIREMENTS for SCHOOL SAFETY, CRISIS MANAGEMENT, INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM for SCHOOLS etc.

More understanding of the subject would come in after the implementation of the District-wide School Safety Plan and individual School Building-Level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in respective areas.

Principles for Planning Process

The following principles are essential and very crucial for the planning process:

- **Effective crisis planning begins with leadership at the top**.
  Members of the School Safety Advisory Committee will essentially be the guiding force for the programme. The District Collector/District Magistrate, District Education Officer, CEO Municipal Corporation and other stakeholders including the Principal of the schools should work together to make school planning a priority. Setting up of a Committee with a top leadership helps set the policy agenda, secures funds, and brings the necessary people together across agencies.
- **School and district administration/emergency officials should open the channels of communication well before a crisis**.
  Relationships need to be built in advance so that emergency responders are familiar with the school. Relations with city emergency managers, public works officials, and health professionals need to be cultivated. It's important that they get to know each other and do not meet as strangers during the time of crisis.
- **Crisis plans should be developed in partnership with emergency services, fire safety officials, emergency medical services, community groups, law enforcement agency, and other professionals**. Do not reinvent the wheel. These groups know what to do in an emergency and can be helpful in the development of your plan. Get their help to develop a coordinated plan for response.
- **Schools should have tailored made School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan to meet individual school needs**. In fact, a plan should not be one document. It should be a series of documents targeted to various audiences. For example, a school could use detailed response guides for Building level School Safety team, flipcharts for teachers, and wallet cards containing evacuation routes for Members of the Evacuation Team. Plans should be age appropriate. Primary school children and physically/mentally challenged children will behave much differently in a crisis than high school students. Plan should be robust to meet the diverse needs of children and the staff.
- **Provide staff/children/emergency officials with ready access to the plan so they can understand its components and act on them**.
- **Training and practice are essential for the successful implementation of crisis plans**.
  Most students and staff do not know what to do in case of an event like fire, earthquake etc. There are no mandatory law requirements to conduct and participate in routine fire-drills. Schools require regular mock drills and evacuation drills. Drills also allow your school to evaluate what works and what needs to be improved. A District-level planned drill will let to know the effectiveness of the emergency response players and their capability to handle and respond to a given hypothetical situation.

- **School Plan need to include all phases of the Disaster Management Cycle**. Review of the existing literature reveals that actions that need to be taken under the plan should include Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response and Recovery.
- **Emergency Plans are living documents**. They need to be reviewed and revised regularly. Analyzing how well a crisis plan worked in responding to an incident, whether a drill or a real event, is crucial. Documenting all actions taken while, during, and after an event helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a plan. This information should be used to strengthen the plan.

■ Outreach documents for the families may have to be printed in local languages for dissemination ■

Sequence adopted for Planning Process

All schools need to establish a building level school safety team. One of the key functions of the Building-level school Safety Team is to identify the types of crises that may occur in the district and schools and define what events would activate the response plan. Both the District and the School team may consider many factors such as the school's ability to handle a situation with internal resources and its experience in responding to the past recorded event.

The Plan need to address a range of events and hazards caused both by both nature and by people, such as:

- Natural Disasters (earthquakes, cyclones, floods etc)
- Weather related
- Fire
- Chemical Accident
- Stampede/ Crowd incident
- Civil Disturbance
- Medical Emergencies
- Explosive/Bomb Threat
- School Bus Accident
- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Act of terror or war
- Others as determined by the District School Safety Team

A sample outline for building-level school safety plans is provided herewith. The outline is categorized under the following broad headings:

- **Section I:** General Considerations and Planning Guidelines
- **Section II:** Risk Reduction: Prevention/Mitigation
- **Section III:** Preparedness
- **Section IV:** Response
- **Section V:** Recovery

Box below highlights actions points that need to be taken into consideration during the planning process.

- School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans -

- Each school plan should address four major areas—prevention/mitigation; preparedness; response and recovery.
- If the school has a plan, review it. Ensure that it addresses Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response and Recovery aspects.
- If the school plan doesn't have a partnership with local emergency response agencies, including law enforcement and fire, health, mental health, develop one. Ensure that it addresses traditional crises and emergencies such as fires, natural hazards, accidents, as well as acts of terror such as war.
- Train, practice and drill. Documents/Plans on a shelf don't work. It needs to be practiced.
- Ensure that your school plan addresses the unique circumstances and needs of individual buildings in the schools. *School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC)* shall encourage each school to develop a separate plan for each building.

Actions that schools should take under each of these areas include:

- Prevention/Mitigation -
- addresses what can be done to reduce or eliminate risk to life and property.

- Each school plan should address four major areas—prevention/mitigation; preparedness; response and recovery.
- If the school has a plan, review it. Ensure that it addresses Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response and Recovery aspects.
- If the school plan doesn't have a partnership with local emergency response agencies, including law enforcement and fire, health, mental health, develop one. Ensure that it addresses traditional crises and emergencies such as fires, natural hazards, accidents, as well as acts of terror such as war.
- Train, practice and drill. Documents/Plans on a shelf don't work. It needs to be practiced.
- Ensure that your school plan addresses the unique circumstances and needs of individual buildings in the schools. *School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC)* shall encourage each school to develop a separate plan for each building.

Actions that schools should take under each of these areas include:

- Preparedness -
- focuses on the process of planning for the worst-case scenario.

- Have site plans for each school facility. Make it readily available and ensure they are shared with first responders and agencies responsible for emergency preparedness.
- Ensure there are multiple evacuation routes. Also have a minimum of two evacuation site options as one may be blocked or unavailable at the time of the crisis.
- Practice responding to crisis on a regular basis.
- Ensure a process is established for communicating during a crisis.
- Inspect equipment to ensure it operates during crisis situations.
- Have a plan for discharging students. Remember that during a crisis many parents and guardians may not be able to get to the school to pick up their child. Make sure every student has secondary contact person and contact information readily available.
- Identify a public information officer in the school to communicate with the media and the school community during a crisis.
- Work with law enforcement officials and emergency preparedness agencies on a strategy for sharing key parts of the school plans and update the plans as per their recommendations.

- Response - -is devoted to the steps to take during an emergency.
▪ Develop a command structure for responding to an emergency. The roles and responsibilities for the School Safety Team and the other first responders in responding to different types of crisis need to be developed, reviewed and approved by the Incident Commander of the school.
- Recovery - **- deals with how to restore the learning and teaching environment after a crisis.**
▪ Return to teaching and learning as soon as possible. ▪ Have a shelter plan for the school in case the existing building becomes inhabitable. ▪ Identify and approve a team of mental health workers to provide mental health services to faculty and students after a crisis. Understand that recovery takes place over time and that the services of this team may be needed over an extended time period. ▪ The plan needs to include notification of parents on actions that the school intends to take to help students recover from the crisis.

Using this Sample Outline for Building Level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

The remainder of this document discuss on the SAMPLE OUTLINE for SCHOOL BUILDING LEVEL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS and RESPONSE PLAN to deal with PREPAREDNESS and EMERGENCY related issues at the building level. Aspects such as mitigation/prevention and recovery are not dealt in detail in this document. It is proposed to establish a team of experienced people/educators at the district level to develop specific guidelines for prevention/ mitigation, preparedness and recovery aspects.

This Sample Outline provides the necessary steps to start the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan process and can be used to as a reference guide to review and improve existing plans.

Good plans are never finished. They can always be updated based on experience and changing vulnerabilities and assessment of current capabilities.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR Building-level Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan

Introduction

Emergencies in schools must be addressed in effective manner. School buildings and children are at risk to various natural, and manmade disasters. To address these threats at a premises level the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan has been suggested. The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan will address towards the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery aspects with respect to emergencies at the school level. The outline document describes the process for making the plan and facilitates the planning process. The school Principal looks into the implementation of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan at the school level. The District Education Officer encourages and advocates on-going district-school cooperation and support the School Safety Programme.

The information provided is a sample outline for consideration and building-specific information along with micro details should be included.

Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

Discussion: Section I provides information about key considerations and planning guidelines that need to be used in developing the building-level plan. The sample format shown below, for example, includes the purpose of the plan; an identification of the Building-level School Safety Team (including Awareness Generation Team, Warning and Information Dissemination Team, Evacuation Team, Search and Rescue Team, First Aid team, Fire Safety Team, Site security Team) and identification of the concepts of operation included in the building-level plan.

In the plan, specific information should be provided, such as the names of individuals in the School Safety Teams, other support agencies; and how this plan supports the overall District-wide School Safety Plan. The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan will be analyzed by the members of the SSAC and will facilitate the institutional mechanism with other stakeholders. Any other information deemed important should be included in this section.

A. Purpose

The _____ *(name of the School)* Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan was developed pursuant to the direction of SSAC _____ *(name of the*

District) District. At the direction of the SSAC, the Principal of _____ *(name of the School)* School appointed a Building-level School Safety Team and institutionalized the process of developing the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.

B. Identification of School Teams

The _____ *(name of the School)* School has developed the teams under the following headings:

- Coordination Committee (also looks at the Incident Command System)
- Awareness Generation Team
- Building Maintenance Team
- Warning and Information Dissemination Team
- Evacuation Team
- Search and Rescue Team
- First Aid Team
- Fire Safety Team
- School Security Team

The description of the roles and responsibilities of each team should be mentioned.

C. Concept of Operations

- The initial response to all emergencies at _____ *(name of the School)* School will be done by the School Team.
- Upon the activation in case of an emergency, the Principal/designee of School will notify the nearest Police Station/Fire Department/local emergency officials. The copy of the incident report will be shared with the SSAC and the District Education Officer.
- Efforts may be supplemented by district resources through existing mechanisms.

D. Plan review and public comment

- A summary of this plan will be made available to each individual of the school (students and staff) and a copy also shared with the parents/guardians. The parents will have to be briefed about the Plan in the PTA meeting.
- Building-level plan may be adopted by the School only after getting the nod from the SSAC appointed agency. The agency could be the Station Officer of the fire department/other local emergency official. The plans must be formally submitted to the SSAC after approval.
- Copies of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan should be supplied to the local area emergency officials for better decision making during the time of crisis.
- School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the Building-level School Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before July 1st of each year by each school & a copy of the plan will be submitted to the SSAC and copy to the District Education Officer.

Section II: Risk Reduction: Prevention/Mitigation

Discussion: Section II of the plan is used to identify and describe procedures for reducing the risk by taking immediate preventive and mitigation options. This section should look in establishing clear descriptions of actions that need to be taken in order to prevent any incident/damage or any other emergency situation. The format below provides a outline for organizing the information for School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.

A. Designation of School Teams

Identify the members of the Building-level School Safety Team, and include the following members in the teams:

- School personnel
- Local ambulance and other emergency response agencies
- Medical personnel
- Representatives of the Education Board or any other education department that deem appropriate
- Local law enforcement officials
- Engineer and Architect (building maintenance/renovation/retrofitting)
- Mental health counselors
- Ward level officer
- Representatives of community based organizations/associations/clubs etc
- Others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a serious incident or emergency

B. Identification of potential emergencies and mitigation steps

The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan shall identify potential emergency situations that could possibly occur due to both natural/man-made disasters and will look into the preventive/mitigation measures that could suitably be adopted. This section of the plan can be used to describe how the School will work to identify both internal and external hazards that may warrant protective actions and nullify the effect of the hazard if it were to occur. Identification of hazard reduction projects (both structural and non-structural mitigation measures) should be on the focus. The annual building maintenance plan should address towards the issue of safety measures that need to be incorporated in the premises.

Section III: Preparedness

Discussion: Section III of the plan is used to identify and describe the school building's preparedness measures for school emergencies. The Preparedness Plan should focus on a multi-hazard approach and mock-drills have to be realized for different prevailing situations. The school safety plan should look into mapping exercises about the prevailing hazards and a building plan for evacuation procedure, specific emergency, operating procedure for responsible teams etc.

A. Personnel (Student/staff) Training

Training for different team is an essential part of the strategy. It should be conducted as determined by the SSAC. This section of the plan could be used to describe the training that need to be provided to all personnel acting in a school. This will enhance the capacity building at the first responder level.

B. Coordination with Emergency Officials

This section of the plan will describe the procedures of coordination and establishing of linkages with the emergency officials in case of external assistance. The annual review of the plan, mock drill and other exercises of the school's plan, should be in coordination with local emergency responders who are a part of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan. The role of the departments involved shall be provided under this section.

C. Annual Multi-hazard Training for Staff and Students

The SSAC, will organize an annual multi-hazard training for staff and students as part of the District-wide School Safety Plan. Each school will send in their MASTER TRAINERS for this annual multi-hazard training and the same will be replicated in the school premises with the in-house capacity.

D. Hardware support

Each school should focus in equipping the school with necessary elements in the building pre-

mises. This could include emergency lighting, public addressal system, electricity back up, fire fighting equipments, alarm system, First aid and emergency kit etc.

Section IV: Response

Discussion: Section IV of the plan is used to identify and describe the school building's response measures for school emergencies. The response measures is highlighted in the format below and the basic task here is to organize important information of the response at different floors of the building, include assignment of responsibilities, preparation plan for the emergency, development of response mechanism for specific emergencies, continuity of operation during operation and backup mechanisms, *notification-activation-deactivation* of the plan

A. Assignment of Responsibilities

Provide a description of the chain of command consistent with all the schools in the district. The external agency support to the schools needs to be highlighted and tasks have to be assigned. The Coordination Committee at the school look into the INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS). The Principal or his/her designee will play the role of the INCIDENT COMMANDER. The ICS should basically consist of the School Principal, Vice Principal, School Administrator and Senior Teachers. In the event of an emergency, the ICS will ensure the functioning of all the teams and look into the continuity of the operations and seek for external help if required.

B. Operational Plan

- This section can be used to describe how the building will continue operations during an emergency. A potential format for describing continuity of operations is as follows:
- In the event of an emergency, the Building Principal or his/her designee will serve as Incident Commander. The school will establish a chain of command to ensure continuity of operations. Each floor of the building should have a FLOOR COMMANDER. The evacuation procedure should follow the Evacuation Route – Floor Plan of the building.
- In case of an event wherein external agencies take over the situation the School Incident Commander shall be replaced by a member of a local emergency response agency. The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan should highlight all the agencies that shall be providing external support during an emergency situation.

C. Evacuation Plan

The Evacuation Route – Floor Plan of the building should be described in detail and highlight all the elements of the floor. Each floor should put up the floor level plan at strategic locations indicating the route. The copies/blueprints of the work plans should be available with the Incident Commander and it should also be ensured that enough copies are made available in case the emergency agencies want to have an access. Schematics or other maps of the school's interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area along with important services/ installations should be demarcated. Area for temporary shelter should be part of the overall emergency plan for the school.

D. Communication

- This section includes notification and activation of an Emergency. On detection of any incident or development of a hazard, the Warning and Information Dissemination Team will inform the Incident Commander and notify all building occupants to take appropriate protective action.
- This section of the plan will include internal and external communication systems that will be used in emergencies. The description could include the flow diagram of the communication system, by way of example, for different hazard situations. On declaration of any emergency, the help desk in the school should be activated.

- The incident report will be submitted to the SSAC by the Building Principal or his/her designee as soon as possible following its detection.

E. Hazard Situations

The District-wide School Safety Plan includes multi-hazard approach plans for taking actions in response to an emergency. In conjunction to it the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan could be used to describe building-specific guidelines that could include the following types of emergencies:

- Natural Disasters (earthquakes, cyclones, floods etc)
- Weather related
- Fire
- Falling Hazards
- Chemical Accident
- Stampede/ Crowd incident
- Civil Disturbance
- Medical Emergencies
- Explosive/Bomb Threat
- School Bus Accident
- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Act of terror or war
- Others as determined by the Building School Safety Team

F. Evacuation Procedures

This section should highlight on the procedures for the safe evacuation of students, other school personnel/staff, and visitors to the school in the event of an emergency. Following procedures need to be looked upon:

- Evacuation before, during and after school hours
- Evacuation routes (individual floor plan)
- Procedures for addressing medical needs
- Sheltering sites (internal & external)
- Emergency notification of persons in parental relation to the students
- Transportation needs
- Other procedures as determined by the Building-level Safety Team

Section V: Recovery

Discussion: Section V of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan is used to develop a summary of the actions that will be taken after an emergency that has had a major effect on the well being of students, school staff and the premises infrastructure. The action calls in for a coordinated effort by the district for immediate shelter and mental health interventions. *Disaster mental health services, in particular, work toward restoring psychological and social functioning of individuals and the community, and limiting the occurrence and severity of adverse impacts of disaster-related mental health problems (e.g., post-traumatic stress reactions, depression, etc).* The outline below summarizes the information in the building plan for recovery.

The School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan will be coordinated with the identified departments for providing of shelter and mental health services by the SSAC to assure that the school has a safe living environment and also access to state and local mental health services in the event of an emergency.

A. Support for Shelter

Describe how resources will support the setting up of a safe living environment. Carry out shelter assessment needs for various situational responses.

B. Mental Health Services

Describe how the school will coordinate, in support of the health service team, in the affected school(s). The school can describe how the recovery phase will look into this aspect so as to restore normalcy.

C. Actions

- Short term actions for recovery include: (examples)
  - Safe shelter
  - Mental health counseling (students and staff)
  - Infrastructure restoration
  - Assessment report on the incident
  - Others
- Long term actions for recovery include: (examples)
  - Retrofitting of the building
  - Mental health counseling (monitor for post-traumatic stress behavior)
  - Mitigation steps both structural and non-structural (to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and impact if it does occur again)
  - Others

SUGGESTED APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

School Map: To include the all the details in the plan for emergency response. Mark down all important infrastructures, the setback details of the building, potential hazards etc.

Appendix 2:

Building floor plans/schematic maps, to include at least:

- Evacuation Routes
- Utilities (Fire fighting facilities/Electricity mains/ Water and sanitation facilities)
- Emergency Response Area Layout
- Safe Shelter Locations (internal and external)

Appendix 3:

Organization Chart of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, including ICS Position and support organization, emergency officials, and descriptions of individuals roles and responsibilities.

Appendix 4:

Emergency Supplies Inventory

Appendix 5:

Shelter agreement and layout map

Appendix 6:

Name, address, and contact numbers of building staff and students (also note contact details of a close relative/family friend outside the city)

Appendix 7:

Local resources details (include name, address and contact numbers)

Appendix 8:

Copy of the School Building-level Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

"BE AWARE & PREPARED..... not SCARED"

Bhuj Earthquake 2001, *"Bharat no naksho"*

"Let's remember that
the time we spend on prevention today
may be the life we save tomorrow"

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