

Emergency Planning for School Districts: What the Feds Say

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The U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services have joined forces and set forth guidance on [the role of school districts](#) in developing emergency operations plans (EOPs).

The guide assists school districts with coordination of school and community partners to make EOPs a collaborative effort, as well as providing planning parameters and support at every step of their development to ensure all types of emergencies are tailored to fit each specific school's needs. The key mission areas include prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery. Also included in the guide are checklists of activities and responsibilities for districts that allow them to stay on course and track their progress.

Additionally, the guide recommends a six-step process for developing and maintaining EOPs:

- 1. Form a collaborative training team.** Forms a common framework, defines and assigns roles and responsibilities and determines a regular schedule of meetings.
- 2. Understand the situation.** Identifies threats and hazards, evaluates the risks and vulnerabilities posed, and prioritizes threats and hazards.
- 3. Determine goals and objectives:** Selects threats and hazards to address, and develops corresponding goals and objectives.
- 4. Plan development (identifying courses of action):** Develops emergency, threat-specific and hazard-specific courses of action.
- 5. Plan preparation, review, and approval:** Develops an exercise and drill plan, works with local law enforcement and community resources, establishes a common format for plans, and establishes a process for plan review and revisions as necessary.
- 6. Plan implementation and maintenance:** Trains stakeholders in their responsibilities for carrying out plans, and establishes a process for plan review and revisions as necessary.

Earlier this year, we provided guidance on emergency planning and [the needs of students with disabilities](#), which incorporated some of the new federal guidance. If you have any questions on emergency planning or any other topic, please contact any member of the [Barley Snyder Education Practice Group](#).