

# THE STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL K12

Operational Guidance for Implementing The Standard Response Protocol  
In a K12 Environment

## K12 SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS



**HOLD**



**SECURE**



**LOCKDOWN**



**EVACUATE**



**SHELTER**



**HOLD**



**SECURE**



**LOCKDOWN**



**EVACUATE**



**SHELTER**

## THE STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL OVERVIEW

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the uniform classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by school and district administration and staff.

Historically, schools have taken a scenario-based approach to respond to hazards and threats. It's not uncommon to find a stapled sheaf of papers or tabbed binder in a teacher's desk that describes a variety of things that might happen, and the specific response to each event.

### SRP IS ACTION BASED

The Standard Response Protocol is based not on individual scenarios but on the response to any given scenario. Like the Incident Command System (ICS), SRP demands a specific vocabulary but also allows for great flexibility. The premise is simple: there are five specific actions that can be performed during an incident. When communicating these actions, each is followed by a "Directive." Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers and first responders.

- **Hold** is followed by "In your Room or Area. Clear the Halls" and is the protocol used when the hallways need to be kept clear of people.
- **Secure** is followed by "Get Inside, Lock Outside Doors" and is the protocol used to safeguard students and staff within the building.
- **Lockdown** is followed by "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight" and is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep students quiet and in place.
- **Evacuate** may be followed by a location, and is the protocol used to move students and staff from one location to a different location in or out of the building.
- **Shelter** is always followed by the hazard and a safety strategy and is the protocol for group and self-protection.

These specific actions can act as both a verb and a noun. If the action is Lockdown, it would be announced on public address as "Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight." Communication to local responders would then be "We are in Lockdown."

## ACTIONS

Each response has specific student and staff actions. The Evacuate action might be followed by a location: "Evacuate to the Bus Zone." Actions can be chained. For instance, "Evacuate to Hallway. Shelter for Earthquake. Drop, Cover and Hold."

## BENEFITS

The benefits of SRP become quickly apparent. By standardizing the vocabulary, all stakeholders can understand the response and status of the event. For students, this provides continuity of expectations and actions throughout their educational career. For teachers, this becomes a simpler process to train and drill. For first responders, the common vocabulary and protocols establish a greater predictability that persists through the duration of an incident. Parents can easily understand the practices and can reinforce the protocol. Additionally, this protocol enables rapid response determination when an unforeseen event occurs.

The protocol also allows for a more predictable series of actions as an event unfolds. An intruder event may start as a Lockdown, but as the intruder is isolated, first responders may direct students in parts of the school to "Evacuate to a different building," and later "Evacuate to the bus zone."

## TACTICAL RESPONSES

SRP also acknowledges that some school incidents involve a tactical response from law enforcement, and suggests consultation with local law enforcement regarding expectations and actions.

## SEQUENCING THE ACTIONS

As you read through the Action Sections, you'll see that the actions can be sequenced as situations change and information is gathered. See page 29 for examples of how this can, and has, been done.



# HOLD

## In Your Room or Area.

### **HOLD IN YOUR ROOM OR AREA.**

There are situations that require students and staff to remain in their classrooms or stay out of access areas. For example, an altercation in the hallway may require keeping students out of the halls until it is resolved. A medical issue may require only one area to be cleared, with halls still open in case outside medical assistance is required.

During a Hold, there may be a need for students who are not in a classroom to proceed to an area where they can be supervised and remain safe.

### **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

The public address for Hold is: "Hold in your room or area. Clear the Halls."

It is repeated twice each time the public address is performed. There may be a need to add directives for students who are not in a classroom, at lunch, or some other location where they should remain until the Hold is lifted.

"Hold in your room or area. Clear the Halls.

Hold in your room or area. Clear the Halls."

An example of a medical emergency message would be:

"Students and staff, please Hold in the cafeteria or your room. We're attending to a medical situation near the office."

### **PUBLIC ADDRESS - RELEASE**

A Hold Action can be released by Public Address.

When it's been resolved:

"Students and staff, the Hold is released. All clear. Thank you for your assistance in making this Hold work smoothly."

### **INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

The School Incident Command System should be initiated.

### **ACTIONS**

Students and teachers are to remain in their classroom or area, even if there is a scheduled class change until the all-clear is announced.

Students and staff in common areas, like a cafeteria or a gym, may be asked to remain in those areas or move to adjoining areas like a locker room.

Students and staff outside of the building should remain outside unless the administration directs otherwise.

It is suggested that, prior to closing the classroom door, teachers should sweep the hallway for nearby students. Additionally, teachers should take attendance, note the time, and conduct classroom activities as usual.

In a high school with an open campus policy, communicate as much detail as possible to students who are temporarily off-campus.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Typically an administrator is responsible for initiating a Hold. However, anyone should be able to call for a Hold if they observe something happening that would require this action.

### **PREPARATION**

Student, teacher, and administrator training.

Reinforce with students and staff that during a Hold, classroom activities will continue while the incident is addressed. Administrators should make a plan for communicating with staff, students, and parents/guardians after a Hold is cleared to provide pertinent information about the incident.

### **DRILLS**

Hold should be drilled at least once a year, or as mandated by state requirements.

### **CONTINGENCIES**

Students are trained that if they are not in a classroom they may be asked to identify the nearest classroom and join that class for the duration of the Hold.

### **EXAMPLES OF HOLD CONDITIONS**

The following are some examples of when a school might initiate a Hold:

- An altercation in a hallway;
- A medical issue that needs attention;
- Unfinished maintenance operation in a common area during class changes.



## SAMPLE OUTWARD MESSAGING TO PARENTS

This is a guide for outward messaging after a Hold Action has been used in the school. Usually, it is sent after a Hold is cleared.

However, if the Hold goes on for an extended period of time or it is happening close to release time, make sure to let the families know. Have a central digital platform that your public information team can easily update, and people can go to for information.

Variables in the message are bracketed and italicized.

### CURRENT HOLD DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Hold Currently Activated at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* has been placed in Hold due to *[state the reason for the Hold]*.

As a precaution, students and staff are asked to remain in their classrooms in order to keep the hallways empty. Classroom learning will continue throughout the Hold, but students will not be able to change classes.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation and update you further as soon as we have more information.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is a Hold Action? \*

### CURRENT HOLD AT THE END OF THE DAY

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Hold Currently Activated at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* has been placed in Hold due to *[state the reason for the Hold]*.

As a precaution, students and staff are asked to remain in their classrooms in order to keep the hallways empty.

Student dismissal may be delayed for a short time until the situation has been resolved. You will be notified when students are dismissed. Thank you for your understanding.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation and update you further as soon as we have more information.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is a Hold Action? \*

#### Text Message

*[School Name]* has been placed in Hold as a precaution. This situation may impact student dismissal. Please check your email for more information.

#### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* has been placed in Hold due to *[state the reason for the Hold]*. As a precaution, we have placed the school in Hold to keep the halls empty. Student dismissal may be delayed for a short time. Please be patient. We will continue to monitor the situation and update you further as soon as we have more information.

### NOTIFICATION THAT A HOLD OCCURRED DURING THE DAY

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Hold Ended at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* was placed in Hold from *[start time]* to *[end time]* due to *[state the reason for the Hold]*.

As a precaution, students and staff were asked to remain in their classrooms in order to keep the hallways empty. Classroom learning continued throughout the Hold, and all school operations have returned to normal.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We will continue to keep you informed about important concerns at our school.

What is a Hold Action? \*

\* The Hold Action is used when the hallways in the school need to remain clear. Classroom learning will still take place as normal during a Hold, but students may not be able to change classes until after the Hold has been lifted.

Link to either your website or [iloveguys.org](http://iloveguys.org) for them to learn more.



# SECURE

Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors.

## SECURE GET INSIDE, LOCK OUTSIDE DOORS.

The Secure Action is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building. Whether it's due to violence or criminal activity in the immediate neighborhood, or a dangerous animal in the playground, Secure uses the security of the physical facility to act as protection.

### PUBLIC ADDRESS

The public address for Secure is: "Secure! Get Inside. Lock outside doors" and is repeated twice each time the public address is performed.

"Secure! Get Inside, Lock outside doors.

Secure! Get Inside, Lock outside doors."

"Students and staff, the school is currently in the Secure Action due to [cause] in the neighborhood. No one is allowed in or out of the building at this time. Stay inside and continue with your day."

### PUBLIC ADDRESS - RELEASE

A Secure Action can be released by Public Address.

"The Secure is released. All Clear.

The Secure is released. All Clear."

"Students and staff, the Secure is released. All clear.

Thank you for your assistance with making this Secure work smoothly."

### ACTIONS

The Secure Action demands bringing people into a secure building and locking all outside access points.

Where possible, classroom activities would continue uninterrupted. Classes being held outside would return to the building and, if possible, continue inside the building.

There may be occasions when students expect to be able to leave the building - end of classes, job commitment, etc. Depending on the condition, this may have to be delayed until the area is safe.

During the training period, it should be emphasized to students as well as their parents that they may be inconvenienced by these directives, but their cooperation is important to ensure their safety.

### ADDING A LIFECYCLE TO THE SECURE PROTOCOL

As a situation evolves there may be more information available to guide decision making. With the Secure Action, there is the option to transition from the initial response of "No one in or out" to some access control.

## NO ONE IN OR OUT

The initial directive and practice during the Secure Action is to retain students and staff within the building and prevent entry into the building.

## CONTROLLED RELEASE

An unresolved, but not directly evident, situation at the end of the school day may warrant a Controlled Release. During a Controlled Release, parents or guardians may be asked to pick up students rather than have them walk home. Buses may run as normal, but increased monitoring of the bus area should occur. There may be additional law enforcement presence.

## MONITORED ENTRY

When there is a perceived threat but it's not immediate, entrances may be attended by security or law enforcement, and anyone entering the building is more closely monitored. Students and staff walking between buildings or going to the parking lot might be escorted with heightened awareness.

## SCHOOL IS SECURED MONITORED ENTRY AND CONTROLLED RELEASE



## ESCUELA BAJO PROTECCIÓN ETRADA VIGILADA Y SALIDA CONTROLADA

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## INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The School Incident Command System should be initiated.

## RESPONSIBILITY

During a Secure Action, administration or staff may be required to lock exterior access points. Staff members assigned "Primary Responsibility" for a "Secure Zone" would follow the designated protocol during a drill as well. These areas may include doorways, windows, loading docks, and fire escape ladder access points. The assigned staff is designated as having "Secure Duty."

A person should also be assigned "Secondary Responsibility" for Secure Duty in the event the person with Primary Responsibility is absent or unable to perform the protocol.

Assign someone to attach the Secure posters out-facing to building entry doors, alerting potential visitors of the Secure condition.

## REPORTED BY

Secure is typically reported by local emergency dispatch to the school office. The office staff then invokes the public address and informs the administration.

It may also be reported by students, staff or teachers if a threat is directly observed outside of the building.

## PREPARATION

Identification of perimeter access points that must be locked in a Secure Action defines the perimeter. In the event a perimeter cannot be secured, identify areas within each building that can be secured.

Secure Zones - areas of a school or campus with exterior access points - should be established and protocols developed to ensure that those on "Secure Duty" attend to all areas in their zone.

Preparation includes identification of staff with Primary and Secondary responsibilities and the assignment of these duties.

## DRILLS

Secure drills should be performed at least twice a year, or as mandated by state requirements. At least one should be performed while outdoor activities are in progress.

## CONTINGENCIES

There may be physical attributes to the campus that mandate special handling of a Secure Action. An example would be a campus where modular buildings are present. If the modular building cannot be secured, it may be best for students to Evacuate to the main building rather than going to Secure in the modular building. Listen for specific additional directives.

If the school is a distributed campus (multiple permanent buildings), they will have to consider what their perimeter is. In a perceived and indirect threat, they may decide that extra supervision for class changes between buildings is sufficient and appropriate.

If during a Secure Action, an additional hazard manifests (i.e.: fire, flood, hazmat), then additional directives will be given for the appropriate response.

## EXAMPLES OF SECURE CONDITIONS

The following are some examples of when a school or emergency dispatch might call for a Secure Action.

- An unknown or unauthorized person on the grounds
- Dangerous animal on or near the grounds
- Criminal activity in the area
- Planned police activity in the neighborhood

## SECURE AND HOLD

Sometimes people become confused about the difference between "Secure" and "Hold." During a Hold, the halls are cleared, students remain in their classrooms with their teachers and business continues as usual. If people are outside, they remain outside. During a Secure, people are brought inside, and all activities inside the school continue as usual but no one will move in or out of the building.

The main difference is that during a Secure, the halls are open and may be utilized by students and staff as needed. People inside the school may not notice any difference in their daily routines during a Secure.

Remember, the main difference between the two is that a Secure is enacted when a threat or hazard is outside of the school. A Hold is used when there is a need for the halls to remain empty, meaning the issue is inside the building. During both instances, classroom instruction should continue as normal.





# SECURE

Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors.



## SAMPLE OUTWARD MESSAGING TO PARENTS

This is a guide for outward messaging when a Secure Action is used in the school. Have a central digital platform that your public information team can easily update, and people can go to for information.

information team can easily update, and people can go to for information.

State in the message if the situation allows for Monitored Entry and Controlled Release. Variables are in the message are bracketed and italicized.

## CURRENT SECURE ACTION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Secure Currently

Activated at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* has been notified of *[state the activity occurring outside of the building]*. As a precaution, we have placed the school in Secure. During the Secure Action, all doors are locked and no one can leave or enter the building. *[Modify for monitored entry and controlled release]*

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is the Secure Action? \*

## CURRENT SECURE ACTION AT THE END OF THE DAY

### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Secure Currently Activated at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* has been notified of *[state the activity occurring outside of the building]*. As a precaution, we have placed the school in Secure. During Secure, all doors are locked and no one can leave or enter the building. *[Modify for monitored entry and controlled release]*

Students may not be able to leave until the situation is resolved, and dismissal may be delayed for a short time. Please be patient.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is the Secure Action? \*

### Text Message

*[School Name]* is currently in Secure as a precaution. This situation has the potential to affect student dismissal. Please check your email for more information.

### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* has been notified of *[state the activity occurring outside of the building]*. As a precaution, we have placed the school in Secure.

Students may not be able to leave until the situation is resolved, and dismissal may be delayed for a short time. Please be patient.

Please check your email for more information.

## NOTIFICATION THAT SCHOOL WAS IN SECURE ACTION

### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Secure Ended at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Today *[School Name]* was notified of *[state the activity occurring outside of the building]*. As a precaution, we placed the school in Secure. The Secure status lasted *[state the length of time in Secure]*. All school operations have now returned to normal.

What is the Secure Action? \*

\* The Secure Action is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building. Secure uses the security of the physical facility to act as protection. During Secure, all students and staff are brought into the secure building and all exterior doors are locked. Classes are able to continue uninterrupted inside the building.

Link to either your website or [iloveguys.org](https://www.iloveguys.org) for them to learn more.



# LOCKDOWN

## Locks, Lights, Out of Sight.

### **LOCKDOWN. LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SIGHT**

Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building. From parental custody disputes to intruders to an active assailant, Lockdown uses classroom and school security actions to protect students and staff from the threat.

### **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

The public address for Lockdown is: “Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight!” and is repeated twice each time the public address is performed.

“Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight!  
Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight!”

### **ACTIONS**

The Lockdown Action advises making rooms look unoccupied by locking individual classroom doors, offices, and other securable areas, moving occupants out of the line of sight of corridor windows, turning off lights, and having occupants maintain silence.

Most schools have implemented policies requiring all exterior doors be locked during the school day, consistent with current best practices. Therefore, the protocol advises leaving the exterior doors as is during a Lockdown Action. Be certain there’s a plan for allowing local first responders to gain access during a Lockdown. The best option is to have the ability to lock and unlock doors remotely.

Training reinforces the practice of not opening the classroom door once in Lockdown. No indication of occupancy should be revealed until first responders open the door.

If the location of the threat is apparent and people do not have the option to get behind a door, it is appropriate to self-evacuate away from the threat.

### **INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

The School Incident Command System should be initiated.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The classroom teacher is responsible for implementing their classroom Lockdown. If it is safe to do so, the teacher should gather students into the classroom prior to locking the door. The teacher should lock all classroom access points and facilitate moving occupants out of sight.

### **REPORTED BY**

When there is a life safety threat on campus, a Lockdown should be immediately initiated by any student or staff member. Initiating the Lockdown may happen through various methods, or a combination of methods, depending on the procedures and alert systems utilized by each school and district. Lockdown alerts may be made by word of mouth, phone, radio systems, intercom, panic buttons, or more advanced forms of technology. Plan the communication method in advance to set expectations for students and staff. Regardless of the method(s) of notification, the initiation of a Lockdown should be consistent, simple and swift, and include immediate notification of school administration and local law enforcement agencies.

### **PREPARATION**

Identification of classroom access points that must be locked in the event of a Lockdown is essential preparation. These may include doorways, windows, loading docks, and fire escape ladder access points.

A “safe zone” should also be identified within the classroom that is out of sight of interior windows. Teachers and students should be trained to not open the classroom door, leaving a first responder, school safety team member, or school administrator to unlock it.

### **DRILLS**

Lockdown drills should be performed at least twice a year, or as mandated by state requirements. If possible one of these drills should be performed with local law enforcement personnel participation. At a minimum, law enforcement participation in the drill should occur no less than once every two years.

A drill should always be announced as a drill.

For more information, see the “SRP Lockdown Drill” section of this book.



# LOCKDOWN

## Locks, Lights, Out of Sight.

### CONTINGENCIES

Students and staff who are outside of classrooms when a Lockdown is announced should try to get into the closest available classroom, or room with a door that can be secured. In the event someone cannot get into a room before doors are locked, they should be instructed about other options. In this situation, students and staff should be trained to get out of sight, or even evacuate themselves away from the building or area. Students and staff should receive training on where to go if they self-evacuate so they can be safe and accounted for.

If during a Lockdown an additional hazard manifests inside the school such as a fire, flood, or hazmat incident, then situational decisions must be made. There should be discussions about reacting to a fire alarm if it is activated during a Lockdown. This may require following additional directives of the SRP.

### EXAMPLES OF LOCKDOWN CONDITIONS

The following are a few examples of when a school or emergency dispatch might call for a Lockdown.

- Dangerous animal within a school building Intruder
- An angry or violent parent or student
- Report of a weapon
- Active assailant

### THE DURATION OF A LOCKDOWN

A question that occasionally arises is "How long does it take to release a Lockdown?" The answer is, "That depends, but probably longer than you want to hear."

The Foundation has heard accounts of a Lockdown lasting for hours. In one case - a weapon report - the school was in Lockdown for over three hours. In another - an active assailant in the building - it took about an hour after the issue was resolved for law enforcement to clear the classrooms.

### RED CARD/GREEN CARD

Red Card/Green Cards should NOT be used for a Lockdown. Based on a number of tactical assessments, the overwhelming consensus is that this practice provides information to an intruder that there are potential targets in that room.

### CELL PHONES DURING A LOCKDOWN

It is not uncommon for school administrators to ban cell phone use during a Lockdown. Parent instincts may be at odds with that ban. Often, one of the first things a parent will do when there is a crisis in the school is text or call their child.

In evaluating actual Lockdown events, the initial crisis may only take minutes. After the threat is mitigated, Law Enforcement typically clears the school one classroom at a time. This process may take significant time. During this time, both parents and students can reduce stress through text communication. This also provides a classroom management strategy. Selecting three or four students at a time, a teacher may ask students to text their parents with a message like this: "We're in Lockdown. I'm okay and I'll update you every 5 minutes." Certainly, if a threat is imminent, texting would be discouraged.

There is also an opportunity to ask the students to text their parents with crafted messages as an event unfolds. For example, "Pick me up at Lincoln Elementary in one hour. Bring your ID," might be recommended for student-parent reunification.

It may also be beneficial to have students turn off both Wi-Fi and cellular data services in order to free up bandwidth for first responders, while still allowing SMS text messaging.

### EVACUATION

If an actual violent incident occurs, expect that the building will be evacuated by Law Enforcement since it has become a crime scene.



# LOCKDOWN

## Locks, Lights, Out of Sight.



### SAMPLE OUTWARD MESSAGING TO PARENTS

This is a guide for outward messaging when a Lockdown Action is used in the school. Because a Lockdown is stressful for everyone, plan to send multiple messages. Have a central digital platform that your public information team can easily update, and people can go to for information.

If a Lockdown will be followed by an off-site evacuation, get that information out as quickly as possible. Include the information here, or in a separate communication thread.

Variables in the message are bracketed and italicized.

### CURRENT LOCKDOWN

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Lockdown Currently Activated at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* is currently in Lockdown due to *[state the facts you know about the situation]*.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We are actively responding to the situation and collaborating with emergency responders.

At this time, we ask that parents stay where they are and remain available to receive updates and instructions as needed.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is a Lockdown? \*

#### Text Message

*[School Name]* is currently in Lockdown. Check your email or voicemail for more information. Please stay where you are and remain available at this time. Check here *[link to social media page/site]* for updates.

#### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* is currently in Lockdown due to *[state the facts you know about the situation]*. At this time, we ask that parents stay where they are and remain available to receive updates and instructions as needed. Check our *[social media page/site]* for ongoing updates.

### LIFTED LOCKDOWN

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Lockdown Ended at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* was placed in Lockdown from *[start time of Lockdown]* to *[end time of Lockdown]* due to *[state the incident that occurred]*.

Thank you for your patience while we worked with first responders to respond to the situation.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority.

What is a Lockdown? \*

#### Text Message

The Lockdown at *[School Name]* has been lifted. Please check your email or voicemail for more information.

#### Phone Call

Parents, the Lockdown at *[School Name]* has been lifted. The school was in Lockdown from *[state Lockdown start time]* to *[state Lockdown end time]* due to *[state the incident that occurred]*. Thank you for your patience while we worked with first responders to respond to the situation.

\* Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building. The Lockdown Action advises making rooms look unoccupied by locking individual classroom doors, offices, and other securable areas, moving occupants out of the line of sight of corridor windows, turning off lights, and having occupants maintain silence.

If students are unable to get behind a locked door, they are trained to self-evacuate.

If your child contacts you to let you know that they safely self-evacuated, please contact the district at [District Phone Number or Safety Hotline] to notify us your child is safe.

Link to either your website or [iloveguys.org](http://iloveguys.org) for them to learn more.



# EVACUATE

## A location may be stated.

### EVACUATE TO A LOCATION

Evacuate is called when there is a need to move people from one location to another for safety reasons.

An on-site evacuation is conducted usually because of a mechanical failure that would disrupt the school day, such as a power outage. If it can't be resolved quickly, the school may have to plan for early dismissal.

An off-site evacuation may be necessary when it's no longer safe to stay in the building such as a gas leak or bomb threat. In this case, people will be allowed to bring their personal items with them.

If there has been a violent event at the school, an off-site evacuation will almost always be necessary since the school will be deemed a crime scene. People may or may not be able to bring their personal items with them.

### REUNIFICATION AFTER AN EVACUATION

When the students and staff are evacuated off-site, they may be walking to a different location or being transported to the location and there will be an organized reunification of students and parents/guardians at that site.

For in-depth information about conducting a Reunification, please refer to The Standard Reunification Method:

Link to either your website or <https://iloveuguys.org> for them to learn more.

### PUBLIC ADDRESS

The public address for Evacuate is: "Evacuate! To a Location" and is repeated twice each time the public address is performed. For instance, "Evacuate! To the Flag Pole."

"Evacuate! To a location.

Evacuate! To a location."

### ACTIONS

The Evacuate Action demands students and staff move in an orderly fashion to a safe area.

### INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The School Incident Command System should be initiated.

### RESPONSIBILITY

The classroom teacher or administrator is usually responsible for initiating an Evacuation. The directives or actions may vary for fire, bomb threat, or other emergencies. Other directions may be invoked during an evacuation, and students and staff should be prepared to follow specific instructions given by staff or first responders.

### PREPARATION

Evacuation preparation involves the identification of facility evacuation routes, evacuation assembly points, and evacuation sites, as well as student, teacher, and administrator training. An evacuation site may become the reunification site, so plan accordingly. Ideally, plan to have an off-site evacuation facility that's within walking distance, and another farther away from the school in case the hazard is in the immediate area. Have an MOU in place with each site to outline expectations and responsibilities in advance. A sample MOU for this can be downloaded from [iloveuguys.org](https://iloveuguys.org).

An Evacuation plan must include having all supplies that people with disabilities may need such as medications, supplementary mobility devices and accessible routes for mobility-impaired people.

### EVACUATION ASSEMBLY

The Evacuation Assembly refers to gathering at the Evacuation Assembly Point(s). Teachers are instructed to take attendance after arrival at the Evacuation Assembly Point(s).

Schools with large populations might plan on having multiple, predetermined assembly points to help manage crowds.

### DRILLS

Evacuation drills should be performed at least twice a year or as mandated by state law. An Evacuation drill is very similar to a fire drill. Fire drills are often required regularly and constitute a valid Evacuation drill.

Drills are also a good opportunity to talk about and practice alternate exit routes to use in case a certain area is not safe to walk through.

### CONTINGENCIES

Students are trained that if they are separated from their class during an Evacuation, then joining another group is acceptable. They should be instructed to identify themselves to the teacher in their group after arriving at the Evacuation Site.

### RED CARD/GREEN CARD/MED CARD

After taking roll, the Red/Green/Med Card system is employed for attendance or first responders to quickly visually identify the status of the teachers' classes. Teachers will hold up the Green card if they have all their students and are good to go. They hold up the Red card if they are missing students, have extra students or another problem, and use the Med card to indicate their need for some sort of medical attention.

See the Materials section for examples.



## SAMPLE OUTWARD MESSAGING TO PARENTS

This is a guide for outward messaging when an Evacuation is necessary. Evacuations can be stressful because they are disruptive, whether they're on-site or off-site, so plan to send multiple messages. Have a central digital platform that your public information team can easily update, and people can go to for information.

Variables in the message are bracketed and italicized.

### EVACUATION WITH A RETURN TO SCHOOL ANTICIPATED

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - *[School Name]* Has Been Evacuated

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* was Evacuated at *[state evacuation time]* due to *[state reason for evacuation]*.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We are actively responding to the situation and collaborating with emergency responders.

The *[state the reason for evacuation]* is expected to be resolved with students returning to class. Dismissal will be at the regular time today. Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is the Evacuate Action? \*

#### Text Message

*[School Name]* has been Evacuated due to *[state reason for evacuation]*. Please check your email and voicemail for details and information.

#### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* has been Evacuated due to *[state reason for evacuation]*. Please check your email for details and information.

### EVACUATION WITH EARLY DISMISSAL PLANNED

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - *[School Name]* Has Been Evacuated

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* was Evacuated at *[state evacuation time]* due to *[state reason for evacuation]*. Because of *[reason]*, there will be an early dismissal at *[state the time]*.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We are actively responding to the situation and collaborating with emergency responders. Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*.

What is the Evacuate Action? \*

#### Text Message

*[School Name]* has been Evacuated due to *[state reason for evacuation]* and students will be dismissed early at *[state the time]*. Please check your email and voicemail for details.

#### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* has been Evacuated due to *[state reason for evacuation]* and students will be dismissed early at *[state the time]*. Please check your email for details and information.

### EVACUATION TO AN OFF-SITE LOCATION

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - *[School Name]* Has Been Evacuated

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* was Evacuated at *[state evacuation time]* due to *[state reason for evacuation]*.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We are actively responding to the situation and collaborating with emergency responders.

At this time, we ask that parents stay where they are and remain available to receive updates and instructions as needed.

You will receive communications as soon as we have additional details and information on when and where to pick your child up. Please bring your ID and your patience when you are picking up your child.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is the Evacuate Action? \*

#### Text Message

*[School Name]* has been Evacuated due to *[state reason for evacuation]* which renders the building unsafe at this time. Students can be picked up at *[alternate location]* after *[time]*. Please check your email and voicemail for details. Please bring your ID and your patience when you are picking up your child.

#### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* was Evacuated at *[state evacuation time]* due to *[state reason for evacuation]*. At this time, we ask that parents stay where they are and remain available to receive updates and instructions as needed. We will update you with further communications as soon as we have additional details and information on when and where to pick your child up. Please check your email for details and information.

\* Evacuate is called when there is a need to move people from one location to another. During an evacuation, students and staff are asked to move from one location to another in an orderly fashion.

Link to either your website or [iloveguys.org](http://iloveguys.org) for them to learn more.



# POLICE LED

## Evacuation after a Lockdown

### **POLICE LED EVACUATION**

In the rare situations where law enforcement is clearing classrooms and escorting students and staff out of the classroom and through the building after a Lockdown, it is important to have provided advance instruction on what to expect.

### **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

There may or may not be any public address notifying students and staff that law enforcement is performing these actions.

### **ACTIONS**

As officers enter the classroom, students and staff must keep their hands visible and empty. It is unlikely they will be able to bring backpacks, purses, or any personal items with them during a Police Led Evacuation. Students may be instructed to form a single file line and hold hands front and back, or students and staff may be asked to put their hands on their heads while evacuating.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT**

Prepare students and staff that during a Police Led Evacuation, officers may be loud, direct, and commanding. Students and staff may also be searched both in the classroom and again after exiting the building.

### **EMOTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

There is a conversation occurring with law enforcement regarding their role in post-event recovery. This is a growing concern and warrants conversations between schools, districts, and agencies about how to keep students safe, and reduce the trauma that might be associated with a Police Led Evacuation.

### **PREPARATION**

Student, teacher, and administrator training.

In the event of a police-led evacuation, policies should be in place on how to give key access to law enforcement officers evacuating all rooms in the school building.

### **MEDIA MESSAGING**

To the media/community after an event.

Example Situation: Violent Event

“On (date) at (time of day), (agency name) responded to (school name) in reference to (event type). Officers assisted with safely escorting students and staff out of the school and to the Evacuation and Reunification site where the (School District) was able to initiate the Reunification process.”

### **DISPATCH MESSAGING**

To responding officers during an event.

Example Situation: Police Led Evacuation

“(Dispatched Units) respond to (school name) to assist with Evacuation of students and staff. Assistance is needed to accompany individuals out of the school and to the Secure Assembly Area at (location). Respond to the Command Post for your assignment. (timestamp)”

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT MESSAGING**

To responding officers during an event.

Example Situation: Gas Leak

(Police unit name) respond to (area near the school) to assist with evacuating students from (school name) because of a gas smell in the building. Meet with (supervisor) for further information to assist with Evacuation and Reunification.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT GUIDANCE**

Once the threat has been neutralized, it is recommended that first responders re-group and slowly move to the evacuation phase. Identify the location of the evacuation area or bus staging area prior to releasing classrooms. Take this time to discuss emotional responsibility when releasing classrooms. Begin releasing people from classrooms and offices to the designated area.

Law enforcement officers may also be needed to assist with directing traffic and ensuring the evacuation process is being done safely.

### **CONTINGENCIES**

Commanders should consider leaving students and staff in their rooms until transportation arrives. Your team can also discuss communicating to classrooms that the threat has been minimized enough that they may Hold in their classroom and wait for evacuation.

When it's time, each room can be cleared directly to the buses in order to minimize trauma.

It is recommended to avoid the scene of the incident when exiting. Transport directly to the Reunification Site.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

During a police-led evacuation, transportation is going to be initiated. Have a policy in place for your transportation department or contracted transportation company so they are ready to respond in a timely manner with enough buses.



# SHELTER

## State the Hazard and Safety Strategy.

### **SHELTER STATE THE HAZARD AND SAFETY STRATEGY**

Shelter is called when specific protective actions are needed based on a threat or hazard. Training should include response to threats such as tornadoes, earthquakes, hazardous materials situations or other local threats.

### **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

The public address for Shelter should include the hazard and the safety strategy. The public address is repeated twice each time the public address is performed.

“Shelter! For a hazard. Using safety strategy.

Shelter! For a hazard. Using safety strategy.”

For a tornado, an example would be:

“Shelter for a tornado. Go to the tornado shelter.

Shelter for a tornado. Go to the tornado shelter.”

After the danger has passed:

“Students and staff, the Shelter is released. All clear. Thank you for your assistance and patience during the Shelter.”

### **HAZARDS MAY INCLUDE**

- Tornado
- Severe weather
- Wildfires
- Flooding
- Hazmat spill or release
- Earthquake
- Tsunami

### **SAFETY STRATEGIES MAY INCLUDE:**

- Evacuate to Shelter area
- Seal the room
- Drop, cover and hold
- Get to high ground

### **ACTIONS**

Collaboration with local responders, the National Weather Service, and other local, regional and state resources will help in developing specific actions for your district response.

### **INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

The School Incident Command System should be initiated.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Sheltering requires that all students and staff follow response directives. Districts should have procedures for all foreseeable local hazards and threats which include provisions for those individuals with access and functional needs.

### **PREPARATION**

Identification and marking of facility Shelter areas.

### **DRILLS**

Shelter safety strategies should be drilled at least twice a year, or as mandated by the state.

### **STATE THE HAZARD AND SAFETY STRATEGY**

Using the Shelter Protocol and stating the hazard allows for an understanding of the threat and the associated protective actions. Most often, the Shelter Protocol is utilized for tornadoes and other severe weather, in which case it would include the Shelter location for students and staff, and what protective posture or action they should take.

Sheltering for a hazardous materials spill or release is very different. In the case of a hazmat situation, students and staff would be directed to close their windows, shut down their heating and air conditioning units and seal windows and doors to preserve the good inside air while restricting the entry of any contaminated outside air. Listening to specific directives is critical to successful emergency response.

### **PLAIN LANGUAGE**

NIMS and ICS require the use of plain language. Codes and specific language that are not readily understood by the general public are no longer to be used. The SRP uses shared, plain, natural language between students, staff and first responders. If there are specific directives that need to be issued for a successful response in a school, those should be made clearly using plain language. There is nothing wrong with adding directives as to where to Shelter, or what protective actions should be used in the response.

### **CUSTOMIZATION**

The classroom poster is sufficient for generic Shelter guidance. The Foundation recognizes that localized hazards may need to be added to the poster. For this reason, the Public Address poster is available in MS Word for customization (<https://iloveguys.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html>).



# SHELTER

State the Hazard and Safety Strategy.



## SAMPLE OUTWARD MESSAGING TO PARENTS

This is a guide for outward messaging when a Shelter Action is necessary. In a weather event, which is commonly the reason this is used, it's likely that families are also sheltering. They will want to know their children are in a safe situation. Have a central digital platform that your public information team can easily update, and people can go to for information.

Variables in the message are bracketed and italicized.

### SHELTER (CURRENT)

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Shelter Currently Activated at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* is currently Sheltering due to *[state reason for Shelter]*.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We are actively monitoring the situation.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is Shelter? \*

#### Text Message

*[School Name]* is currently Sheltering due to *[state reason for Shelter]*. Please check your email and voicemail for more information.

#### Phone Call

Parents, *[School Name]* is currently Sheltering due to *[state reason for Shelter]*. The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. Please check your email for more information. We are actively monitoring the situation and will send updates as necessary.

### SHELTER (PAST)

#### Email

Subject Line: Safety Notification - Shelter Ended at *[School Name]*

Dear Parent or Guardian,

*[School Name]* used the Shelter Action from *[start time of Shelter]* to *[end time of Shelter]* due to *[state reason for Shelter]*. All school operations have now returned to normal.

The safety and well-being of your child is our top priority. We will continue to keep you informed about important concerns at our school.

Watch for updates here *[link to the platform you'll be updating]*

What is Shelter? \*

#### Text Message

The Shelter at *[School Name]* has been lifted. All school operations have now returned to normal.

Please check your email and voicemail for more information.

#### Phone Call

*[School Name]* used the Shelter Action from *[start time of Shelter]* to *[end time of Shelter]* due to *[state reason for Shelter]*. All school operations have now returned to normal.

\* Shelter is called when specific protective actions are needed based on a threat or hazard. Sheltering requires that all students and staff follow response directives based on the threat or hazard.

Link to either your website or [iloveguys.org](https://loveguys.org) for them to learn more.

# SEQUENCING

## the Actions



**HOLD**



**SECURE**



**LOCKDOWN**



**EVACUATE**



**SHELTER**

### **ENVIRONMENT DICTATES THE TACTICS**

The five actions of the Standard Response Protocol can work together as situations evolve and information is gathered. Here are some examples of how this can, and has, been done.

#### **HOAXES**

False information may be reported to public safety about a threat inside the building. This situation may warrant a conversation with public safety agencies. If a threat is reported, but is suspicious, isolated or unverified, then a Hold action may be used in combination with a Secure action, instead of calling for a Lockdown.

This results in students being behind locked classroom doors and locking all outside access points. If the threat report proves false, it is easier to return to business as usual, than releasing the school from Lockdown.

#### **HOLD ESCALATES TO LOCKDOWN**

The school receives a vague or anonymous report, through social media, of a student carrying a weapon. There is neither an immediate confirmation of it nor a substantiated threat. School personnel need time to locate the student and send security/SRO to locate and engage the student in a very low-key way. They initiate the Hold Action during the search. Additional information and evidence may lead to a Lockdown because an imminent threat is detected.

#### **HOLD TO EVACUATE**

Utilize a Hold Action for a brief time during an unexpected fire alarm that is not accompanied by immediate signs of smoke or fire. This allows safety/security teams to scan for actual signs of fire, or other ambush type threats before Evacuating the building. An Evacuation would still occur per fire department requirements, but the tactical pause to gather information before evacuating allows for more situational awareness.

### **LOCKDOWN MISTAKE SHIFTS TO SECURE**

The Police Department received reports from passers-by of a person with a rifle on the bike path adjacent to an elementary school. They called the school directly and directed them to put the school in Lockdown, which was incorrect but this can happen when there are many unknown factors. Officers and District Security Teams were on the scene within 2-5 minutes and a suspect was taken into custody within that time. Personnel on-site were able to quickly confirm the building wasn't breached.

The Lockdown was shifted to a Secure Action, with each classroom being released by school and security personnel. Releasing each classroom instead of using a public address is to retain continuity for releasing any Lockdown.

#### **SECURE ESCALATES TO LOCKDOWN**

Recently there was a shooting in a park adjacent to a high school. The school was immediately placed in Secure, however, several victims and witness students ran back inside before the doors could be secured. In this case, it was unknown exactly who entered the building. The Secure Action shifted to Lockdown as a precaution while officers searched the building. It was determined to be safe within about 30 minutes, but the Lockdown was not immediately lifted. Moving to Hold at that point may have been a better choice in order to manage the situation and maintain tactical control of the building while allowing some monitored movement inside.