

Department of School Safety and Security  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

***Emergency Preparedness Procedures  
Guidelines for Lockdown-Evacuate-Shelter***

***LOCKDOWN***

This is a term used to describe an emergency at a Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) facility. *Lockdown* alerts staff that imminent danger exists inside or outside the building. It requires moving to an immediate lockdown mode and that all students are under supervision. The on-site emergency team (OSET) is not activated during a Lockdown.

**Persons authorized to call a Lockdown**

School administrators or their designee will notify students, staff, and visitors via public address (PA) system and two-way portable radios when a Lockdown is in effect. Directions should be given to immediately move to lockdown mode. Staff should make an announcement and notify 911 and Office of School Support and Improvement (OSSI).

***Lockdown Alert***

- When the administrator/designee announces a Lockdown, scan the immediate area outside the classroom or office for any students and staff. Allow them in the classroom/office, and immediately lock or secure the door if possible.
- Make the room look unoccupied by turning off the lights, closing and/or covering the windows and blinds, and moving away from the line of sight from the doors and windows. Remain silent.
- If staff and students are inside the building but outside a classroom or office when a Lockdown is called, move students to the nearest securable location.
- Staff supervising students outside when a Lockdown alert occurs inside the building should be notified of the Lockdown activation by PA or two-way radio. Staff and students should move to a pre-determined safe location identified on the school's emergency plan, away from the building, and maintain communication with the command post.
- Ignore the fire alarm system and class change bells.
- Wait for further instructions.

***EVACUATE***

There are two types of evacuations: *fire* and *directed*.

***Fire Evacuation***

- Activate fire evacuation alarm.
- Students/staff/visitors leave the building by the nearest exit.
- Proceed to a point at least 50 feet from the building.
- Perform an accountability of the students/staff/visitors.

***Directed Evacuation***

- Will be used during possible high-level bomb threats, an identified suspicious package, or an inside hazardous material release.
- Notify 911 and OSSI.
- Determine a plan to direct everyone away from the known danger area.
- Announce via PA and two-way portable radio.

- Students/staff/visitors must evacuate to a point at least 300 feet from the building.

***SHELTER***

This is a term used to alert staff that an emergency exists at or near an MCPS facility. It requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. Administrators may activate OSET and set up a command post when appropriate. There are three types of shelters: *Public Safety*, *Severe Weather*, and *Outside Hazardous Materials Release*.

**Persons authorized to call a Shelter alert**

Administrators or their designee will notify students/staff/visitors via the PA system and two-way portable radios when a Shelter alert is activated. It is recommended that an age-appropriate announcement of a Shelter alert include a brief description of the nature and location of the incident.

***Public Safety Shelter Alert***

- When the administrator announces a Public Safety Shelter alert, bring outside students/staff/visitors into the main building; relocatable classrooms are secured but not evacuated.
- Outside doors are locked and kept secured.
- Students should be accounted for in an instructional area.
- Classroom instruction should continue.
- Staff must document attendance and report any discrepancies to an administrator/designee.
- During a Public Safety Shelter alert, classroom lockdown is not required.
- OSET may be activated by an administrator during a Public Safety Shelter alert via a PA announcement and two-way portable radios.
- Depending on the nature of the emergency or potential threat, it may not be appropriate to change classes. In these situations, class bells should be turned off and students and staff should remain in their classrooms until directed otherwise by the administrator/designee.
- Do not ignore the fire alarm system.

***Severe Weather Shelter***

A severe thunderstorm or tornado warning is activated for the area near the school.

- Students/staff/visitors must report to the identified weather-safe areas inside the building.
- Relocatable classrooms are to be evacuated to the main building.
- Bring the emergency kit, emergency kit cell phone, and the Nextel phone to the identified weather-safe area.
- Ensure that the NOAA weather radio is continually monitored.

***Outside Hazardous Material Release Shelter Alert***

This is a term used to describe a specific shelter alert due to an outside air contamination emergency at or near the building. This could be the result of a suspected chemical, biological, or radiological incident or a nearby hazardous material spill.

### **Outside Hazardous Material Release Alert**

When activating an Outside Hazardous Material Release Shelter alert, take the following steps immediately:

- Announce an Outside Hazardous Material Release Shelter alert.
- Bring students/staff/visitors into the main building from outdoor activities.
- Evacuate relocatable classrooms if safe to do so.
- Secure/lock exterior doors and windows.
- Hold students in their current locations inside the building until the best course of action can be determined.
- Turn off electrical power to ensure immediate shutdown of HVAC.
- Ignore fire alarm system only during this Outside Hazardous Material Release Shelter alert.

### **Parent/Child Reunification**

All schools have plans in place to reunite students with their parents/guardians in the event of an emergency at a school. This process will ensure the safe and orderly reuniting of students and parents/guardians. Schools will ensure that a three-step approach is used:

- Verify the authorization to release the student.
- Locate the student.
- Sign out student and unite student and parent/guardian.

### **Firearms**

- Avoid attempts to disarm/subdue an armed subject.
- Notify administrator/designee and school-based security of any firearm incidents immediately, and call 911 with details.
- Determine the need to implement a Lockdown or Public Safety Shelter alert.
- Abandoned/discarded firearms should be covered by appropriate means and never left unattended.

### **Bomb Threat Assessment**

- Factors to consider:
  - Specific details provided by the threat.
  - Number of prior threats to the school.
  - Current events surrounding the school.
  - Demeanor of the threat.
- The administrator will make a decision on evacuation based on an assessment of the situation and input from other school administrators, the Department of School Safety and Security, and the police. If the parties do not agree, this disagreement will be resolved in favor of evacuation. Refer to MCPS Regulation EKC-RA, *Bomb Threats/Explosive Devices*. Use a Directed Evacuation to evacuate the school.
- Evacuation is **warranted only** if the threat level is high.
- Evacuation is **not warranted** if the threat level is low.
- It is recommended that an activation of a Public Safety Shelter alert and the use of sweep/scan teams be used during a low-level threat when the building is not evacuated.

### **Bomb Threats—Call Trace**

- Use *call trace* procedures as described on the yellow *Telephone Threat Checklist* card. Follow instructions exactly.
- After hanging up the phone, press \*57 on the same line the call came in on.
- Press \*47 if the school's phone number has a 279 or 517 exchange.
- Do not dial "9" before dialing \*57 or \*47.
- Notify school administration immediately.
- Report the bomb threat to 911 and OSSI.

- Inform the 911 operator of *call trace* activation.

### **Bomb Threat Sweep/Scan**

- In certain circumstances, staff volunteers may be asked to sweep/scan the facility or grounds for suspicious items.
- A sweep/scan should be conducted in teams and only by visual means (eyes and ears only).
- If a suspicious item is discovered during a sweep/scan, evacuate to a 300-foot safe zone and immediately notify administrator.
- If a suspicious item is located, do not use a radio or cell phone in the immediate area; i.e., within 25 feet in all directions.
- No suspicious item should be handled in any manner by school staff. Do not touch it!

### **Hazardous Material Spills**

These guidelines should be followed in the event of a chemical incident in which there is potential for a significant release of hazardous materials. Spill response procedures will vary depending on whether the spill is **small** (less than 18 inches in diameter), **medium** (exceeds 18 inches, but is less than 6 feet), or **large** (exceeds 6 feet in diameter, and any *running* spill that has not been stopped). If a potential biological agent threat or incident is present, follow MCPS Biological Agent Threats/Incidents guidelines.

**General Spill Control Techniques:** Once a spill has occurred, the staff at the spill site must decide whether the spill is small enough to handle without outside assistance. Guidance should be obtained from science resource teachers or staff with a chemistry background; i.e., in science labs, chemistry labs, automotive shop areas. Containment or clean-up of a small spill should be done only by staff members who are properly trained under OSHA Regulation 1910.120.

**Small Spill Evacuation:** Evacuate the immediate area and surrounding areas whenever the air is or could become untenable and could cause someone to experience difficulty breathing, watery eyes, upper respiratory congestion or tightness in chest, coughing, runny nose, etc. Also evacuate the immediate area or building if material is emitting vapors or fumes.

### **What to do during an Earthquake**

Stay as safe as possible during an earthquake. Be aware that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks and a larger earthquake might occur. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and if you are indoors, stay there until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

#### **If Indoors**

- **Drop** to the ground; take **Cover** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; **Hold On** until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall such as light fixtures or furniture. Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and you know it is a strongly supported, loadbearing doorway.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Most injuries occur when people move to a different location or exit the building.
- Do not use the elevators

#### **If Outdoors**

- Stay there. Move away from building, streetlights, and utility wires.