

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

### **Background:**

In the event of an emergency, the Division's primary concern is the safety of students, staff, contractors and visitors, followed by the preservation of property. Through Division and site Emergency Response Plans, specific administrative procedures have been established to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources.

### **Definitions:**

#### **Administrative Command Team (ACT):**

is led by the EOC director and provides advice and assistance to the Superintendent and Incident Commander during an emergency. It is comprised of members of the Central Leadership Team.

#### **Crisis:**

is an unplanned present or imminent event that demands immediate action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety and welfare of people, or to limit damage to property. Response protocols required and the need to involve external agencies are dependent on the crisis level.

#### **Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Director:**

provides overall leadership and authority at the Division level to schools and departments during an emergency and co-ordinates the Division emergency response or Administrative Command Team (ACT). The role is assigned to a member of the Executive Team, usually the Division Principal.

#### **Evacuation:**

is a functional protocol used when it's unsafe to remain inside a building—such as a fire, gas leak or chemical spill.

#### **Functional Protocols:**

are [standard protocols](#) used when a specific action is required in response to an emergency—they include evacuation, hold and secure, lockdown, shelter-in-place and on-alert. These are regularly practiced as drills.

#### **Hold and Secure:**

is a functional protocol used when there is a security threat or threat of violence outside the building, such as an intoxicated person or criminal activity in the area.

#### **Hour Zero:**

is a web-based application used by the Division to store, update and monitor Division, school

and department emergency preparedness and response plans (ERP). It follows the incident command system (ICS) for emergency management.

**Incident Command System (ICS):**

is an internationally recognized system for emergency management used by industry and emergency responders. Division and site emergency preparedness plans are based on this framework.

**Incident Commander:**

is the person assigned with overall responsibility for the co-ordination of emergency response at the site level and provides leadership for the site emergency response team (SERT). At school sites, this is the Principal.

**Lockdown:**

is a functional protocol used when there is an imminent security threat or threat of violence inside the building—such as a dangerous intruder or active shooter.

**Shelter-in Place:**

is a functional protocol used when it's safer to be inside the building than outside—such as during a tornado warning, flood, windstorm or wild animal on the premises—and there is no threat of violence. A shelter-in-place is also used to control movement because of an incident at the school, such as an injury, student emergency or chemical spill.

**Site Emergency Response Team (SERT):**

is led by the Incident Commander and co-ordinates activation and response of the emergency plan at the site (school or department) level. The team works in conjunction with the Division ACT if the response becomes larger than the site can handle.

**Procedures:**

1. In the event of a crisis within a school or department, the Incident Commander—Principal or Director—has the authority to make immediate decisions regarding emergency response, as guided by site- and Division-level emergency response plans, functional protocols and procedures.
2. As soon as practical, the Incident Commander shall notify the Division Emergency Hotline when there is an unplanned incident or emergency that interrupts the normal course of operations (including, false alarms, evacuation, lockdown, etc.). The hotline links to the EOC Director and the Division Information Officer who will provide further guidance. During non-operational hours, contact the on-call tradesperson to report facility-related emergencies.
3. The EOC Director, following the Division Crisis/Emergency Communication Protocol, shall notify members of the Division Administrative Command Team (ACT) to review the incident and provide any necessary support to the Incident Commander.
4. In the event of a crisis, the Superintendent, in consultation with the EOC Director, has the authority to make final decisions regarding crisis response, as guided by the Division Emergency Response Plan, functional protocols and procedures.

5. Crisis communications, questions or inquiries from the media or public shall be referred to the Division Information Officer, without further response or comment.
6. The Incident Commander shall:
  - 6.1. Prepare [a site-specific school/department emergency plan](#), and procedures that follow Division template(s) and ensure these procedures also address persons with special requirements.
  - 6.2. At the beginning of each school year, review and update site plans and procedures in [Hour Zero online](#) and communicate functional protocols and procedures annually to staff, students and the school community.
  - 6.3. Ensure the site annual checklist and drill schedule in [Hour Zero online](#) is updated regularly.
  - 6.4. Ensure emergency equipment, supplies and training required to support a crisis response are maintained.
  - 6.5. Ensure classroom and departmental emergency folders are updated annually and stored in a visible location near the primary exit.
  - 6.6. Mobilize members of the Site Emergency Response Team (SERT) as required.
7. The Incident Commander at each school shall:
  - 7.1. Hold a minimum of six evacuation drills per year, with at least two in the fall and two in the spring.
  - 7.2. Hold one additional drill related to each of the following: hold and secure, lockdown and shelter-in-place.
  - 7.3. Ensure kindergarten classes participate in at least half of the emergency drills.
  - 7.4. Notify the Facility Service Centre one hour prior to all drills.
  - 7.5. For fire evacuation drills, notify the Facility Service Centre and security monitoring company at least one hour prior to the drill, and the security company after the drill.
  - 7.6. Keep a record of each drill and drill evaluation in [Hour Zero online](#).
  - 7.7. Post evacuation routes near exit doors in each room.
  - 7.8. Communicate emergency response protocols and site-specific procedures for staff and substitutes on the school website and in classroom folders.
  - 7.9. Make arrangements to shelter students in an offsite evacuation centre, as necessary, in a school evacuation. These arrangements are to be reviewed and documented annually in the site Emergency Response Plan, available through [Hour Zero online](#).
8. The Incident Commander at Central Services shall:
  - 8.1. Hold a minimum of two evacuation drills per year.
  - 8.2. Notify the security monitoring company and Facility Services prior to the drill, and the security company after the drill.
  - 8.3. Hold one additional drill related to each of the following: hold and secure, lockdown and shelter-in-place.
  - 8.4. Keep a record of each drill and drill evaluation in [Hour Zero online](#).
  - 8.5. Post evacuation routes near exit doors in each area.

- 8.6. Make arrangements to shelter staff in an offsite evacuation centre, as necessary, in a building evacuation. These arrangements are to be reviewed and documented annually in the site Emergency Response Plan, available through [Hour Zero online](#).
9. In the event a provincial or municipal state of emergency is declared, the Division and site Emergency Response Plans, shall be superseded by the local jurisdiction's disaster service agency from which all directions for emergency evacuation or other emergency actions shall be directed and co-ordinated.
10. Pursuant to the *Disaster Services Act*, all Division employees may be considered disaster workers during a declared emergency, and as such, may be directed to remain on the job until released by their supervisor.

**Reference:**

Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 62, 196, 197, 222 *Education Act*  
*Disaster Services Act*  
*Emergency Medical Aid Act*  
*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*  
*Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Regulation and Code  
Alberta Fire Code