

CAMPUS RESILIENCY TEAM



PREPARE MY
SCHOOL

READINGS & RESOURCES

CAMPUS RESILIENCY TEAM

(Other names used include: Emergency Response Team, Crisis Management Team, EPM Team, Incident Management Team, and Emergency Preparedness Team.)

Overview

Best practices within the school community includes the utilization of a Campus Resiliency Team (CRT) or sometimes referred to as a Crisis Management Team or Emergency Action Committee, etc. This group, regardless of its title, not only convenes in response to potential or actual crisis or emergency situations, but also meets on a regular basis to plan and discuss overall safety, security and emergency preparedness policies and strategy that will lead to a more resilient organization. This wider group of stakeholders serves as a “force multiplier” for the direct hire employees charged with managing these programs on a daily basis and assists the campus directors in determining that the right assets, resources and emphasis are placed for all life-safety and business continuity programs. Convening of this group also allows the risk management personnel to seek “buy-in” from other stakeholders early in the process of strategy and policy development, making successful implementation more likely. A regular, recurring schedule of CRT meetings should be established where risk is the main topic. Items of discussion may include safety, security, emergency preparedness, child protection, emergency communication, policy and procedure development, mitigation strategies, training and drill regimens, risk elements of off-campus travel or after-hours activities or special event planning among other topics.

The Campus Resiliency Team is responsible for working with all campus stakeholders to design, implement and manage the Emergency Planning Management (EPM) program and ensure the school is prepared to quickly deal with incidents and emergency situations and to prevent them from becoming a crisis. The number personnel assigned to the CRT depends on the size of the school but typically ranges from six to twelve. An industry best practice would be that each position also has a designated and trained back-up. Key suggested CRT positions include:

CRT Leader: The Head of School does not necessarily need to lead the CRT, however, the school leader selected for this critical position needs to have clear delegation of authority from the Head and/or Board to manage any incident response. The most critical aspect of this position is to ensure that all aspects of the EPM program are maintained and that stakeholders are continuously trained on response protocols.

EPM Coordinator: The EPM Coordinator is responsible for the administrative side of the EPM program and ensures program activity is well documented, updated and coordinated across the school community. Some of their duties would include:

- Working with the leadership team to assign personnel to the CRT
- Assisting the CRT with the development and vetting of appropriate emergency response protocols to counter the identified threats and hazards
- Scheduling and monitoring emergency response drills to ensure all stakeholders are appropriately trained

- Documenting all aspects of the EPM program
- Ensuring emergency supplies are maintained and in a state of readiness
- Maintaining emergency contacts
- Tracking and coordinating all safety/security related audits and inspections
- Tracking and documenting incidents

Operations/Facilities Coordinator: The Operations Coordinator is best filled from a member of the facilities management team and would be well versed in building and maintenance operations.

Public Information Officer: A best practice would be that the Head of School or CRT Leader not be the one designated as the main spokesperson for the public and media during an incident or crisis. This position should be filled by a school representative who has been trained on how to deal with the press and media.

Security Coordinator: Someone from the school security staff should always serve on the CRT.

Medical Representative: The School Nurse or Counselor should always be a member of the CRT.

Finance Representative: Someone who has the ability to make emergency purchases, such as a representative from the school finance office, should always be a member of the CRT.

Athletic Director: Whoever is responsible for or works with the after-school activities program, often referred to as the Athletic Director, should be represented on the CRT.

Academic Leaders: One or more Principals or Assistant Principals/Deans should be assigned to the CRT as well.

Every school should determine their CRT staffing based on their size, magnitude of threats and hazards (past and future), and level and speed of response from fire, police, HAZMAT (hazardous material), and other emergency responders. Schools should also ensure that every position on their CRT has a dedicated back-up in the event a CRT member is not present during an incident response. While the CRT develops multi-hazard response protocols for most threat responses, many incidents still require that certain management functions be performed. The situation must be identified and assessed, a plan to deal with it developed and implemented, and the necessary resources procured and paid for. Regardless of the size of the incident, these management functions still will apply. There are five major CRT functions that are critical for incident responses. These functions include:

- **Incident Response:** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has over all responsibility for the incident.
- **Operations:** Conducts operations to reach the incident response objectives.
- **Planning:** Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/ analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.
- **Logistics:** Provides resources and needed services to support the achievement of the incident objectives.

- **Finance & Administration:** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

Best practice among schools dictates that the use of a well-trained and prepared emergency team (such as a CRT) to manage and lead operations during an emergency or disruptive incident or event leads to more favorable outcomes and results.

Three common response problem areas that schools face when not operating with well-trained teams are summed up by the term **ACE:**

A - Authority

- Not sure who has it.
- Too many people “assuming it.”
- People who have it, don’t use it.
- “Bottleneck” – Too many decisions by one person.

C - Communication

- Your response is only as good as your communication.
- Information must be given and received.
- Too and from who do you need to get information?

E - Expectations

- Who will take on which responsibilities?
- What are the expectations of your students, staff, parents, the Board, and other stakeholders?

How to build a Campus Resiliency Team

Identify who will lead the CRT and who will be the back-up. Note: It does not have to be the Head of School in every instance.

Develop specific delegation of authority to manage emergency responses (possibly with Board input).

Identify those school/campus features that would be impacted in a disruptive event such as:

- Campus layout/location
- Infrastructure (number and location of buildings, recreational areas, parking structures, etc.)
- Student/staff population and ratios
- Students/staff with special needs/health issues

Determine level and capacity of local emergency first responders (fire/police/medical, etc.).

Determine the desired skills needed for the CRT such as:

- Local community knowledge
- Languages
- Knowledge of campus infrastructure
- Experience as a first responder (military/police/fire/medical)

Using the staff skills inventory questionnaire, select the best suited members for the CRT.

NOTE: See the “Staff Inventory Questionnaire” under Downloads

- Appoint members or ask for volunteers.
- Conduct a meeting with the new CRT before students arrive.
- Ensure all CRT staffing/needs gaps are covered.
- Develop or update the resiliency plan (emergency operations plan) for the new year by taking into account any new potential disruptions, vulnerabilities, etc.
- Introduce the new CRT to the staff and faculty and discuss the planning and training for the year.
- Review, drill, train, and prepare throughout the year.

CRT Response Checklist

When schools are forced to respond to a fast-developing incident or event, they commonly face three factors:

- Inadequate information
- Insufficient time
- Insufficient resources

Knowing this Campus Resiliency Teams can utilize a response checklist as part of their preparedness training and drills. By using this during drills and training they will be better prepared to respond to real events.

A typical checklist might include:

- Determine what is occurring.
- Identify what the disruptive event is determine the appropriate response.
- Activate your emergency management system.
- If it is a “quick action” emergency, ascertain which response protocol needs to be implemented. If it is going to be a prolonged disruptive event, determine your course of action or response.
- Maintain communication among all relevant stakeholders.
- Establish what information needs to be communicated to staff, students, families and the community.
- If it is a “quick action” response monitor how emergency first aid is being administered
- If there are injured stakeholders.
- Decide if more equipment and supplies are needed.