

## **REGULATION #5208.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

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### **1.0 CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAMS**

Each school and site is required to establish a Critical Incident Response Team at the beginning of each school year. School team members' names and roles assistant superintendent by the end of September each year. District site team lists must be submitted to the assistant superintendent responsible for Student Services.

The Critical Incident Response Team's goal is to **“return the school/site to normalcy”** by providing managerial assistance and administrative support to the school/site while dealing with and mitigating the effects of the incident on staff and students.

The Critical Incident Response Team does not manage a critical incident, but rather manages the school/site's response to a critical incident. In so doing, the affect and effect of the incident may be mitigated and the school/site community will recover more quickly and completely. As issues will be dealt with in a timely and appropriate fashion, secondary trauma may be reduced.

All teams should meet each September to review general procedures for responding to critical incidents and their school/site specific plan.

### **2.0 ASSESSMENT MEASURES**

Assessment measures should be carried out on a regular basis and may be incorporated into, or supplement, the inspections made by the school or site-based health and safety committee.

- a) Principals and site managers must guarantee easy access for emergency vehicles and equipment. In order to ensure unimpeded access for emergency vehicles, the Director, Physical Plant & Transportation Services, or designate, in consultation with Principals and site managers and representatives of Surrey/White Rock Fire Services, may designate specific portions of a school site as fire lanes. No vehicles are to be parked within 8 metres (25 feet) of any school buildings, to ensure full perimeter access to buildings. When a person refuses to remove his/her vehicle from a designated “no parking” area, or when the driver or owner of a vehicle parked in such an area cannot be readily located, the principal or site manager, or designate, may have the vehicle removed. Providing it can be

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demonstrated that no reasonable alternative was available, the Surrey Board of Education will support such action as required.

- b) Principals or site managers must immediately notify the Physical Plant & Transportation Services Department when fire extinguishers are empty or missing, when fire alarms are not working, or break glass stations require attention.
- c) The school Safety Committee must frequently assess high risk areas such as industrial, science, and food preparation areas. The committee should also ensure that spray painting is carried out in accordance with B.C. Fire Code Regulations and compressed gas cylinders are securely chained at all times.
- d) The school Safety Committee must carefully monitor the procedures for storage, use and disposal of hazardous substances.
- e) The school Safety Committee must conduct periodic inspections of the school to identify potential earthquake hazards and reduce potential dangers posed to staff, students and the public.
- f) Principals or site managers must formulate an evacuation plan of safe routes and open-space assembly areas. Elevators are extremely vulnerable to earthquakes and should be avoided.
- g) Principals or site managers should be aware of the necessity to have established procedures to deal with: main shut off valves for water, gas and electricity; heating-air conditioning equipment; chemical storage and gas lines in laboratories; portable (battery-powered) PA equipment, radios, lighting, first aid equipment, fire extinguishers, overhead power lines; underground gas and sewer lines.
- h) Services such as water, gas, electricity, heating-air conditioning equipment must be reactivated by qualified maintenance personnel.

### **3.0 DRILLS**

Regular evacuation drills are essential to help ensure safe conduct and immediate and appropriate reaction in the event of an emergency. Principals or site managers are reminded that procedures used during earthquakes are different from procedures for evacuation in case of fire, and require some different assessment and planning. Classroom discussions, demonstrations and exercises regarding emergencies and safe and orderly evacuation of facilities

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should be frequent enough to ensure that all staff and students are familiar with procedures to be used and reasons for their use.

Principals or site managers should consult with district resources before determining appropriate response procedures for a particular school. Building design and materials may be key indicators as to how drills and emergency response procedures are to be carried out.

Please note that these are only guidelines and meant to serve as the basis for a portion of the preparatory and action plans of the school. The principal or site manager is responsible for coordinating the communication of all critical incident procedures to staff, students and parents.

Principals and site managers are given the following guidelines for conducting **fire drills**:

- a) Fire drills should be held as frequently as necessary, but not less than three (3) times in the fall and three (3) times in the spring during each school year. (B.C. Fire Code section 2.8.3.2 – Fire drill frequency)
- b) School security systems are electronically monitored and the activation of a fire alarm will automatically notify the security company. Schools must phone the security company prior to a fire drill to ensure that Surrey/White Rock Fire Services are not directed to respond. After completion of the fire drill, security should also be notified.
- c) The foregoing procedures are to be followed even in the case of false alarms. Willful false alarms by students are to be treated as follows:
  - Kindergarten to Grade 3 – Students apprehended causing a fire alarm should be admonished by the Principal and a Fire Department Public Educator should be contacted to assist in educating the student about the seriousness of the incident.
  - Grades 4 to 12 – Students apprehended causing a false alarm may be immediately suspended. A Fire Department Public Educator should be contacted to assist in educating the student about the seriousness of the incident.

Principals and site managers are given the following guidelines for conducting **earthquake drills**:

- a) Complete earthquake drills should be held as frequently as necessary but not less than two (2) times during each school year.

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- b) Prior to an earthquake drill, staff and students should be provided with information as to what might be expected through each phase of an earthquake and what actions should be taken.
- c) Drills should cover what actions are to be taken during the actual earthquake, aftershocks and after the ground stops shaking.

If inside the classroom:

- Extinguish any burners in science labs or turn off stoves in food preparation areas.
- Move away from potential hazards (e.g. windows, shelves, wall hanging, chemicals).
- Take cover under a table or desk, in a corner or against an inside wall.
- Assume drop position and stay quiet until earthquake is over and further instructions are given for evacuation.

If in halls/stairway or place where no cover exists:

- Move to the interior wall (be careful of lockers) and kneel with back to the wall.
- Cover sides of head with elbows and clasp hands firmly behind neck.
- After the initial shock is over, teachers will evacuate the classroom/school to a prearranged outside location, alert to the possibility of aftershocks.

If outdoors:

- Move to an open space (away from buildings, overhead power lines and gas lines).
- Assume the drop position until the earthquake is over.
- Watch for dangers that may require you to move.

If on a school bus:

- Drivers should immediately stop the bus away from possible hazards.
- Overhead objects should be removed from racks.
- Occupants should remain in their seats and hold on or assume drop position under seats, if possible, or in the aisles.

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- d) When leaving classrooms, staff should ensure evacuation routes are safe and that any classroom emergency supplies are also transported outside. Staff will direct students to pre-arranged assembly locations where they will remain until re-entry to school buildings has been approved, they are directed to relocate elsewhere or students have been released to parents/guardians.

### **4.0 IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE EMERGENCY:**

- a) Activate the site fire alarm for building evacuation.
- b) Confirm the location of the fire.
- c) Call 911 for Surrey/White Rock Fire Services, providing details of incident, e.g. location, nature.
- d) Even in the case of a small fire that has been extinguished, report it to Surrey/White Rock Fire Services and school district Physical Plant & Transportation Services Department immediately.
- e) Determine if staff and students have safely evacuated the school building.
- f) Check access routes, gates and fire lanes to ensure they are not obstructed.
- g) Inform Fire Services of students/staff waiting in secure areas of the school for assistance to be removed from the building.
- h) Inform Fire Services of names, ages and possible locations of unaccounted for students/staff.
- i) Notify Assistant Superintendent or Associate Superintendent, Continuing, Career & International Education, and Manager, Communication Services.
- j) Stand by and be of assistance to Fire Services as required.
- k) Staff and students must remain in designated areas until Fire Services gives 'All Clear'.
- l) Contact District Resource Counsellor as necessary.
- m) Activate school's Critical Incident Response Team as necessary.
- n) Notify the Director, Financial & Risk Management Services, at the Board Office, to arrange for an insurance investigator where there is damage over \$3,000.

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- o) Complete an Incident Report for all incidents.

### **5.0 IN THE EVENT OF AN EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY:**

- a) Wait for the shaking to stop – check yourself and others around you for injuries.
- b) Be alert to aftershocks.
- c) Decision to evacuate all or part of school should not be automatic – there may be more danger outside the building than inside.
- d) Identify safe evacuation routes and safe assembly areas.
- e) Activate fire alarm to signal staff and students to evacuate. Do not use elevators.
- f) Determine names, ages and possible locations of unaccounted for staff/students, including any students/staff waiting in secure areas of the school for assistance to be removed from the building.
- g) Ensure all power, fuel and water mains have been shut off – contact school district Physical Plant & Transportation Services Department if required.
- h) Check for possible fires, utility leaks, hazardous material spills and call emergency services and provincial emergency response as necessary.
- i) Implement procedures for communication, search and rescue, first aid, shelter, supervision, student/staff release, etc.
- j) Ensure staff/students remain away from buildings, overhead power lines, trees or other hazards that may fall while outside.
- k) Attempt to contact school district Board Office to relay the extent of damage or injury at your site.
- l) Await instructions from emergency officials over battery-operated or car radio where possible.
- m) Consider school plans in the event that students must stay past school hours and/or emergency evacuation to another site.
- n) Schools will remain open indefinitely until every child has been released to a parent/guardian or other authorized person.
- o) Do not re-enter the building until approval has been given by the Director, Physical Plant & Transportation Services, or designate and until power, fuel and water services have been reactivated by qualified maintenance personnel.

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### **6.0 IN THE EVENT OF A BOMB THREAT:**

**CAUTION:** Do not use any transmitting devices such as radios, cellular phones or pagers as they may trigger an electronic detonator. Do not assume that there is just one device and do not touch a suspicious device.

- a) Complete Bomb Threat Telephone Checklist and notify the principal or site manager.
- b) In the event that a bomb threat is received either by phone or written communication or a suspicious device is located, call 911 for police assistance.
- c) When written communication is found, handle it with care, by edge and place it in a folder immediately, to preserve any evidence that may be found.
- d) Assess threat (nature, time, location, suspect) and perform quick check of location, where identified.
- e) Consult with police and Assistant Superintendent or Associate Superintendent, Continuing, Career & International Education, and consider school evacuation and closure.
- f) If immediate evacuation is necessary, proceed to Evacuation Procedures.

#### **Evacuation Procedures:**

##### **Known Location:**

- a) Evacuate staff and students from the area nearest the threat and then in stages, evacuate the surrounding areas of the school.
- b) Do not use fire alarm.

##### **Unknown Location:**

- a) Use fire alarm and relevant evacuation procedures to evacuate all staff and students.
- b) Police will lead a comprehensive search of the school site.
- c) Do not re-enter the building until `All Clear` is given by police.
- d) Notify Manager, Communication Services, if school closure necessary.

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### **7.0 OTHER EMERGENCIES**

In the event of other critical incidents (hazardous materials spill, flood, etc.), the principal or site manager must rely on established safety and communication procedures. More information on Critical Incidents is available in the Critical Incident Quick Reference (flipchart) and the Critical Incident Resource Guide (yellow binder).

### **8.0 LOGGING CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

It is expected that all fire drills, earthquake drills, bomb threats and other emergency situations be recorded in the Critical Incident Resource Guide.

In recording the information, please note the:

- a) Date and time.
- b) Nature of the critical incident or drill.
- c) Duration of the critical incident or drill (start/finish time).
- d) Specific amount of time required to reach 'All Clear' of danger.
- e) Short anecdotal comment as to any pertinent details of areas in need of improvement, such as: exit congestion, lack of proper access for emergency vehicles, communications inadequacies, staff/student awareness, assembly areas.
- f) Person responsible for conducting the procedure.

The Critical Incident Resource Guide should be kept as a reference for Health and Safety personnel, Surrey/White Rock Fire Services, new principals, site managers, and other supervisory personnel who might benefit from the information as to the frequency and chronology of such events.

Appendices:      [School-based Critical Incident Response Team](#)  
                          [Site-based Critical Incident Response Team](#)  
                          [Bomb Threat Procedures](#)

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