

Source Safety



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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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dis·ci·pline (dīs'ə plīn), *n.*, *v.*, -pline
1. training to act in accordance with r.
disci line. 2. instruction and exercise



Pepperdine University's National School Safety Center is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education. NSSC's goal is to promote safe schools free of drug traffic and abuse, gangs, weapons, vandalism and bullying; to encourage good discipline, attendance and community support; and to help ensure a quality education for all children.

Ronald D. Stephens, Executive Director

G. Ellis Butterfield, Deputy Director for Operations

Ronald W. Garrison, Deputy Director for Education/
Law Enforcement

James E. Campbell, Business Manager

Bernard James, Special Counsel

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School Safety

School Safety is published by the National School Safety Center to communicate current trends and effective programs in school safety to educators, law enforcers, lawyers, judges, government officials, business leaders, journalists and the public. Published three times a year in the fall, winter and spring. Annual subscription: \$12.00.

Ronald D. Stephens, Executive Editor

Brenda Turner, Editor

June R. Lane, Associate Editor

Sharon K. Manjack, Photocompositor/Designer

Stuart Greenbaum, Communications Consultant

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Correspondence for *School Safety* and the National School Safety Center should be addressed to: National School Safety Center, Pepperdine University, 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA 90263, telephone 818/377-6200, FAX 818/377-6209.

Prepared under Grant No. 85-MU-CX-0003 and 100 percent funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education or Pepperdine University.

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About the cover:

Discipline, or more accurately, the lack of, is identified as the root of many of our schools' problems. Only drugs in schools concern the public more. Illustration by Karen Watson.

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Recent threats of terrorism compel schools — and everyone — to be ready should a crisis situation develop.

Preparing schools for terrorist attacks

Recent developments in the Persian Gulf have heightened our nation's concern about the impact the war may have on potential terrorist attacks within our communities. While no schools appear to be specifically targeted for terrorist-related activities, school administrators should be prepared to handle these or other emergencies.

"School administrators are faced with the challenge of addressing legitimate fears without going to extremes that will damage their campus' academic atmosphere or incite undue panic by students and parents," says Dr. Ronald D. Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center (NSSC). "Unfortunately, many of our nation's schools are not adequately prepared to effectively deal with a crisis situation on their campus."

In 1989, NSSC sponsored the first-ever meeting of school administrators whose campuses had experienced crisis situations, including armed intruders and bomb attacks. From their comments and recommendations, learned by living through tragic incidents at their schools, NSSC has developed a resource paper titled "School Crisis Prevention and Response" and currently is producing a videotape on the subject to be distributed to schools nationwide.

School administrators can take several actions, both immediately and over the long term, to protect against an intruder or terrorist armed with a gun or bomb:

Establish a clear chain of command

Establish a clear chain of command, including a backup coordinator, so that everyone knows who is in charge.

Identify a command post

Establish a command post that includes emergency equipment and facilities capability to respond to a crisis.

Appoint a crisis response team

A crisis team should be appointed and may include ad-

ministrators, staff members, teachers and pupil service personnel. Each person should understand their role, whether it be transportation, medical assistance, notifying parents, providing student supervision, dealing with the media or calming rumors.

Assign roles

Assign specific roles. In addition to members of the crisis response team, every staff member should understand his or her role in a crisis. Update emergency procedures several times during the year, being sure to reassign duties when staff members leave and others are added.

Create a communications plan

A school communications network should be established that links classrooms and schoolyard supervisors with the front office or security staff, as well as with local law enforcement and fire departments. Two-way radios for staff, a working bullhorn and telephone equipment with a backup power supply or cellular phones are critical.

Control access points

Access points to school grounds should be limited and monitored during the school day. A single visitor entrance should be supervised by a receptionist or security officer. Visitors must sign in at the reception area and wear an identification pass. Delivery entrances used by vendors should be checked regularly.

Increase security and surveillance

Additional school security personnel, school staff or parent volunteers may be needed to provide increased control and visibility. A Neighborhood Watch program can provide surveillance both during school hours and during evenings and weekends. Suspicious individuals or activities should be reported to local authorities.