

# Shelter-in-Place Sample Annex: A Fictional Example for Schools Before, During, and After an Emergency



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Annexes are a critical component of any comprehensive, high-quality emergency operations plan (EOP). Functional annexes contain information about the activation of emergency management functions (cross-cutting activities that can be carried out in response to multiple different types of threats and hazards that impact a school). Functional annexes should ideally describe and outline goals, objectives, and courses of action that should be undertaken before, during, and after a specific emergency management function. The [Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) recommends that school EOPs include functional annexes for at least 10 of the most common emergency management functions, one of which is shelter-in-place.

This document presents a scenario and a sample Shelter-in-Place Annex from a fictional middle school. Intended to provide one potential example of the content, format, and structure of an annex, the following sample Shelter-in-Place Annex is a reference tool and should not be copied or used as a template. All annexes and appendices referenced within are fictional and are intended to illustrate the interconnectedness of a real plan.

## SCENARIO

Sheltering in place is used during a variety of emergency events—including possible exposure to a tornado, lightning, severe wind, or hazardous airborne materials—when it is determined that conditions on the outside of the building or in designated parts of the building are unsafe. Our sample Shelter-in-Place Annex applies to the following types of sheltering in place:

- Sheltering in place against a possible severe weather situation, such as a tornado.
- Sheltering in place against hazardous material (hazmat) contamination in the environment.

The following are actions to take before, during, and after an emergency requiring shelter-in-place. Every situation is different, so all the courses of action may not be necessary for every shelter-in-place event. School administrators and staff members will need to adjust their actions based on the emergency situation.

# BEFORE AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

## GOAL

Have the capacity to shelter-in-place immediately.

## OBJECTIVES

- Prepare to seal shelter locations or take personal protective actions
- Prepare to meet the basic needs of the whole school community until the identified emergency is resolved

## COURSES OF ACTION

### All Staff Members and Substitutes

*Before School Starts in the Fall*

- Take our Safe Schools online shelter-in-place training, which is located on the staff secure Website. District Human Resources will verify compliance.

### Assistant Principal and Town Engineer

*Before School Starts in the Fall*

- Identify the most structurally sound locations in the building, which are the places that provide maximum protection in a severe weather emergency.

- Identify locations in the building that could be most easily sealed in a hazmat situation. (See the *Site Assessment Appendix*.)
- Identify routes that students would take to get to designated shelter-in-place locations if a section of the building were to be inaccessible.
- Produce building maps that mark the locations of shelter-in-place areas.

### Assistant Principal and New Staff Members/Visitors

*Before School Starts in the Fall*

- Orient new staff members to specific shelter-in-place locations in classrooms and elsewhere in the building.
- Teach new staff members how to turn off individual classroom ventilation units.
- Prepare written instructions for visitors and substitute staff members, available at the front desk upon visitor registration.
- Review procedures for assisting substitutes and visitors who may be in the building when a drill/event occurs.
- Indicate compliance on the "Planning Team Roles & Responsibilities Form."



# BEFORE AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

## Assistant Principal and Parents/ Guardians (hereafter referred to as “families”)

*During the Fall Open House and in the Second-Semester School Newsletter*

- Present information to families on the school’s shelter-in-place and lockdown procedures. Send the information home to families.
- Indicate compliance on the “Planning Team Roles & Responsibilities Form.”

## All Teachers (coordinated by the Assistant Principal with assistance from the Secretary)

*Before School Starts in the Fall*

- Take inventory of, inspect, and replenish emergency supplies in each room. This includes a 5-gallon bucket (with a toilet seat and lid) that contains the following:
  - Plastic sheeting (labeled and pre-cut to the sizes of doors, windows, and vents);
  - Duct tape and masking tape;
  - Hex key;
  - Battery-powered radio and extra batteries;
  - Bottled water; and
  - Needed items from the “Emergency Supplies and Go-Kit Approved Inventory List” (see “Emergency Supplies and Go-Kits Approved Inventory List”).
- Report status to the Secretary.
- The Secretary will procure and distribute missing, damaged, or expired supplies.

## Principal, Assistant Principal, All Administrators, All Custodians, and at Least One Planning Team Member

*Before School Starts Each Semester*

- Physically walk to each heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) location in the school and review/mimic procedures to turn the unit off.

- Confirm that HVAC shut-off valves are labeled.
- Inspect valves for proper function.
- Place HVAC operating instructions with the EOP.
- Indicate compliance on the “Planning Team Roles & Responsibilities Form.”

## School Nurse/Health Assistant and the District Nurse Leader

*Within First 2 Weeks of the School Year*

- Use new student health forms and update shelter-in-place procedures for those with disabilities or access and functional needs.
  - Store student health forms in a safe and secure location that is accessible to the school nurse/health assistant while sheltering in place.
- Share information with the planning team and with classroom teachers, who may be responsible for students with disabilities or for those with access and functional needs.
- Send updated plans to the district nurse leader.

## Kitchen Manager

*Before School Starts in the Fall*

- Collaborate with the head custodian to locate the gas/electric shut-off valve in the kitchen.
- Inspect the shut-off valve for proper function.



# BEFORE AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

- Place operating instructions with the EOP.
- Review and share the plan for quickly distributing snacks and meals to all shelter-in-place locations.
- Send the updated plan to the planning team and to the district's food services director.

## All Teachers

*Before November Drill (Principal will review during October faculty meeting)*

- Become familiar with shelter-in-place locations within classrooms and elsewhere in the school building and with alternative routes in the event that sections of the building are inaccessible.
- Review shelter-in-place protocols with students. Show the online video to students and provide pre-drill training to them. Assign roles to students (e.g., shutting windows, etc.). At a later date, review protocols with students who were absent.
- Identify students who might require special consideration during a shelter-in-place situation and communicate in advance with appropriate personnel to review any accommodations that will be made.
- Assign an evaluator to observe the drill and fill out the Drill Evaluation Form during and after the drill.
- Prepare for the November shelter-in-place drill.

## Planning Team, Principal, and Fire and Police Department Liaisons

### *Before November Drill*

- Plan and conduct shelter-in-place tabletop exercises with various scenarios, including various times of day (before, during, and after the academic school day.)
- Conduct an after-action review of the tabletop exercise.
- Synthesize the analysis into an after-action report.
- Update the EOP and *Shelter-in-Place Annex* accordingly.

## Whole School Community

### *November*

- Conduct and participate in a shelter-in-place drill.
- After the drill, debrief with staff members and students in an after-action review; create an after-action report that evaluates results, identifies gaps or shortfalls, and documents lessons learned; and make immediate corrections, if needed, to the EOP and the *Shelter-in-Place Annex*.
- The Assistant Principal will communicate any plan revisions to staff members and families.
- The Principal will send the drill evaluation/after-action report to the safety office.

# DURING AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

## GOAL

Protect students and staff members from exposure to exterior hazards or contaminants.

## OBJECTIVES

- Seal the school or take personal protective actions until the emergency is resolved
- Meet the basic needs of the whole school community

## COURSES OF ACTION

### Principal

*Immediately (upon recognizing the need to activate the Shelter-in-Place Annex)*

- Make a shelter-in-place announcement using the building's public address system.
- Make a shelter-in-place announcement using the battery-powered radio if the building's public address system is inoperable.



*Within the First 10 Minutes of the Shelter-in-Place Announcement*

- As Incident Commander, establish the incident command post and assign incident management personnel as needed according to the Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

### All Staff Members

*Immediately (upon recognizing the need to activate the Shelter-in-Place Annex)*

- As directed by the Incident Commander and based on the nature of the emergency, all students, staff members, and visitors should remain in their classrooms or immediately go to their designated shelter-in-place areas.

*Within 5 Minutes*

- If directed to do so in preparation for severe weather, students and staff members need to relocate to designated structurally sound locations—away from windows—and assume protective positions under desks, etc. (See the *Tornado Annex\**.)

*Within 10 Minutes*

- If directed to do so in response to a hazmat emergency, seal the room, leaving time for the delivery of food, water, and medications by shutting interior doors last. (See the *Hazardous Materials Annex*.)
- Turn off the classroom's ventilation unit with the hex key taped to the lid of your yellow emergency supplies bucket.
- Close and lock all windows and doors and any other openings to the outside.
- Use wet towels to seal gaps and openings around windows and under doors.



# DURING AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

- Cover and seal all openings to the outside using plastic sheeting and tape; this includes doors, windows that can open, vents, and any other opening that would allow air from outside the building to get inside.
- Follow protocols to account for all students, staff members, and visitors. (See the *Accounting for All Persons Annex*.)

## Throughout the Duration of Shelter-in-Place

- Reassure students. Continue instructional activities as feasible.
- In a hazmat situation:
  - Activities requiring physical exertion should be avoided.
  - Be alert for anyone exhibiting physical symptoms such as shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, unexplained coughing or headache, etc. Request immediate medical attention by calling the First Aid/Medical Unit Leader if any of these symptoms are identified. (See the *Public Health, Medical, and Mental Health Annex*.)



- Continue shelter-in-place procedures until an “all clear” is announced or other instructions are given. Be prepared to move quickly to evacuation procedures if requested, and review them with students.

## First Aid/Medical Unit Leader (School Nurse)

- Activate procedures for tending to those with disabilities or those with access and functional needs.

## Food Unit Leader (Food Services Director)

- Implement the procedures to distribute snacks and meals to each classroom.

## Security/Utilities Unit (Security and Custodians)

- Close and lock all common-area exterior doors and windows and any other openings to the outside.
- Turn off all HVAC units and assist teachers with turning off classroom ventilation units as needed.

## Safety Officer (Physical Education Teacher)

- Check the log to see whether there are visitors in the building, and support their safety by instructing them to stay in the building.

## Operations Chief (Assistant Principal)

- Use the attendance roster and visitor log to account for all students, staff members, and visitors. (See the *Accounting for All Persons Annex*.)

## Incident Commander (Principal, in coordination with the Superintendent’s office)

- Assess the need for off-campus evacuation protocols and/or family reunification, and implement them if necessary.
- Consult the “Incident Commander Checklist” for additional action steps.

# AFTER AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

## GOAL

Restore a safe and healthy learning environment.

## OBJECTIVES

- Inspect and clean up the physical environment
- Address health, social, emotional, and behavioral needs
- Evaluate and refine plans

## COURSES OF ACTION

### Principal

*As the Situation Resolves*

- Give an “all clear” announcement, when safe, using the building’s public address system. (See the *Communications and Warning Annex*.)
- Transfer operational control back from ICS positions to those used on a daily basis.
- Follow emergency communications protocols to reassure stakeholders. (See the *Communications and Warnings Annex*.)

*Within 1 Day of the Event*

- Debrief staff members, students, and community partners.

### All Staff Members (coordinated by the Assistant Principal)

*Within 1 Day of the Event*

- Report any damage or special concerns.
- Take inventory of and inspect supplies, and report any deficiencies.

*Within 5 Days of the Event*

- Identify any students who need additional reassurance or support, and follow the procedures for referral to the Guidance Counselor or School Adjustment Counselor. (See the *Recovery Annex*.)



### Head Custodian

*Within 1 Day of the Event*

- Coordinate with the district office to arrange for the cleanup of the physical environment.

*Within 5 Days of the Event*

- Restock shelter-in-place supplies for sealing rooms.

### Kitchen Manager

*Within 5 Days of the Event*

- Restock snacks and meals for shelter-in-place emergencies.

# AFTER AN EMERGENCY INVOLVING SHELTERING IN PLACE

## Guidance Director

### Within 1 Day of the Event

- Work with the School Adjustment Counselor to provide for the immediate mental health needs of students and staff members. (See the *Recovery Annex*.)
- Update lists of community resources available for families that may have sustained home or property damage during the event.

## Principal, Assistant Principal, Head Custodian, and School Resource Officer

### Within 1 Day of the Event

- Assess the impacts in the surrounding community that may affect school operations or students/families.
  - Communicate with the local department of human services to complete the following actions:
  - Identify any local resources that may address needs.
- Identify families that have become homeless as a result of the event, and refer them to the district's McKinney–Vento Liaisons.

### Within 1 Month of the Event

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the *Shelter-in-Place Annex*, related annexes, and response actions.
- Update annexes based on the debriefing, after-action report, and team evaluation.
- Communicate any relevant updates to teachers, other staff members, and students.
- Communicate any revised roles and responsibilities of families. Include media as applicable.

\*References to other annexes, such as this reference to the “*Tornado Annex*,” do not refer to other sample annexes available from the REMS TA Center, but are instead meant to illustrate the interconnectedness of a real emergency operations plan. All sample annexes are fictional and represent fictional schools. These are for reference only and do not depict actual decisions made by collaborative planning teams. A true annex would reflect the unique characteristics, capabilities, resources, and policies of a school and its school district.

View more sample annexes on our Website at  
<https://rems.ed.gov/REMSPublications.aspx>.



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