

Sample Checklist for Hostage Situations

A hostage situation is any situation in which a person or persons are forced to stay in one location against their will by one or more individuals. Weapons are usually in the possession of the hostage taker (s) and hostages are threatened with some degree of bodily harm. All hostage situations should be considered dangerous events. The dynamics of a hostage situation vary greatly and no two incidents will be the same.

DIRECTIONS: Use the following checklist to assess the school building's/school district's response. Place the date below and mark the individual's name, in the completed block, who is confirming that the action item has been completed.

DATE: _____

Action Item	Completed
Upon notification of a hostage situation within any activity, event, school, or building under the control of the school district, the following procedures should be implemented:	
The principal/designee will contact 911.	
Initiate lockdown procedures.	
Notify the Superintendent's Office.	
Establish an Incident Command Post.	
Try to establish if hostage taker is in possession of a school district radio.	
Keep the base radio station set to Channel 1 until otherwise directed by the police.	
Take appropriate actions to isolate the hostage taker (s) and the victim (s) under his/her control.	
Law enforcement arrive on the scene.	
The school Incident Commander turns over command to the ranking police officer as the overall Incident Commander.	
Brief Police Incident Commander of the situation facts upon arrival at the school including cause of incident, identity of the hostage (s) and hostage taker (s), and their location in the building, if known.	
The school Incident Commander should report to the Joint Incident Command Post.	
Building master keys and detailed building plans are made available to Incident Command Post.	
Details on camera and monitoring locations, hearing and broadcast devices, motion sensors, location of radios, and availability of telephones are made available to Incident Command Post.	
Persons who are knowledgeable of the building design are available to describe the premises using detailed building plans.	

Entrances to the school campus have been sealed by the police agency in charge of the incident.	
Police department negotiator contacts the hostage taker (s) to begin the process of negotiating an end to the situation.	
Upon arrest of the hostage taker (s) and the release of the hostage (s), the control of the school is returned to the Administration.	
Provide area for law enforcement to meet with hostage (s) and pertinent staff to document and record information.	
Provide released hostages with food and beverages and arrange access to restrooms.	
Provide counseling for hostages and their families.	
Call staff meeting to hold a review of the incident and discuss changes to procedures.	
Update checklist, if necessary.	
Evacuation Procedures:	
Determine evacuation procedure in conjunction with law enforcement.	
If evacuation is to an off-site location, notify Transportation Director.	
Evacuation message is delivered by runners.	
Staff and students proceed to a prearranged location out of sight of the building so that any possibility of injury from gunfire is minimized.	
Teachers bring class list/roll books.	
All staff and students are accounted for by attendance being taken again when everyone has reached the assembly area. Missing student (s) and staff is reported to the principal/designee or the emergency personnel.	
School Bus Hostage Situation:	
Notify Transportation Director of hostage situation.	
The bus driver makes the students aware of the behavior that is required in order to keep them safe and not inflame the situation.	
If the following tasks can be accomplished in a safe manner, the bus driver should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disable the bus or throw the keys away from the bus. • Evacuate as many students as possible from the bus and direct them to move to a position out of sight of the bus. • Notify the Transportation Office by radio with as much information as possible regarding the situation and location. • If permitted by the hostage taker (s) to maintain radio communication, do so. 	
Reunification:	
Reunification Plan is activated.	

Communications:	
Notify the Public Information Officer to activate the Communications Plan.	
Communication Plan is activated.	
Cautions/Notes:	
Incident Command will work closely with the police once they arrive on the scene.	
School district radios should be used for communication purposes unless it is established that the hostage taker has possession of one. Cellular phones can be used as an alternative.	
Keep telephone lines open for law enforcement use.	
It is imperative that no additional individuals be exposed to the hostage taker (s).	
Evacuation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every effort will be made to ensure that the egress of staff and students is handled in a manner that will have all students and staff moving away from the area controlled by the hostage taker (s). • No individuals for any reason should be permitted to enter or re-enter the building. • Students and staff will not return to the building until it has been declared safe by municipal law enforcement. 	
Negotiations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to remember that it is generally the philosophy of the police department to end a hostage situation through negotiating tactics. • Negotiations can be a lengthy process. • A rapid deployment assault is only used when all indications are that the hostage taker (s) will harm the hostage (s) or the lives of the hostage (s) will in fact be saved through such an intervention. 	
If the hostage situation occurs on a school bus, the bus driver must assume the responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students, as well as his/her own safety.	