SCHOOL SAFETY DRILLS IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

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Agenda

- Purpose
- Requirements
- Recommendations
- Best Practices
- Comments & Questions
Purpose

- In the current state of emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not feasible nor safe to conduct many of the state-required drills where students, faculty and staff would move throughout the schools at the same time and within close proximity to each other; therefore, an alternative method of compliance while maintaining as safe an environment as possible must be developed.
Purpose

■ Overarching Legal Precedent: Ala. Code 1975, § 16-1-44

■ Severe Weather Drills
  - Code of Alabama § 16-1-44(e), which directs to
  - Alabama State Fire Marshal Regulation 482-2-102-.01c

■ Fire/Evacuation Drills:
  - Code of Alabama § 36-19-10 which points back to § 16-1-44(e)

■ Lockdown Drills
  - Code of Alabama § 16-1-44(g)

■ The following recommendations should be considered:
Drills Available for Virtual Education

- Tabletop/Workshop-style drills are encouraged.
  - Should not take the place of physically walking escape/sheltering routes at least once, in concert with other required trainings.
  - After routes are walked, discussion-based drills are highly encouraged.
  - Teachers - take advantage of the opportunity of the virtual learning environment by encouraging students to talk with their family members about emergency protective actions within their home or place of learning.
Drills for In-Person Education

- Drills must be conducted within certain time constraints; however, they do not state they must be done all at once.

- To minimize cross-contamination of classes/persons, fire and severe weather drills should be conducted over the course of a few days:
  - Allows for each class, by themselves and while maintaining proper face coverings and social distancing, to walk their respective routes.
  - Ensures students and teachers are familiar with the routes and expectations prior to a dangerous event.
Severe Weather Drills

- Coordination with other classes and school administration must be done in advance to ensure timing and route/shelter locations are clear of others and can be cleaned if necessary.

- Younger children (Pre-K through 5th Grade) should practice the appropriate protective position while properly spaced for social distancing precautions as to ensure children retain muscle memory actions:
  - Protective position includes backs against the wall with a book or object covering their heads and necks.

- Older students may be shown the appropriate protective position.
Fire Drills

- Coordination with other classes and school administration must be done in advance to ensure timing, route & meeting destination locations are clear of obstructions and other people for social distancing requirements.

- Coordinate with your local fire department to practice the interaction that will be necessary during a real-world event (i.e. accountability, access, FDC locations, etc.)
Lockdown/Active Shooter/Intruder Drills

- Lockdown drills can still be conducted by each classroom while maintaining appropriate social distancing and face coverings.
- These drills are usually procedural and can be done while adhering to COVID-19 health guidance (i.e. locking a door, ensuring student accountability, discussing “what if” scenarios and perhaps movement to various locations within the classroom away from a door).
Other Best Practices

- Utilize local first responders in your drills
  - *Coordination between school administration and first responders is critical*
  - *Universal safety precautions must be strictly adhered to by first responders and staff to limit possible exposures*

- Ensure substitute teachers and other regular visitors are made aware of emergency plans in the event they must initiate protective actions

- Document all drills, briefings and discussions, whether virtual or in-person, and upload into nSIDE for credit
Questions and Comments