

INTRODUCTION TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A. PARTNERSHIPS IN PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code (35 Pa. C.S.A. Sections 7101-7707 also referred to as PL1332, as amended by Act 87, 1988, by the Cambria County Department of Emergency Services requires public and private schools to develop school disaster plans so that students and staff will act instinctively and correctly when a disaster strikes. This Cambria Heights School District Emergency Management Plan is designed to provide administrators with a resource for protecting students, staff and school facilities, as well as to describe the responsibilities of staff members for a wide range of emergency and disaster situations that may occur.

Within this Cambria Heights School District Emergency Management Plan are emergency preparedness and response instructions, guidelines, and forms to help protect the safety, security and well being of students and school staff during many types of emergencies. This document has been developed as a comprehensive resource to promote and coordinated preparedness measures and to assist in standardizing response protocols to improve response to and recovery from an emergency or disaster affecting this school district.

The Cambria Heights School District has a comprehensive plan that outlines response not only to severe weather and natural disasters, chemical accidents and medical emergencies, but also to campus violence and various types of terrorist threats.

The health and welfare of students and school staff in crisis situations is dependent upon sound emergency preparedness. School personnel are obligated to prepare themselves to render competent service through all phases of an emergency including planning, training, drilling, response, recovery and evaluation, as may be required. **The Cambria Heights School District Emergency Management Plan describes actions and response protocols for crisis situations to ensure that the district and schools can quickly and adequately restore the school community to a safe and orderly learning environment.**

This Cambria Heights School District School Emergency Management Plan has been prepared in compliance with legal requirements and in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Cambria Heights School District Administrators, Cambria Heights School Board of Directors, Cambria County Emergency Management and other members of the Cambria Heights school community. In the event of a widespread emergency such as a widespread severe weather event, available government and county resources will be

overtaxed and may be unable to respond to all requests for assistance. **This plan assumes that schools must be self-sufficient for a time and may be required to make many crucial decisions and provide shelter to the immediate community.**

B. HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Cambria Heights School District School Emergency Management Plan is designed as a comprehensive reference to assist Cambria Heights school district in providing a safe learning environment. The emergency management responsibilities and procedures outlined in this plan are consistent with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), both of which incorporate the Incident Command System (ICS).

The Cambria Heights School District Emergency Management Plan outlines procedures and guidelines to be utilized during disaster events affecting the Cambria Heights district and/or any of its school buildings. When appropriate, individualized site-based procedures have been incorporated into this Emergency Management Plan to meet the individual resources and circumstances of each school building and reflect that building's unique characteristics and needs. This plan includes:

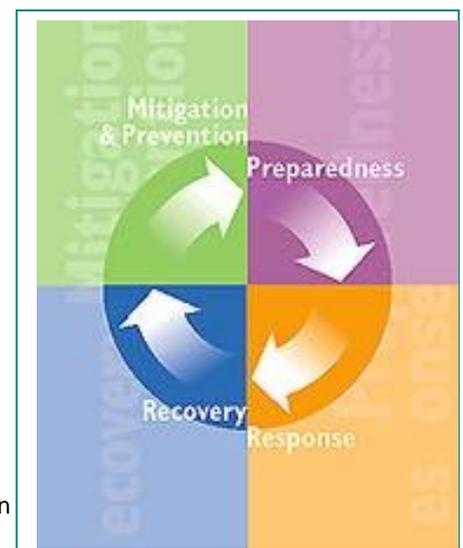
- a designated chain of command;
- specific roles for team members;
- specific procedures to implement in the event of an emergency.

The final steps to ensuring the effectiveness of this Emergency Management Plan involve:

- Communicating and practicing the plan;
- Orienting new personnel;
- Keeping multiple copies of the plan in accessible locations;
- Ensuring that team leaders have a copy of the plan at home;

C. FOUR PHASES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

This Cambria Heights School District Emergency Management Plan is presented in four main sections which conform to the four phases the U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools uses to describe planning for, responding to and recovering from emergencies: Mitigation/Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery. Each of these topics is introduced briefly below and applied in detail in the respective sections of the plan.



- ◆ **Section I – Mitigation/Prevention** addresses what school buildings can do to reduce exposure to risks and hazards and lessen the potential impact of an emergency situation. Mitigation efforts can occur both before and after emergencies or disasters.
- ◆ **Section II – Preparedness** focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the school emergency response teams and the actions, exercises and supplies needed for various emergency scenarios. These activities develop readiness and response capabilities.
- ◆ **Section III – Response** presents detailed procedures for implementing appropriate actions for most types of emergencies that may be encountered in a school building setting. In this phase, schools buildings mobilize resources needed to address the emergency at hand. Emphasis is placed on minimizing the effects of the emergency or disaster.
- ◆ **Section IV – Recovery** focuses on general strategies to follow after the emergency and restoring affected areas to pre-emergency conditions in order to return to the normal learning environment as quickly as possible. Recovery activities may be both short-term and long-term; ranging from restoration of essential utilities such as water and power, to mitigation measures designed to prevent future occurrences of a specific threat.

Each section contains information that outlines the basic components of these four critical areas. All four phases of emergency management should be planned for in advance in order to be most effective. The **APPENDICES** contain supplemental emergency information including cross-jurisdictional agreements, flipcharts, forms, sample letters and other supporting documentation.

D. LEVELS OF EMERGENCIES

1. **THREE LEVELS OF EMERGENCIES:** Emergencies are often described in terms of the following three levels:

Level One (School Level) Emergency: A localized emergency, with low impact on school building operations, which school personnel, can handle by following the procedures in the emergency plan. Examples: power outage, unexpected death, suicide threat.

Level Two (District Level) Emergency: A moderate to severe emergency, somewhat beyond Cambria Heights School District’s response capability, which affects students district-wide and may require mutual aid assistance from the fire department, local police, etc. Examples: intruder, shooting on campus.

Level Three (Community) Emergency: A major disaster, clearly beyond the response capability of Cambria Heights School District's personnel, where a significant amount of mutual aid assistance will be required, and recovery time will be extensive, and response time from major support agencies may be seriously delayed and/or impaired. Examples: severe weather with injuries and/or structural damage, flooding, explosions, chemical spills requiring evacuation, death of multiple staff or students (as in a bus accident), hostage situation. In a catastrophic disaster, school buildings must be prepared to rely on their own resources because assistance from others may be delayed. A large-scale event such as severe weather that affects one school building may also affect the surrounding community. Some large-scale events may result in widespread telephone outages, road blockages, gridlock and congestion on the highways, damage to utility systems, roof collapse, chemical or electrical fires, release of hazardous materials, flying debris, injuries and death caused by falling objects and smoke inhalation.

FIGURE 1 – Levels of Emergencies

Level 1 - School Emergencies

Situations is contained or limited to a school building setting and school-based personnel will take action, no outside resources are required.



Level 2 – District-wide Emergencies

These are events where support and involvement is required from outside the school building setting. School district support (District Emergency Team) is provided as well as local emergency responders (local fire, police and ambulance personnel). While these events may require help from non-school employees, they do not reach the scope and gravity of community-level disasters requiring community-wide support.



Level 3 – Community/Countywide Emergencies

These large-scale events require coordination of services from the school district, local emergency responders and mutual aid support agencies. Emergency responders may not be immediately available. It may be necessary for the school district to implement protocols until appropriate community resources (e.g., police, fire and ambulance) arrive and assume responsibility. Cambria Heights School District is prepared to rely on school district resources and take protective actions until help arrives.

E. PLAN DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND UPDATES

The Cambria Heights School District Emergency Management Plan has been:

- **DEVELOPED** by a team of school administrators and staff, working with Cambria County Emergency Management;
- **INITIATED** by the principal or designee when conditions exist that warrant its execution;
- **IMPLEMENTED** by all staff, which will remain at school buildings and perform necessary duties as assigned until released by the principal or superintendent.
- **REVIEWED** at least annually.

Emergency and disaster functions are identified and pre-assigned before the beginning of each school year. The Emergency teams and contact information is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. New personnel are assigned to vacant command staff positions. Procedures are revised as needed. All emergency preparedness training and drills are documented, and updates to this plan are recorded.

The elements of emergency planning, preparedness and management are:

- ◆ **Leadership:** Leadership ensures that emergency preparedness will be a priority and that adequate resources will be allocated to create and implement district and school-based plans. At the district level leadership will come directly from the superintendent, at the school level; it will come from the principal.
- ◆ **Incident Command System:** The ICS is a standardized organizational structure that is the basis of NIMS, designed to handle: Management, Operations, Logistics, Planning, and Administration & Finance. The ICS allows for appropriate utilization of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications. The Incident Commander is the highest-ranking official in charge of the emergency response operations.
- ◆ **School Emergency Management Plan:** A plan that has been individualized for each specific school building, addressing the unique needs and resources at each site. The site-based plan includes team assignments, emergency numbers, protocols, and the four phases of emergency management: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
- ◆ **School Emergency Teams:** Site-based teams of individuals with specific duties to perform in order to prepare for and respond to emergencies. The

School Emergency Teams has developed the plan to meet each individual school buildings needs and is prepared to implement the plan in the event of an emergency.

- ◆ **Communication:** Plans have established lines of internal communication (within each school building) and external communication (with the district office and community). Plans include provisions for after-hours communication (telephone tree), and alternate means if telephone lines are disabled.
- ◆ **Emergency Management Protocols:** Emergency Management Protocols are the step-by-step procedures for schools to implement in the event of an emergency.
- ◆ **School Emergency Actions:** These are a set of clear directives that may be implemented across a number of emergency situations. These actions include Drop/Cover and Hold, Evacuation, Lockdown, Shelter in Place, Stand-by and All Clear, in addition to several specialized actions such as Offsite or Reverse Evacuation and Student Release.
- ◆ **Staff Responsibilities:** School personnel have a moral and legal responsibility to all students in their care. Just as school staff members rely on first responders, public agencies and others to open blocked roads, repair utilities, perform rescue work, etc., those members of the community rely on schools to provide care for their children in an emergency.
- ◆ **Training:** Training is important on at least three levels:
 - ◆ General awareness training for all staff;
 - ◆ First Aid, CPR and School Emergency Response Training (SERT)
 - ◆ Team training to address specific emergency response or recovery activities, such as Student Release, Search and Rescue, Shelter Management.
- ◆ **Practice:** Practicing the plan consists of drills, tabletop and functional exercises, orientation for staff, etc. Practice scenarios will start with basic procedure orientation and tabletop exercises prior to engaging in full-scale simulations or drills.
- ◆ **Personal Emergency Plans:** Cambria Heights School District staff members should develop personal and family emergency response plans. Each family should anticipate that a staff member might be required to remain at school following a catastrophic event. Knowing that the family is prepared and can handle the situation will enable school staff to do their job more effectively

F. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

◆ Authority

Pennsylvania School Code (71 Pa. C.S.A. Section 1518).

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code (35 Pa. C.S.A. Sections 7101 – 7707) also referred to as PL 1332, as amended by Act 87, 1988.

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, as amended, (35 Pa. C.S.A. Section 7701 - d, e, f, g).

Pennsylvania Code, Title 34, Chapters 49, 50, and 54, Fire and Panic Regulations, Department of Labor and Industry, March 1987.

◆ References

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), August 1997, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

Marin County Schools Model Emergency Management Plan, April 2008 through U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Pennsylvania Department of Education, School Emergency Management Guide, Oct. 1996

The County of Cambria Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) (2010), Cambria County Emergency Management Agency.

“Hazards Vulnerability Analysis,” (2009), Cambria County Emergency Management Agency.