

School Safety and Security Committee Guidelines

Texas Education Code (TEC) 37.109 mandates that each school district in Texas establish a School Safety and Security Committee in accordance with the guidelines established by the Texas School Safety Center.

The committee shall participate on behalf of the district in developing and implementing emergency plans consistent with the district's multi-hazard emergency operations plan required by Section 37.108(a) to ensure that the plans reflect specific campus, facility, or support service needs.

The committee shall provide the district with any campus, facility, or support services information required in connection with a safety and security audit required by Section 37.108(c), or another report required to be submitted by the district to the Texas School Safety Center.

The committee shall review each report required to be submitted by the district to the Texas School Safety Center to ensure that the report contains accurate and complete information regarding each campus, facility, or support service in accordance with criteria established by the Center.

The committee should ensure that emergency operations plans meet the requirements as stated in TEC 37.108. The committee should also ensure that plans are updated regularly. This includes maintaining records of policy or personnel changes and verifying that preparedness documents reflect after action review findings pertaining to lessons learned and best practices identified from emergency preparedness exercises, drills, and actual incidents. The committee should also ensure that campuses and facilities are conducting emergency preparedness training and testing of the district's emergency operations plan (EOP) through drills and exercises as required by the district's plan.

Districts should determine the frequency of meetings necessary to accomplish the committee's objectives. It is recommended that the committee meet at least once each semester, or more frequently as needed, to review and update the district's multi-hazard emergency operations plan. This review should ensure that planning, training and exercises are conducted in collaboration with first responders, local emergency management personnel, neighboring school districts, local health authorities and appropriate state and federal agency representatives.

Safety committee meetings should be documented and records maintained in accordance with the district's records management policy. The district should develop a communication plan for disseminating committee activities to district stakeholders.

Committee membership is determined by the district. Since the committee's actions have direct effect on school district operations and policies, the core safety and security committee should consist of district personnel. However, districts are encouraged to include other collaborative partners for support in emergency operations planning, training, and exercising.

Suggested safety and security committee membership may include representation from the following:

- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Superintendent
- Deputy/Assistant Superintendent
- Finance
- Technology
- Facilities/Support Services
- Health/Mental Health
- Counselors/Social Work
- Human Resources
- Student Services/Special Programs
- Food Services
- Transportation
- Athletics
- School Based Law Enforcement
- School Board of Trustees
- Campus representatives for each level

Collaborative partners to **support** the committee include, but are not limited to:

- Local Emergency Management
- First Responders, Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Local, State and Federal Officials
- Parent Organizations
- Local Health Authority
- Community Mental Health Organizations
- Building Inspectors/Public Works

These collaborative partners should be selected based on knowledge and experience they possess related to the duties of the Committee. Training should be provided for how to maintain confidentiality due to the potential sensitive nature of safety and security information discussed during committee meetings. Appropriate background checks of committee members are recommended.

Benefits of a Safety & Security Committee

The benefits of a functioning safety and security committee include but are not limited to:

- Central coordination of safety efforts
- Improves the climate and culture of the school
- Enhances the learning and educational environment
- Assisting with drills and exercises, safety audits, policy development and training

Campus and district leadership should demonstrate their commitment to safety by:

- Communicating the importance of the safety committee in achieving the district's goals
- Promoting the positive aspects of the safety committee
- Allowing time for safety committee activities and achieving results
- Identifying and providing resources and support
- Appropriate selection of committee members

Strategies for success:

- Formalize meetings by having an agenda and keeping meeting minutes
- Determine the goals and objectives of the committee
- Train committee members
- Report out on projects the committee is working on to improve safety
- Establish a mechanism for reporting of safety issues
- Celebrate successes