School Emergency Management Plans
Frequently Asked Questions

General

Q. **Where can I find information on School Emergency Management Plans?**

A. https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/school_safety_plans

Q. **What does the new law and rule for emergency management plans say?**

A. Ohio Revised Code 3313.536 and Ohio Administrative Code 3301-5-0 define which schools must submit emergency management plans, the requirements for developing and submitting plans and the penalties for not complying with the law. Also, the law requires an annual review, annual emergency management test and a three-year re-evaluation of the plan by the Ohio Department of Education.

Q. **When did this new section of law and the new rule go into effect?**

A. The law (ORC 3313.536) went into effect Sept. 17, 2014, and the new rule (OAC 3301-5-01) became effective Dec. 25, 2014; however, the department did not begin enforcement until Jan. 5, 2015.

Q. **Where can I find a template or model school emergency management plan that is compliant with Ohio law?**

A. Samples to create a compliant plan can be found on the SaferSchools website. Also posted is the federal "Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Management Plans," which provides comprehensive guidance for developing your current compliant plan.

Q. **Who has access to my school emergency management plan? Which personnel from my jurisdiction can upload and view our school emergency management plan?**

A. School emergency management plans are not public records and are protected from release according to Ohio law (ORC 3313.536 (I)). Only authorized individuals at the school, local first responders, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the Ohio Attorney General's Office have access to emergency management plans.

The purpose of uploading the emergency management plan via the SAFE portal is so police and fire first responders will have immediate access to it during a crisis. In addition to first responders, the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio

Department of Public Safety also have access. Finally, designated staff members at the school (or district) have access.

NOTE: Plans should never be emailed to anyone under any circumstance as this method of transmission is typically unsecured.

Definitions and Terms

Q. What does the term "administrator," as used in the law, mean?

A. Pursuant to Ohio law (ORC 3313.536(A)(1)), the "administrator" is the superintendent, principal, chief administrative officer or other person having supervisory authority over a school. Every school has a single person that is administratively responsible for the building. Various terms and titles are used throughout the law to refer to these people. The law places various responsibilities on administrators, regardless of their titles.

Q. What does the term "building," as used in the law, mean?

A. Pursuant to Ohio law (ORC 3313.536 (A)(3)), "building" means any school, school building, facility, program or center. For public schools, this includes the district administrative offices/IRNs, as they fall under the definition of facility. If you are unsure if any of your locations need to submit emergency management plans, please contact the Center for P-20 Safety and Security at (614) 644-2641.

Q. What is the difference between "school safety plan" and "emergency management plan"?

A. "Emergency management plan" is a standardized term commonly used by emergency first responders and emergency management agencies that incorporates both safety and security concerns. The law requires schools to have a comprehensive, all-hazards emergency management plan to address threats and hazards and effectively manage various types of emergencies that could risk the safety and security of students and staff. "School safety plan" was used in previous Ohio law, and was updated to "emergency management plan" in ORC 3313.536.

Emergency Management Plans

Q. What documents are actually required in the emergency management plan?

A. Pursuant to Ohio law (ORC 3313.536(B)(1) and ORC 3301-5-01(B)(2)), the comprehensive emergency management plan consists of **FOUR s**eparate, distinct documents (these documents must be uploaded individually into the SAFE portal). These documents are the:
   1. **Emergency Operations Plan**, which is the protocol for addressing serious threats to property, students, employees or administrators of the building.
   2. **Floor Plan** for each floor of the building;

3. **Site plan** that includes all building property and surrounding property (aerial view of entire school parcel)
4. **Emergency Information Contact Sheet** that contains important information about the building, its administrators and the community first responders. The emergency contact sheet also contains a signature page listing all parties to be included in emergency management plan development.

Samples of each of these plan documents are available on the [SaferSchools website](#).

Q. **Ohio law (ORC 3313.536(B)(1)) requires the administrator to "examine the environmental conditions and operations of each building to determine potential hazards to student and staff safety." What does that mean?**

A. It means that administrators should consult local emergency management personnel and first responders to determine what the greatest hazards are for the community and, specifically, the school.

Q. **Ohio law (ORC 3313.536(B)(1)) requires administrators to "propose operating changes to promote the prevention of potentially dangerous problems and circumstances." What does that mean?**

A. Administrators should work with the local governing authority for the school (e.g., a local school board) in implementing an emergency management plan or changes to an established emergency management plan.

Q. **The law also states the administrator is required to involve other people in the development of the emergency management plan. Who should be involved?**

A. Pursuant to Ohio law (ORC 3313.536(B)(1)), "…In developing the plan for each building, the administrator shall involve community law enforcement and safety officials, parents of students who are assigned to the building, and teachers and nonteaching employees who are assigned to the building."

Safety officials include representatives from local law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, the county emergency management agency and possibly others. The administrator should work with those officials when preparing the plan. The final version of the emergency management plan may contain a signature page that demonstrates stakeholders' involvement in the creation of the emergency management plan.

Q. **In ORC 3313.536(B), what is the difference between paragraph (B)(1) and (B)(2)?**

A. Paragraph (B)(1) addresses the need for a comprehensive emergency management plan that incorporates all phases of emergency management (prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery).

Paragraph (B)(2) lists some, not all, of the considerations that should be contained in the emergency management plan and requires a specific response plan for those

threats. This section also requires the submission of three specific documents: a floor plan for each floor of the building, a site plan and an emergency contact sheet.

NOTE: OAC 3301-5-01(B)(1) addresses all the specific protocols that need addressed in your emergency management plan. Please refer to the Sample Safety Plan on the School Safety Plans Web page for a comprehensive list of all potential threats and further guidance.

Q. **The law (ORC 3313.536 (C)(2)) requires the administrator to file a copy of the plan with each law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school building. How can the administrator find out which law enforcement agencies need copies of the emergency management plan?**

A. Each school building falls under the jurisdiction of at least one law enforcement agency and many times more than one. County sheriffs always have jurisdiction for school buildings in their counties. In addition, if your school is within a city or township that has a police department, that department also will have jurisdiction. College and university police also have jurisdiction if the school is on the campus.

Emergency Management Test

Q.   **What is an Emergency Management Test?**

A.   An emergency management test is a regularly scheduled drill, exercise and any appropriate follow-through activities designed for the assessment and evaluation of the emergency management plan and its capabilities. An administrator must conduct at least one test per year for each building under his or her control.

To comply with the statute, the test must meet all of the criteria outlined in the OAC 3301-5-01.

NOTE: You must report your annual Emergency Management Test through your SAFE account for each IRN every year.

Q. **How does the Emergency Management Test requirement differ from the requirements for fire drills and tornado safety precautions?**

A. The requirements for fire drills and tornado safety precautions are found in Ohio law (ORC 3737.73) and involve preparing students and staff by having them practice evacuation or shelter-in-place drills. The focus of the drill is on the students and staff in the school.

Emergency management tests prepare students, employees and administrators to respond to all hazards that may impact the school.

Q. **Can one of the drills conducted to comply with the requirements for fire drills and tornado safety precautions also serve as the emergency management test required for school emergency management plans?**

A. You have flexibility in designing emergency management tests. For example, you may conduct a tabletop exercise (i.e., a discussion-based exercise) or an operational exercise where the actual tasks are performed. An example of an operational exercise may be one of the drills required for fire drills and tornado safety precautions. Whichever method you use, your test must address the procedures and processes identified in your emergency management plan and meet the requirement for the emergency management test as outlined in in the OAC 3301-5-01.

SAFE Submission of Emergency Management Plans

Q. How does the administrator submit the emergency management plan?

A. The Ohio Department of Education provides a secure login through the SAFE portal that allows school administrators to submit the required components of OAC 3313.536. Administrators who do not have SAFE accounts should visit the SaferSchools website for guidance.

Only one document per type (see drop-down box in SAFE: emergency operation plan, site plan, floor plan, emergency contact information) can be uploaded via SAFE, for a total of four documents. Secured copies are automatically transmitted from the department of education to Ohio Homeland Security and the Ohio Attorney General's repositories, CIMS and OHLEG respectively, where only vetted personnel have access.

NOTE: Your school or district's Ohio Educational Directory System (OEDS) administrator must keep all data current for each school IRN in OEDS, ensuring both physical and mailing addresses are reflected for every school/IRN in order to be able to submit the emergency management plan via SAFE.

Annual Plan Certification (before July 1)

Q. Once the emergency management plan is determined to be compliant, what else is the administrator required to do?

A. According to Ohio law (ORC 3313.536 (D) and OAC 3301-5-01(D) and (E)), each year by July 1, the administrator must review and certify that the emergency management plan is current and accurate. The administrator also is responsible for making sure the emergency management plan is kept up to date. Certification is done via SAFE under the box, "Annual Plan Certification." Whenever *any* information changes in the emergency management plan (new administrator, police chief, etc.) or whenever a major modification to the building requires changes in the procedures outlined in the emergency management plan, the administrator must refile the emergency management plan. The administrator must refile the emergency management plan every three years, even if there are no changes.

Evaluation of Emergency Management Plans

Q. How is my school emergency management plan being evaluated?

A.   Specially trained evaluators with Ohio Homeland Security review all emergency management plans. An emergency management plan evaluation matrix, known as the Gap Analysis Tool (GAT), was developed to evaluate each plan. Administrators can review a blank GAT on the School Safety Plans Web page. Information, resources, guides and samples of each of the four emergency management plan documents also are available on the SaferSchools website.

Q.   What happens if my emergency management plan does not meet state requirements? How long do I have to resubmit my corrected emergency management plan?

A.   At the conclusion of the review, the administrator will be notified via email of the findings and any recommendations. School administrators must make the necessary changes and resubmit their emergency management plans as soon as possible. The expectation is for school administrators to take advantage of all the assistance and resources being offered via Ohio Homeland Security and engage with their evaluators. In the event an administrator is not taking appropriate action to address any of the emergency management plan deficiencies, the administrator may be subjected to consequences outlined in Ohio law (ORC 3313.536(F) and (G)).