

# ***School Administrator's Risk Management Newsletter***

Volume II, Issue 1

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Welcome to the second year of publication of the ***School Administrator's Risk Management Newsletter***, brought to you by **Camp and School Consulting**. The newsletter is provided electronically at no cost to private school administrators. Circulation now includes over 2150 private school administrators.

This periodic newsletter provides information on risk management tips, emergency preparedness, updates on new legislation, new workshops and faculty in-services and other services that may be of interest to you and your school community. I hope you find the information helpful.

Information regarding unsubscribing or adding additional administrators at your school is listed at the end of this issue. All requests regarding subscriptions will be promptly addressed.

## ***Risk Management Tips***

### ***This month's feature: Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina***

After watching hours and hours of television coverage on the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, I realized there were many lessons to be learned by school administrators regarding preparing their school to respond to a catastrophic emergency. Here are a few of the thoughts that came to mind ...

#### **The Need for Self-Sufficiency**

Many of us were shocked by the length of time that elapsed before local, county, state and federal resources became available to those impacted by the hurricane. In my seminars on emergency preparedness, I tell school administrators that elementary and secondary schools are not first on the priority list for emergency responders within a community. Hospitals, nursing homes, elderly care facilities, and even day care centers receive attention and responses before schools. Therefore, we have to be prepared internally to care for the members of our own community.

It is essential that a school's ***Crisis Response Plans*** include staff assignments for all key tasks likely to be encountered in a major emergency. These include:

- Command Center functions, such as community liaison and information spokespersons;
- Search and rescue;
- Triage and first aid,
- Campus security and student release;
- Student attendance, care, and supervision.

Faculty and staff members assigned to these response teams need to be trained in how to accomplish these critical tasks safely, quickly, and effectively.

Another critical area is ***Emergency Supplies***. Often, schools with a very local population base question the need for a 72-hour food and water supply for the entire campus population, assuming parents will reach the school quickly to pick up their children. As we have all seen, in a major area-wide emergency, this may not be the case. It also became apparent from watching the events unfold in Louisiana that the need for emergency supplies goes far beyond just food and water. Provisions need to address shelter and sanitation needs as well as medical and search and rescue equipment. ***Note: Next month's issue will focus on emergency supplies and emergency drills.***

**Communications** is an area that every school needs to address in evaluating the level of emergency preparedness, both **internal** within the school during an emergency response and **external**, creating vital links to parents and emergency responders. Many schools feel that cell phones alone will meet this need. I was somewhat surprised to see how long the victims of Hurricane Katrina were without cell phone coverage, and I suspect we would experience the same situation here in California if we were impacted by a major earthquake. We have all experienced dead spots in our cell phone coverage, but imagine what the coverage would be when cell towers and antennas are down or out of alignment. In addition, these transmission and relay towers require power, and the loss of electricity following an area-wide event could eliminate the use of cell phones for communication.

Many schools have established an **out of area contact** with another school, so that parents can call the partner school, located in another state far from the local impacted area, to get information as to the status at their child's school. Many schools are willing to enter into a mutually beneficial reciprocal arrangement. Likewise, many schools make use of an **emergency notification calling service** to alert parents. Again, there is some value to the call center being located out of the area where the school is located so that local conditions don't impact their ability to dispatch the calls. (Many services have provisions in place to deal with this and use a relay system to place the calls from an alternate location)

One of the most effective and least costly solutions for emergency communications within the school community is the use of the small walkie-talkie radios (such as the Motorola Talkabouts). The less expensive units that use standard AA or 9-volt batteries are more desirable in an emergency situation compared to the more expensive units that have rechargeable batteries and need electricity to recharge the batteries. These units are extremely effective for on-site communications between search and rescue teams, the first aid center, the parent pickup area and the student assembly area and the administrator in charge at the Emergency Operations Center.

Does someone at your school subscribe to EDIS? EDIS is the Emergency Digital Information Service, operated by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and could be a vital source of information in the event of an area-wide disaster. This service is available free of charge to anyone wishing to subscribe. You can choose the type of alerts you receive (child abduction, weather-related, power outages, etc.) and also the geographic region for notifications. Here is an example of a recent bulletin released by EDIS and subscription information. (Note, the incident described below at Dow Chemical was a false alarm)

From: Contra Costa County Health Services

This is a message from Contra Costa Health Services. There is an emergency at Dow. Residents in Pittsburg and Antioch are advised to shelter in place. Go inside, close all windows and doors, turn off all heaters, air conditioners and fans. If not using the fireplace, close fireplace dampers and vents and cover cracks around doors and windows with tape or damp towels. Media news networks will continue to carry updated emergency information. Stay off the telephone unless you have a life threatening emergency (DOW )

For more information contact:  
Contra Costa Health Services Tel: (925) 260-6262

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To update or terminate your subscription to this email service visit our webpage at <http://www.incident.com/edismail.html>.

EDIS is operated by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, State of California. This email relay service is offered by incident.com on a non-commercial, subscription-only basis.

## **The Need for Contingency Operating Plans**

Officials have stated that many schools within the area impacted by Hurricane Katrina will not open for a year. This loss of income to a private school is devastating, not to mention the impact of the loss of employment for faculty and staff. Our own schools could suffer an interruption in services resulting from an area-wide emergency such as a flood or earthquake, or from a site-specific emergency such as a fire resulting in serious property damage.

*Louisiana officials say it's unlikely that students from the Orleans and St. Bernard parishes will be able to return to their home schools for the rest of the school year. The New Orleans Times-Picayune reports that 135,000 students in Orleans, St. Bernard, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Source, Schoolhouse Beat*

*What options are available in your area for continuing school operation in the event of a disaster?*

*Could you rent tents, vacant office buildings or warehouse space if your campus was uninhabitable?*

*Who would be assigned to this task? Do they know that is part of their job responsibilities?*

*Who would they contact and what resources are available to find out what is available in your area?*

Many universities, schools and colleges were faced with the question of what they would do with tuition already paid for the current school year. Would tuition be refunded to the family? Applied to the following school year's expenses? Transferred to another school with the student?

*Does your school have a policy addressing tuition in the event that the school cannot continue operation?*

*What would you be able to offer faculty and staff in the event that the school had to close for an extended period of time? Does your employment contract with faculty address this issue?*

*Would your business interruption insurance provide coverage in the event of a natural disaster?*

**I would suggest these questions be an agenda item for every private school's next board of directors or board of trustees meeting.**

## ***Beginning a new school year***

Are you in charge of risk management and emergency preparedness at your school? There are a number of items that should be addressed early in the school year to ensure that the school is prepared to respond to a crisis and faculty and staff members are aware of key policies and procedures.

### ***Workplace Safety***

As school administrators, we are not only responsible for the safety of our students, but also for our faculty and staff. Cal/OSHA regulations regarding workplace safety are in effect for all but the smallest of schools. (See the article in the June 2004 newsletter at [www.campandschool.com](http://www.campandschool.com) for more information on this topic.

*Did your opening faculty meeting include a session on Workplace Safety?*

### ***Crisis Response Team Staffing***

*Have you updated your assignments from last year, and provided training to new team members in their team's role and responsibilities?*

## ***Inventory of Emergency Supplies***

*Has your enrollment increased significantly from the previous year, and if so, have you increased the quantities of supplies?*

*Have you replaced outdated items? Do you know what is out of date in your supply cache?*

## ***Organizing and Staffing the School Safety Committee***

*Does your school have a functioning safety committee?*

*Has a meeting schedule been set for the year, before everyone's calendar is filled and impacted by other events on campus?*

An internal school safety committee with representatives from all facets of the school operation can be an invaluable tool in addressing risk management, safety, and crisis response issues. A well-organized committee can meet as seldom as once each quarter or semester, and address many of the issues raised in this newsletter.

Camp and School Consulting offers a 2-hour workshop for administrators on setting up an effective safety committee that addresses team makeup, scope and function of the committee, typical tasks and agendas and frequency and types of meetings and safety activities. For more information, visit [www.campandschool.com](http://www.campandschool.com) and click on Workshops.

## ***Tips, Tools and Miscellaneous Information***

### ***New Requirement for School Bus Drivers***

As of September 20, 2005, all school bus drivers in the State of California (for both public and private schools) are required to have in their possession the new "S" (School Bus) endorsement for their Commercial Driver's License issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles whenever they are operating a school bus. This endorsement is different from and in addition to the School Bus Driver Certificate issued by the California Highway Patrol.

*Questions regarding the "S" Endorsement can be referred to the California Department of Education, Office of School Transportation at (916) 375-7100.*

### ***New Resource for Schools in Selecting Charter Buses for school trips***

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has established a new website that deals with Passenger Carrier Safety.

According to the FMCSA, "Travelers -- ***including school trip planners***, senior citizens groups, community groups and businesses -- now will be able to obtain important safety information about local bus and other transportation companies via the Internet to help them make travel plans that are safe, reliable and right for them.

The Passenger Carrier Safety Web site is designed to help buyers of transportation services compare passenger carrier safety performance, pick the type of vehicle best suited for their needs, locate carriers serving specific geographic areas, and get detailed safety information through direct links to related Web sites. The site is a one-stop source for safety information about carriers operating motor coach, school bus, van/mini-bus, and limousine services. It lists safety, licensing and insurance information about each carrier in an easy-to-access, user-friendly format."

*The website is located at <http://www.ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/Passenger/home.asp>*

## ***Emergency Preparedness Links***

The devastation from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has made us all stop to consider our level of disaster preparedness. There is some excellent information available at the following sites. Some of the information is geared to personal and family preparedness. Don't underestimate the importance of personal family preparedness planning. When our house is in order at home, it is much easier for us as school administrators to focus our attention on caring for our faculty and students. :

### **General Emergency Sites:**

- [American Red Cross](#)  
A great place to start. Filled with comprehensive information.
- [Ready.gov](#) (US Dept. of Homeland Security)  
Another comprehensive general site, with special emphasis on terror threats.
- [FEMA](#)  
Disaster relief information, plus how to prepare for all kinds of natural hazards.
- [Preparedness for Businesses](#)  
How to protect your workers, assets, and your entire company.

### **Personal and Family Preparedness:**

- [Home and Family Disaster Supplies](#)  
Find out what's essential to stock in your home.
- [Make a Plan](#)
- [Protecting Your Important Records](#)  
Learn how to keep your personal and financial records safe.

### **Preparing for Specific Disasters:**

- [Floods](#)  
Essential information for people living in flood hazard areas.
- [Hurricanes](#)  
Learn about hurricanes and how to protect yourself and your home.
- [Tornadoes](#)  
Learn what to do before, during, and after a tornado.
- [Fires](#)  
Facts on smoke alarms, safe-guarding electrical wiring, planning escape routes, and more.
- [Earthquakes](#)  
Complete earthquake preparation handbook with important survival information.

### **First aid and Medical Care:**

- [First Aid and Self Care](#)  
Comprehensive list of first aid treatments from the Mayo Clinic.
- [CPR and Emergency Care](#)  
Life-saving information from the American Heart Association.

## Locating loved ones:

- [Next of Kin Registry](#)  
Free contact system for locating your next of kin in emergency situations.
- [Family Links](#)  
International Red Cross site to help people find information about their loved ones.

## Children and others with special needs:

- [FEMA for Kids](#)  
Interactive site designed to engage and inform kids.
- [Prepare.org](#)  
Info for the elderly and others with special needs (includes a large print function).
- [Resources for Parents and Teachers](#)  
Tips and information on taking care of kids away from home.

## Pets:

- [American Veterinary Medical Association](#)  
A wonderful, downloadable guide to caring for house pets and farm animals
- [Disaster Preparedness for Pets](#)  
Tips from the Humane Society to safeguard your pet.

**Thank You** to all the private schools in California and the western United States for your continued enthusiastic support of *Camp and School Consulting*. Since forming the company in 2002, CASC has presented to hundreds of school administrators at area seminars and has conducted a number of on-site trainings for administrators, faculty and staff. The CASC Emergency Preparedness Plan is gaining wide acceptance at a variety of schools from small single-site elementary schools to multi-campus programs and large single-site high schools.

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If you would like to add additional administrators to the newsletter list or change the email address currently in use, reply to this email with **ADD** or **CHANGE** in the subject line, and provide the new address in the body of the message.