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School Safety for Fall 2024

Greetings,

With the start of the 2024-2025 school year, the Agency of Education (AOE) would like to share important reminders and resources to help support efforts to maintain and improve school safety and security. Please share this communication with your leadership and staff that work to support school safety and security.

Governor's Annual School Safety Conference

Vermont's Agency of Education, Department of Public Safety, and the Vermont School Safety Center are pleased to announce that the Governor's Annual School Safety Conference will be held on September 30, 2024. This all-day, in-person event will be held at the DoubleTree in Burlington, VT. The conference will include keynotes and breakout sessions presented by several of the country's foremost school safety experts and advocates, including Michele Gay, co-founder of Safe and Sound Schools, and Don Hough, Deputy Associate Director of the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). To register, please click on the [conference registration link](#). Please contact Taylor Goodwin (taylor.goodwin@vermont.gov), Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator, with any questions.

School Safety Drill Guidance Memo

Please see the [school safety drill guidance memo](#) for Fire and Response to Violent Intruder Drill requirements and instructions for the 2024-2025 school year. As a reminder, completed drills should be reported using the [AOE's Drill Reporting Tool](#). For questions about best practices for conducting safety drills, please contact Sunni Eriksen, Vermont Emergency Management, at sunni.eriksen@vermont.gov.

Critical Incident Report Form

Please note: this form should only be used by Superintendents, Independent School Heads, Principals or other Key School Safety staff. It should **not** be distributed or used by other members of the school community.

In an effort to share timely and accurate information and to support schools/school districts when managing a critical incident, the Agency of Education, Department of Public Safety and the Vermont School Safety Center have developed a [Critical Incident Report webform](#).



The intent of this form is to ensure state level school safety stakeholders are informed of a school based critical incident and to provide insight into any regional or statewide school threats schools/school districts may be experiencing.

This form does NOT replace the need to call (911) if you need emergency response resources to assist with managing a critical incident. This form should be completed once the situation is being effectively managed and school leaders are able to submit this form with the level of accuracy and detail requested.

The types of incidents for which we request a report be submitted include:

- Bomb threat
- Swatting
- Death of a student or faculty/staff member during the academic day or during recognized after school activities
- Other than drills or exercises, any event that results in a partial or total evacuation of the school
- Lockdown
- Threat of targeted violence
- School bus accident where students and/or staff have sustained serious injury
- Any critical incident response that may result in significant media attention

Please contact Sunni Eriksen at sunni.eriksen@vermont.gov and/or Rob Evans at revans@cosecure.com from the Vermont School Safety Center with any questions or concerns.

Behavioral Threat Assessment

[Act 29 of 2023](#) requires that all Supervisory Unions/Supervisory Districts and Approved and Recognized Independent Schools adopt and implement policies, procedures, training, and reporting for School Behavioral Threat Assessment teams by July 1, 2025. The AOE and VSSC are committed to supporting schools in the development and implementation of these school BTA teams with fidelity and rigor. The AOE is in the process of selecting a School BTA Consultant to provide technical assistance, expertise, and after-incident support to school BTA teams, and the state will continue to offer a variety of trainings during the 2024-2025 school year to prepare schools to undertake this important work. The next scheduled School Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM) training (virtual) is scheduled for October 6, 2024. For information on how to register and for additional upcoming trainings, please see the [Vermont School Safety Center BTA Trainings page](#).

EOP Reminder

[Act 29 of 2023](#) also requires that all Supervisory Unions/Supervisory Districts and Approved and Recognized Independent Schools shall adopt and maintain an all-

hazards emergency operations plan by July 1, 2024. For more information, please see the March 15, 2024 memo [All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan Guide and Template](#), [State of Vermont All-Hazards Emergency Operations Planning Guide 2024](#), and the [Template All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan](#). EOPs will not be collected. However, if you would like feedback for your EOP, please contact Sunni Eriksen, Vermont Emergency Management, at sunni.eriksen@vermont.gov. For questions regarding Act 29 requirements, please contact Taylor Goodwin, Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator, at taylor.goodwin@vermont.gov.

Trainings

Please plan to regularly review the [Vermont Emergency Management training calendar](#) for pertinent school safety training opportunities, including trainings to support the development and maintenance of your required EOP. For questions about the training calendar, please contact Sunni Eriksen, Vermont Emergency Management, at sunni.eriksen@vermont.gov.

New this year: CISA Facilities Assessments

We anticipate that some high schools may have access to an upcoming opportunity with the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) for on-site physical security assessments. This offering is new to Vermont and will likely have limited availability. More information about these assessments is forthcoming and will be widely shared when available.

Contact

For questions about school safety and security requirements provided under Act 29 (2023) or the annual school safety conference, please contact Taylor Goodwin, Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator, at taylor.goodwin@vermont.gov.

For technical assistance for conducting drills, questions regarding school safety trainings, or EOP feedback, please contact Sunni Eriksen, Vermont Emergency Management, at sunni.eriksen@vermont.gov or see the [Vermont School Safety Center website](#).