

This Month's Topics: Safety Policy - Annual Inspections - Local Community Assessments



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Charter School Safety Awareness Newsletter July 2017

The School Safety Awareness monthly newsletters are designed to provide charter leaders with the knowledge and resources necessary to continuously improve the safety of their school environments.

By both federal and state law, charter public schools are required to perform specific safety duties and administer certain responsibilities (Colorado Safe Schools Act, C.R.S. 22-32-109.1). View the law here:
http://www.lpdirect.net/casb/crs/22-32-109_1.html

Each issue features specific topics to inform and guide readers along the ever-evolving journey of school safety compliance and practices. Read this publication to stay abreast of your obligations and implement the proven practices and procedures shared here by government agencies, safety experts and fellow charter school operators.

This month we focus on ensuring your safety policies are in place, your annual inspections are happening per regulations, and that your safety team is considering the bigger picture of your community when designing safety plans.

Special Notice - Claire Davis School Safety Act Effective July 1, 2017

Effective July 1, 2017, under the [Claire Davis School Safety Act](#), governmental immunity no longer exists for schools that fail to take reasonable care to guard against incidents of school violence.

Schools may be liable for up to \$350,000 for any injury to one person in any single occurrence, and \$990,000 for an injury to two or more persons in any single occurrence. Schools should therefore make sure that they can demonstrate that they took steps to prevent incidents of school violence, which are defined to include murder, first degree assault and felony sexual assault. An incident of school violence may be between students, staff members, or any other person and may occur at both school and school-sponsored events.

Schools should consult with their insurance broker and your legal counsel for implementation advice.

Be Proactive: [The Colorado School Safety Resource Center](#) will conduct free threat assessment and adult sexual misconduct trainings. Many schools and Districts are reaching out to the Center for assistance, so schedule your assessment/training as soon as possible.

What School Safety Policies Should Be in Place?

In addition to those required by the [Colorado Safe Schools Act](#), each charter public school should have its own policies in place, which address the following:

- Compliance with NIMS/Incident Command Structure as the management structure to be utilized in school and district emergency response plans.
- Process for review and updates to school safety emergency operations plan.
- Threat Assessment practices.
- [Prohibition against sex discrimination, harassment and sexual violence.](#)
[Training for staff and age appropriate training for students.](#)
- Technology (internet safety) practices.
- Pandemic Procedures.
- Food allergies and food handling procedures.
- Mail handling procedures.
- Use or non-use of volunteers during or after a crisis.
- Safety and security policy requiring annual school building inspections.
- Employment, board member and volunteer screenings.
- Visitor authorization and management.
- Written conduct and discipline code (per CO Safe Schools Act):
 - General policies on student conduct, safety and welfare.
 - General policies for dealing with disruptive students.
 - Provisions for suspension or expulsion (school engagement and truancy policies).
 - Policies and procedures for the use of acts of reasonable and appropriate physical intervention.
 - General policies and procedures for determining the circumstances under and the manner in which disciplinary actions shall be imposed.
 - Specific policy concerning gang-related activities on school grounds, in school vehicles and at school activities.
 - Written prohibition of students from bringing or possessing dangerous weapons, drugs or other controlled substances on school grounds, in vehicles, etc.
 - Written prohibition of students from using or possessing tobacco products on school grounds, etc.
 - Written policy concerning searches on school grounds, including lockers.
 - Dress code prohibits students from wearing apparel that is deemed disruptive or to the maintenance of a safe and orderly schools.
 - Specific policy concerning bullying prevention and education.

Annual Inspections

The Fire and Life Safety Section of the Colorado state government administers the fire, building, and life safety codes adopted by the Division of Fire Prevention and Control. This administration involves the review regular maintenance inspections of regulated facilities including public schools. In many cases, authority over regulated facilities is delegated to local fire and/or building officials through Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) or certification.

- **Fire and Life Safety Inspections:** Schools should consult with the local fire department to develop fire drill procedures consistent with department and local ordinances and regulations. [Dept of Public Safety-Div of Fire Prevention and Control: CODE ENFORCEMENT](#)

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment oversees inspections for public school laboratories.

- **School Laboratory Inspections:** All schools with laboratories, and/or engaging in industrial arts or hazardous vocational activities should be inspected a minimum of once per year. All other schools should be inspected a minimum of once per three years. Source: [Colorado Dept of Public Health & Environment:6 CR 1010-6 Rules and Regulations Governing Schools in the State of Colorado](#)

The Colorado Department of Education directs food service and transportation inspections for public schools.

- **Food Safety Inspections:** §210.13 Facilities management - (b) Food safety inspections. Schools shall obtain a minimum of two food safety inspections during each school year conducted by a State or local governmental agency responsible for food safety inspections.
- **School Transportation Inspections:** [CDE Transportation Annual Inspection/Preventive Maintenance Checklist](#)

What does your school insurance policy state regarding safety inspections?

Your insurance company expects you to take care of your school facilities. Annual general campus safety inspections are often required. There is even language in some policies that will remove coverage if certain building inspections are not performed. Read your policy carefully to know what your carrier expects and dictates. All insurance companies employ risk control specialists. Their services are typically included within the pricing for insurance policies. Before you purchase a risk product or service, check with your insurance provider to see what they can provide to your school at no additional cost to you.

Conducting a Local Community Assessment

Assessing your surrounding community falls under Step 2 of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) planning process: Understand the Situation.

Assessments inform updates and revisions to a school's EOP on an ongoing basis. A site assessment examines the safety, accessibility, and emergency preparedness of a school's buildings and grounds. This assessment includes, but is not limited to the following: a review of building access and egress control measures, visibility around the exterior of the building, structural integrity of the building, compliance with applicable architectural standards for individuals with disabilities and others with functional and access needs, and emergency vehicle access. Beyond the site assessment, schools also need to consider their surrounding community for potential threats and hazards. A community assessment will provide the safety team with vital information about safety issues within the school and the community as a whole.

Evaluate these Six Key Areas:

1. **Security resources and physical safety:** includes review of security personnel and equipment, building and site layout and the adequacy of intra-school and external partner communication systems.

2. **Crisis plan:** includes a review of the emergency management and crisis response plans from identified local community safety organizations. This should include nearby schools and higher education institutions, as well.
3. **School and district policy:** includes the understanding of communication practices between school and district/authorizer, both for periodic reporting and during a crisis. Schools should also stay informed regarding authorizer's community MOUs and partnerships already in place.
4. **Community resources:** includes finding and establishing communication practices with community health and mental health services, social workers, psychologists, hospitals, nurses, ER personnel, fire departments, and police departments.
5. **Special needs:** includes locating community resources to support students/staff in the school who are identified as learning disordered, high-risk (for violence) or emotionally disturbed.
6. **School-community partnerships:** includes creating collaborations with various local community agencies and organizations, and engaging with nearby businesses to develop partnerships for additional assistance during school emergencies.

Other areas to appraise during the community assessment concern the CLIMATE of the school and its community:

1. **School climate:** includes student perceptions of safety within the community, attitudes toward diversity, respect for authority, and the presence of gangs in school or community.
2. **Violence and victimization:** includes bullying, gang activity, and community crime rates.
3. **Opportunities for students:** includes participation in before and after school programs and community-based youth development programs, participation in and availability of employment opportunities for youth, and participation in community leadership and decision-making opportunities.
4. **Community perceptions of the school and its students:** includes parent involvement in the school, parent attitudes toward the school, and community attitudes toward the school and youth.
5. **Community climate:** includes community conditions, the rates of violence within the community (including family violence) and the proportion of students who have witnessed or been victims of violence in the community or at home, community cohesion, community perception of safety, family and community values opposing violence, presence of gangs in the community, availability of firearms, adult participation in community activities, and teens acting out in the community.

Useful Free Resources

[Colorado School Safety Resource Center](#)

[FEMA 424, Design Guide for Improving School Safety in Earthquakes, Floods, and High Winds](#)

[School Response Framework - Safety Plan Webinar Series](#)

[Safe Communities Safe Schools - CU Boulder](#)

[Safe2Tell Colorado](#)

[Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment: Emergency Planning & Preparedness](#)

[American Red Cross: Preparation Tips for Your School](#)

[Colorado Division of Homeland Security](#)

[Charter Focus Journal Archives](#)

[Campus Safety Magazine](#)

[Grants.gov](#)

Upcoming Safety Events

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention & Intervention Symposium

Hosted by Colorado School Safety Resource Center

Date: Thursday, September 28

Time: 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Location: Adams 12 Five Star Conference Center, 1500 E. 128th Avenue, Thornton

Cost: \$100 per registrant

Description: The day will open and close with a two-part, gripping presentation on "Predators in Schools" by officers from Indiana and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Registration: [Click here to register.](#) [Click here to view flyer.](#)

2017 Colorado Safe Schools Summit

Hosted by Colorado School Safety Resource Center

Date: Wednesday, October 18 - Thursday, October 19

Location: Adams 12 Five Star Conference Center, 1500 E. 128th Avenue, Thornton

Cost: Full two-day registration \$95 plus registration fees | Single day registration cost \$48 plus registration fees.

Registration: [Click here to register.](#)

School Safety Partner: Colorado School Safety Resource Center



COLORADO
School Safety Resource Center
Department of Public Safety

The mission of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC) is to assist educators, emergency responders, community organizations, school mental health professionals, parents and students to create safe, positive and successful school environments for Colorado students in all PK-12 and higher education schools.

The CSSRC provides free consultation, resources, training, and technical assistance to foster safe and secure learning environments, positive school climates, and early intervention to prevent crisis situations.

The CSSRC supports schools and local agencies in their efforts to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and crisis situations.

Information and resources from the CSSRC are available to all schools, school officials, and community partners throughout the State of Colorado.

The Colorado School Safety Resource Center was created by state legislation in 2008. Senate Bill 08-001 (C.R.S. Section 24-33.5-1801, et seq.) was signed by Governor Ritter in May, 2008.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Next Month's Topics: How to review or establish safety agreements with various agencies. Important employment screening practices to keep your school safe.

School Safety Awareness Newsletter published by the Colorado League of Charter Schools - July 2017 - www.coloradoleague.org

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