

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

Introduction to the REMS TA Center

The REMS TA Center is administered by the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Supportive Schools (OSSS). The Center serves as the nation's hub for higher ed and K-12 school safety, security, emergency management and preparedness (school safety) information and services (e.g., guidance, training, tools, resources). We serve K-12 schools and institutions of higher education (IHEs), public and private, as well as their local, state, and Federal partners with shared school safety responsibilities, in developing and maintaining comprehensive, all-hazard, and high-quality campus and school EOPs that work to continually protect the whole school community, before, during and after possible emergencies, and continually consider the 5 Preparedness mission areas: Prevention, Mitigation, Protection, Response and Recovery.

Introduction to the *School Guide* and the *District Guide*

On June 18, 2013, several Federal departments and agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Education (ED); Justice (DOJ); led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Homeland Security (DHS), led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and Health and Human Services (HHS), released the [Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) (*School Guide*). Recently, during National Preparedness Month, September 25, 2019, the agencies issued a companion guide, [The Role of Districts in Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) (*District Guide*). These documents align and build upon years of emergency planning and are the first joint product of these departments and agencies. The *School Guide* and the *District Guide* incorporate lessons learned from recent incidents and respond to the needs and concerns voiced by stakeholders following recent emergencies. All practitioners with school safety responsibilities (education officials, first responders, planners, elected leadership) are encouraged to use the *School Guide* and *District Guide* to collaborate as well as create or revise and update existing plans as well as align their emergency planning practices with those at the national, state, and local levels.

The guidance provides the key [principles](#) of school emergency preparedness planning and an overview of a recommended [six-step planning process](#) for developing a high-quality school emergency operations plan (EOP). Planning teams can progress through the six steps as follows. After a planning team is formed (Step 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team), the team may identify through assessments, such as culture and climate assessments and site assessments, that help to identify and prioritize threats and hazards to be addressed in the EOP (Step 2: Understand the Situation). Goals can be created that identify desired outcomes for before, during, and after these incidents and objectives can be established that are specific and measurable actions to achieve those goals (Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives). Courses of action are then developed to accomplish those objectives (Step 4: Plan Development [Identifying Courses of Action]). basic plan, [functional annexes](#),

The *School Guide*'s Approach to Planning

Six Step Planning Process:

- Step 1: Form a Collaborative Planning Team
- Step 2: Understand the Situation
- Step 3: Determine Goals and Objectives
- Step 4: Plan Development (Identifying Courses of Action)
- Step 5: Plan Preparation, Review, and Approval
- Step 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance

Functional Annexes such as:

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Communications | 6. Reunification |
| 2. Evacuation | 7. Continuity of Operations |
| 3. Shelter-in-Place | 8. Security |
| 4. Lockdown | 9. Recovery |
| 5. Accounting for All Persons | 10. Health and Medical |

Threat - and Hazard-Specific Annexes such as:

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Hurricane or Severe Storm | 5. Mass Casualty Incident |
| 2. Earthquake | 6. Active Shooter |
| 3. Tornado | 7. Cyber Attack |
| 4. Hazardous Materials Incident | 8. Pandemic or Disease Outbreak |

and [hazard- and threat-specific annexes](#), and approved—see the text box above (Step 5: Plan Preparation, Review, and Approval). After sharing relevant sections of the plan with partners and stakeholders, the team conducts communication, training and exercise activities to help ensure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities. (Step 6: Train Stakeholders on the Plan and Their Roles).

REMS TA Center Resources

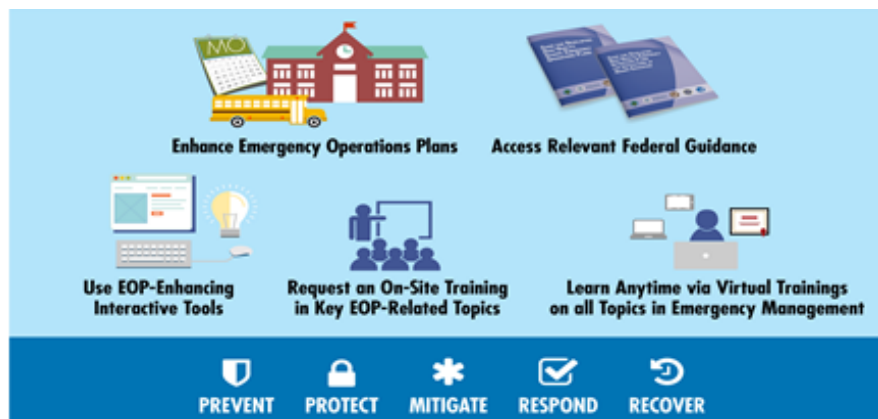
To assist the field in developing high-quality school EOPs by implementing the *School Guide's* contents, the REMS TA Center has developed several resources and training opportunities to make the guidance easier to learn, understand, and implement. These are hyperlinked and described in brief below.

- [Interactive Map](#). This map on the REMS TA Center's Website provides higher ed and school safety staff information on state-level information related to emergency preparedness, including the topics of safety, security, and emergency management. For example, you will find specific information for your state on state emergency management resources, safety and security mandates and policies, and state/field offices of state and federal partners.
- [EOP Interactive Tools](#). These tools can help schools assess, evaluate, and create comprehensive, high-quality school EOPs that address a range of threats and hazards:
 - [EOP ASSESS](#) is an online, interactive tool that can help planning team members assess their current understanding of how to create a high-quality EOP. The tool asks a few questions about emergency planning and at the end provides a customized report, which provides information to help increase knowledge of the planning process and how to create an EOP.
 - [EOP ASSIST 4.0 Software](#) can be hosted on a state's, district's or school's server and even a partner's server. The program directs planning team members through the processes that will result in the output of an editable, EOP resulting from applying the planning principles and processes put forth in the *School Guide*. When used to support more than one school, at the district and state level, the software includes a management dashboard along with dissemination functions. For more information on the software, its benefits and how it functions, please see our [webinar](#). An IT professional with an intermediate level of expertise or knowledge related to networking, Web server and database systems is needed to configure and install the software and the REMS TA Center offer a users' manual. As always, REMS staff are available to provide additional support if needed.
 - [EOP ASSIST Interactive Workbook](#) is the low-tech version of the EOP ASSIST 3.0 Software. The Interactive Workbook has the same content as the software and is comprised of Word documents that can be filled out offline. The workbook also comes with a PDF set of instructions. Many planning teams use this during planning meetings and subsequently input the final narrative in EOP Assist.
 - [EOP Evaluate](#). This HTML-based tool is designed to help schools and IHEs evaluate an established EOP. Tool users are prompted through the Federally recommended six-step planning process to determine strengths and areas to be further developed within the existing EOP and its annexes.
 - [SITE ASSESS](#) Our newest, free tool, is a mobile app for use on phones and tablets. It facilitates the school's multidisciplinary team walk-through with community partners. This safety assessment is important and helps users to gain a better understanding of the possible impacts of the hazards and threats facing schools alongside identifying priority safety activities for the building and campus. The customizable app builds from the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED); universal access; disease transmission prevention; culture, climate and more. The app exports a customized report for users, which, when used by multiple schools and considered at the district and state levels, can help to inform budget, policy and program decisions. For more information, see our webinar, "[Conducting K-12 Site Assessments With SITE ASSESS Webinar.](#)"
- [Informational Fliers](#). Also attached to this email are fliers highlighting some key resources and support provided by the REMS TA Center. In addition to the EOP Interactive Tools, the flier describes the:

- [Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#). This secure, online forum is a place for practitioners at schools, school districts, state education agencies, and their community partners to share ideas, experiences, lessons learned, and engage with one another on the comprehensive topic of preparedness (e.g., prevention).
- [On-site Trainings by Request \(TBRs\)](#). We offer a variety of free TBRs for delivery on-site at schools and districts on topics such as *Developing School Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)* and *School Behavioral Threat Assessments: An Introduction*.
- [Virtual Trainings](#). On this Web page are links to a series of [Online Courses](#) that guide users on federally recommended information and processes for high-quality emergency plan development and related topics in comprehensive preparedness. The page also links to our [Webinars](#) page, which provides archived Webinars with accompany resources on similar topics as well as our [downloadable training](#) package with special topic for you and your partners to use providing training to your teams.
- [Tool Box](#). The Tool Box is an online repository of tools and resources developed by practitioners in the field and pertinent to the needs of school and higher ed practitioners as they engage in the process of school and higher ed emergency management planning.
- Technical Assistance (TA). For answers on emergency preparedness, individuals can contact the REMS TA Center for TA. The team can be reached at info@remstacenter.org, through our toll-free number, 1-855-781-REMS (7367), or by submitting an online [TA Request Form](#).
- Twitter.

We also encourage you to share this information, including the flier, and our contact information with your partners and the schools you support. For additional resources and information on school and district preparedness, including the topics of safety, security, and emergency management, please visit the TA Center [Website](#) or call us toll-free at 1-855-781-REMS [7367].

Consider following us on Twitter, [@remstacenter](#), to stay up-to-date on our services, products and tools, as well as those of our Federal, State and local partners, and share school safety strategies and information with school safety, security, emergency management and preparedness professional.



On behalf of OSSS, the REMS TA Center team, and myself thank you for all you do to keep school communities safe, and to protect students and their teachers!

Sincerely,
Madeline Sullivan