

Minimum Requirements for School Emergency Operations Plans

2026 Edition

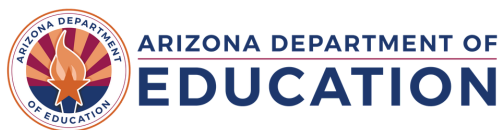
Jointly authorized:

Arizona Department of Education (ADE)

Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (AZ DEMA)

ARS 15-341(A)(31) Compliance Guide

ARS 15-183(E)(1) Charter Compliance



This document provides the components that shall be included in a school's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to comply with ARS 15-341(A)(31) and ARS 15-183 (E)(1). These Minimum Requirements establish the components required in every school's EOP and may be supplemented by additional planning elements based on local needs and hazards. All local education agencies shall comply with the minimum requirements and utilize the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) EOP Template.

ARS 15-341 (A)(31)

Requires each school to develop an emergency response plan in conjunction with local law enforcement and emergency response agencies, in accordance with minimum standards developed jointly by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and the Division of Emergency Management within the Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA). The plan must also address how the school and emergency responders will communicate with and provide assistance to students with disabilities.

ARS 15-183 (E)(1)

Requires charter schools to comply with applicable school safety laws. As a result, charter schools are required to develop and maintain an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for each school site in accordance with these Minimum Requirements.

The Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs jointly authorize, approve, and adopt the 2026 Arizona Minimum Requirements for School Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). This edition supersedes and replaces all previous versions.

The undersigned affirm their shared commitment to supporting safe and prepared school communities through the adoption of this document and acknowledge it as the final, official version of the 2026 Arizona Minimum Requirements for School EOPs.

ADE Representative

Title

Signature

Date

DEMA Representative

Title

Signature

Date

The district/charter shall maintain a policy requiring the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage school emergencies.

REQUIRED ICS ROLES

Each school shall develop and maintain an ICS organizational chart. At a minimum, the chart shall identify primary and alternate individuals for each required role.

Whenever practicable, school-based individuals shall be assigned to ICS positions. When incident needs exceed school-level resources, district or charter individuals and/or community partners may be designated to support or fulfill ICS roles.

The [ICS chart](#) shall identify designated individuals for the following required positions. Individuals assigned to these roles shall be informed of their responsibilities and complete the training requirements outlined in the Training Requirements section.

Required Positions

- [Incident Commander](#)
- [Planning Section Chief](#)
- [Operations Section Chief](#)
- [Logistics Section Chief](#)
- [Finance/Administrative Section Chief](#)
- [Public Information Officer](#)
- [Safety Officer](#)
- [Liaison Officer](#)

[Additional ICS positions](#) may be assigned and activated as needed based on the scope and complexity of the incident.

Required Initial Training

[Insert principal name / charter equivalent] shall ensure individuals assigned ICS roles complete [COPS Safety Training Program: Intro to Incident Command System ICS for School Personnel](#) prior to assignment, and all additional training required by the 2026 EOP Minimum Requirements for School Emergency Operations Plans. Schools shall maintain documentation of completed required training.

Required First Year Training:

Within one year of assignment, individuals with ICS responsibilities shall complete [FEMA IS 100.C](#) and [IS-200.C](#), plus Introduction to Standard Response Protocol (SRP) and DAFN Essentials for School Safety Teams available through [APLD](#) in the Fall of 2026.

Required Ongoing Training:

At least once every three years, individuals assigned to ICS roles shall complete one or more approved trainings listed below:

FEMA: (Courses are searchable on the [FEMA](#) site.)

[FEMA IS-120.C: An Introduction to Exercises](#)

[FEMA IS-235.C: Emergency Planning](#)

[FEMA IS-360: Preparing for Mass Casualty Incidents](#)

[FEMA IS-362.a: Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools](#)

[FEMA IS-366.A: Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters](#)

[FEMA IS-700.B: An Introduction to NIMS](#)

[MGT-360: Incident Command: Capabilities, Planning & Response Actions for All Hazards](#)

EOP Overview:

[PREPaRE Workshop 1](#) - comprehensive school safety planning

[Circle of Trust](#) - comprehensive school safety training

Focused Training:

[Standard Response Protocol Training](#)

[Standard Reunification Model Training](#)

[Staying Safe](#)

[Especially Safe](#)

[ALICE Training](#)

[Run, Hide, Fight Training](#)

[AVERT](#)

Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM): Such as [Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines](#) (CSTAG) or other nationally recognized approaches.

Basic Plan

Each Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) shall include all required sections and content, following the organizational outline below, and use the Arizona Department of Education's EOP template.

Section I - Basic Plan

Table of Contents

Document Authorization Page:

- Approval statement with dated signature of the site leader (principal or charter equivalent)
- Approval statement with dated signature of the district leader (superintendent or charter equivalent).

Record of Review and Revision:

The Record of Review and Revision shall be updated immediately following any of the following actions:

- Annual EOP review
- Changes to ICS chart
- Revisions to the EOP

EOP Record of Distribution:

Document all EOP distribution dates to local response agencies. Redistribute the EOP whenever updates or revisions are made and maintain an accurate, ongoing record of distribution. Document if a local agency refuses to accept documents. Indicate method, and number of times attempted.

Introduction, Purpose and Scope:

- State the purpose of the EOP
- State the scope for which the EOP applies

School Overview and Property Description:

- List the school address, campus size (acres), number of buildings, number of floors, and grades served.
- Document the number of students and employees typically present on campus based on Arizona Official Enrollment counts, including during regular school hours, before and after school programs, school sponsored clubs and athletic events.

Disabilities, Access and Function Needs (DAFN):

- Identify, document, and address accommodations and support needs for students and staff with DAFN using the **ADE DAFN Accommodation Form**, as appropriate.
- Maintain a confidential list of students and staff with a completed DAFN Accommodation Form.

EOP Activation Authority:

Describe all procedures for activating the EOP.

- Delegation of authority
- Conditions or incidents that may trigger EOP activation
- Individuals authorized to activate the EOP
- Order of succession, by name and title, for EOP activation

Communications:

- Describe procedures for notifying 911 and emergency responders.
- Describe any and all emergency alert and notification systems used by the school, including their purpose and the individuals authorized to activate them.
- Describe how emergency notifications are communicated to students, staff, parents, and guardians.

The EOP shall utilize plain language for emergency communications and response protocols to direct staff and students. School EOP's must utilize all of the following **approved response protocols**:

- Hold
- Secure
- Shelter
- Lockdown
- Evacuate
- Reunification

Coordination, Direction, and Control:

Effective coordination, direction, and control are supported through established partnerships and pre-incident planning. The EOP shall describe procedures for coordinating with responding agencies and external partners during an emergency, including information sharing, resource coordination, and the transition to Unified Command, when appropriate.

Incident Response Locations

The EOP shall designate:

- Primary and alternate evacuation routes
- Primary and alternate assembly areas
- Primary and alternate on-site command posts*
- Primary and alternate staging areas*

***On-Site Command Post:** The designated location where the school's ICS team will coordinate incident response activities prior to the establishment of Unified Command or during incidents that do not require a law enforcement response.

***Staging Area:** The designated location where emergency personnel, vehicles, and equipment assemble and await assignment or deployment.

Reunification and Continuity of Operations:

- Designate primary and alternate off-site reunification locations.
- Describe procedures for transporting students and staff to each reunification location, including accommodations and supports for individuals with DAFN.

Special Circumstances:

The EOP shall include procedures for:

- Off-campus emergencies, including field trips, bus incidents, traffic incidents, and other school-sponsored activities occurring away from campus.
- School-sponsored activities occurring outside normal school hours, including before- and after-school programs, clubs, athletics, performances, and special events.

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Response Annexes and Threat and Hazard Annexes

Required Response Annexes

Response annexes describe the procedures the school will follow in response to an incident.

The EOP shall include response annexes for the following actions:

- Hold
- Secure
- Shelter
- Lockdown
- Evacuation
- Reunification

Required Threat and Hazard Annexes

Develop an annex for each of the following required threats and hazards:

- *Active Threat on Campus*
- *Reported Threat to Campus*
- *Utility Disruption*
- *Outbreaks, Epidemics, Pandemics*

Develop at least two additional threat or hazard annexes based on the highest priority risks identified through the school's completion of the [School Hazard Assessment](#) Worksheet. Community specific risks identified by the local emergency management office shall be considered when conducting the assessment and selecting additional annexes.

Each annex shall document response actions, communication procedures, and support considerations for students and staff, including individuals with DAFN.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The following information shall be readily accessible to school staff during an incident:

- Student rosters
- Parent, legal guardian, and emergency contact information
- Faculty and staff rosters

Include primary and alternate methods for how these documents will be stored and accessed.

Reunification site maps shall be accessible to school staff during an incident and clearly identify:

- Student entrance
- Student assembly areas
- Parent/Guardian parking
- Greeting area
- Parent/Guardian check-in
- Parent/Guardian waiting area
- Reunification location
- Exit route
- Medical area
- Behavioral Health area
- Crisis/Notification rooms
- Command post
- Staff/Volunteer check-in area
- Staging area
- Media area

*Include primary and backup methods for storing and accessing reunification maps during an incident.

Emergency Procedure Guides

- Develop and post emergency procedure guides in all classrooms and indoor assembly areas, including gyms, auditoriums, lunchrooms, libraries, and any other spaces occupied by students/staff.

School Transportation:

Provide drivers with readily accessible emergency procedures for all activities.

- Procedures shall include:
- Maps to key locations such as reunification sites.
- Operational procedures for a bus accident.
- Operational procedures for a medical emergency.

Facility and Site Information:

If present on campus, the location of the following items shall be identified on the school floor plan or blueprint:

- Emergency utility shut-off, boilers, HVAC systems, generators, hazardous material storage, flammable materials storage, fire suppression equipment, automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), Stop the Bleed kits, first aid equipment, property and building access points, and additional items as applicable.
- Include primary and backup methods for how the school floor plans and blueprints will be stored and accessed during an incident.
- Describe when and how school floor plans and blueprints will be shared with local emergency response agencies, including law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services.

Pre-Drafted Emergency Communications:

- Develop messages for use when communicating with staff, students, parents/guardians, the media, and other stakeholders during an incident.
- Include primary and backup methods for how these documents will be stored and accessed during an incident.

Review, Update, and Improve:

- Annually review and update the EOP, annexes, and supporting documents.
- Use [After Action Review and Improvement Plans](#) to inform EOP revisions.
- Review and update the ICS chart annually **and** whenever staffing changes occur. Only individuals who have completed foundational courses IS-100.C and IS-200.C, shall be designated to ICS roles.
- Collaborate with local emergency management, fire, law enforcement, and public health agencies when addressing the outcomes of the Hazard Assessment Worksheet, and when developing, revising, training on, or exercising the EOP.

Train:

Incorporate EOP related school safety training into annual training and professional development to support school community preparedness, operational readiness, and coordinated response.

Train all staff on the EOP, emergency procedures, and their roles and responsibilities. Develop a process to ensure substitute teachers receive essential emergency preparedness and response information.

Training shall cover:

- Overview of the EOP
- Emergency notification methods
- Response Actions (Hold, Secure, Shelter, Lockdown, Evacuate and Reunification)
- Evacuation routes and assembly areas
- Incident Command System (ICS) Structure

Provide parents/guardians and relevant community partners with information on:

- Response Actions
- Communication and notification methods
- Reunification expectations during drills and incidents

Improve:

- Develop a process to assess and improve the effectiveness of the EOP beyond required drills and completed After Action Review and Improvement Plans.
- Consider opportunities to strengthen partnerships through joint planning, exercises, after-action reviews, lessons learned, and continuous improvement efforts.

Annually conduct the emergency response drills listed below with all students and staff.

Lockdown Drills:

Conduct three (3) lockdown drills annually.

- A real lockdown incident may count for one (1) of the three required drills.
- If a real lockdown incident is substituted, two (2) additional lockdown drills shall still be conducted.
- At least one (1) drill during a transition period (passing period, lunch, recess, or before/after school).

Shelter Drills:

Conduct one (1) shelter-in-place drill annually

Building Evacuation Drills:

Conduct one (1) evacuation drill annually.

Bus Evacuation Drills:

Conduct two (2) bus evacuation drills annually per ARS 28-900).

Fire Drills:

Conduct one (1) fire drill each month school is in session based on fire code.

Within **one week** of completing a drill or incident, schools shall complete an [After Action Review and Improvement Plan](#) using a collaborative, team-based approach to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Communicate relevant lessons learned and improvement opportunities to staff and the school community, as appropriate.