

# NCEF Safe School Facilities Checklist

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School or building name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## About the Checklist

This checklist is designed for assessing the safety and security of school buildings and grounds. Created by the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities and funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, the checklist combines the nation's best school facility assessment measures into one comprehensive online source. Nationally recognized school facility and safety experts participated in the checklist's creation and oversee its maintenance and updating.

The checklist embodies the three principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): **natural surveillance**, the ability to easily see what is occurring in a particular setting; **natural access control**, the ability to restrict who enters or exits an environment; and **territoriality-maintenance**, the ability to demonstrate ownership of and respect for property.

*There is no perfect score or passing grade for the checklist* and not all assessment measures will apply to any one school. Those that do apply must be considered in the context of the school's primary purpose: providing an effective teaching and learning environment. Proper safety and security measures do not work counter to this purpose.

Using the checklist should be an integral part of a school's crisis mitigation and prevention strategy. For complete information about crisis planning, see the publication **Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities** by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (available on the NCEF website at [www.edfacilities.org/safeschools](http://www.edfacilities.org/safeschools)).

## The Assessment Team

For reviewing designs for a new school, addition, or renovation, the assessment team should be led by a school CPTED specialist and include the project facility planner and architect as well as appropriate school personnel and engineering and security professionals. Reviews should be conducted during the schematic phase and at the 30 and 95 percent document completion stages, with emphasis on getting things right as early in the design process as possible. If there is a post-design value engineering review, be careful that safety and security features are not compromised.

For assessing an existing school, where the facility itself is examined, the assessment team should be led by a school CPTED specialist and include the school or district facility manager, the principal, and, as appropriate, the head custodian, a teacher, the school resource officer, the local fire and building inspectors, and any needed architectural, engineering, and security professionals. Where assembling such a team is impractical, key school personnel should be interviewed to identify specific safety and security concerns and potential sources of trouble that otherwise might be missed.

## Acknowledgements

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## Sources

The checklist is drawn primarily from six sources:

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The checklist is available in Word format for states and local school districts seeking to adopt and modify it; contact NCEF at [bbrenner@nibs.org](mailto:bbrenner@nibs.org).

## **Questions and Comments**

For questions, comments, or suggestions, contact NCEF at [bbrenner@nibs.org](mailto:bbrenner@nibs.org).

**You have made the following initial selections:**

Reviewing plans for a new school facility

Acts of violence and terrorism

**You have selected the following categories and subcategories of information:**

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

- Fresh Air Intakes
- Air Handling and Filtration

## 1. MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

### 1.1. Fresh Air Intakes

- 1.1 a -- Fresh air intakes are located on roofs or placed high on exterior walls, at least 12 feet off the ground (or the fourth floor or higher in tall buildings), and away from vehicle exhaust-laden areas.**  
**-- Fresh air intakes are installed at less than 12 feet off the ground, they are within secure fenced areas, cages or enclosures, and are protected by metal mesh sloped at least 45 degrees to reduce the threat of objects being tossed onto them.**  
**-- Air exhusts are located downwind from air intakes and separated by the maximum distance possible.**

-- Roof-mounted air intake locations are vulnerable to flying debris in high winds, so wall-mounting is preferable.  
-- Wall intake heights should be increased where existing platforms or building features (i.e., loading docks, retaining walls) might provide access to them.

\_Yes \_No \_Not Applicable \_Further Study      Notes:

### 1.2. Air Handling and Filtration

- 1.2 a There is a master ventilation system shut-off in the principal's office or other designated area, making it possible to help control the spread of airborne contaminants through the ventilation system from any source, from chemical spills to volcanic ash fall to chemical-biological-radiological (CBR) attack.**

\_Yes \_No \_Not Applicable \_Further Study      Notes:

- 1.2 b In high risk areas, a smoke evacuation system with adequate purge capacity is operational, installed facing away from high-risk buildings, with controls and wires protected against damage, and connected to emergency power.**

\_Yes \_No \_Not Applicable \_Further Study      Notes: