



School Safety Facilities Design Checklist

The following checklist has been designed to help prompt discussion early in the design phase for new school construction as well as major school renovation projects. School design teams can use the checklist to prompt them to consider equipment, fixtures and design features that are conducive to a safe learning environment and a higher level of emergency preparedness. This checklist is not designed to replace the technical assistance of experts in relevant fields but as a tool to stimulate discussion of safety design features during the design phase.

Teams should evaluate the appropriateness of the items listed to the facility they are designing. Teams should consider future developments. For example, it is extremely common for schools to require the addition of numerous portable classroom buildings after they are constructed. As a result, the initial design should anticipate this possibility from a safety standpoint.

School plan development safety enhancement team

Some of the most safely designed school facilities were designed by architects who met with the school safety planning team early in the design process. The architect typically provides an overview of the core concepts of their design concept, the major goals of the facility design, and a brief primer on how to understand the building plans. The team members can then ask questions and make observations to help address any potential design features and concepts that are undesirable. Though this process may take several hours or more, it will dramatically improve the final design and the resulting school. This process can result in a reduction in civil liability for both the school district and the architect while increasing overall client satisfaction.

Who should be on the review team?

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Architect(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Local/state homeland security official |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building planner(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health agency official |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Risk manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Student(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement (SRO or officer/deputy from appropriate agency) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police tactical team member | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Medical Technician/
School Nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire service professional | <input type="checkbox"/> School bus driver/Route supervisor/
Transportation director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency management agency representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities representative |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance department representative |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> School board member |

Safety equipment and design features to be included

- Automatic external defibrillators with proper age appropriate features
- Power outlets near main doors for use with walk through metal detectors (this is necessary even if metal detectors will not be used on a daily basis)
- Power outlets located near auditorium and gymnasium entryways for use with walk through metal detectors for special events
- Intrusion alarm system
- Portable school radios for outdoor activities and crisis situations
- First aid kits
- Safety glasses
- Saw Stop[®] saws or similar product
- Fences around any rappelling towers, obstacle courses etc.
- Fences around any drainage areas with standing or running water
- Gates to control vehicle access
- Avoid the use of chain link fencing when possible – wrought iron or aluminum is more attractive, harder to climb, provides superior natural surveillance and usually costs less over time because people cannot easily cut holes in the fence or vandalize it
- Avoid solid block or brick walls on the exterior that block natural surveillance or will encourage skate boarding
- Avoid cement benches that have surfaces conducive to skateboarding
- Mark speed breakers with high visibility markings
- Emergency telephones accessible in public areas
- Use exterior doors that remain locked during the day but are easily accessible to staff members (it should be easy for a teacher to open doors to bring a class in quickly from outside in the event of a crisis)
- Incorporate murals and other attractive physical features to create a sense of connection between students, staff and parents and the place of school

Emergency equipment/features to be included

- Fire Extinguisher cabinets with local alarm covers
- Exterior mounted “knox box(es)” mounted out of sight from interior of building (for safe access by public safety during an active shooter crisis)
- External public address system (remote phone capability is desirable)
- Fireman’s phone public address capability near main hall exit
- Emergency lighting
- ADA compliant emergency phones in all elevators
- Emergency evacuation chairs
- Fire extinguishers
- Eye wash stations
- Emergency showers
- Fire blankets
- Chemical storage cabinets

Building design features to look for

- Secure room for security camera and emergency communications equipment
- Secure room for storage of high value equipment during Summer, Winter & Spring class breaks
- Securely anchored protective laminate glass on exterior windows, especially for areas prone to high wind emergencies
- Skylight weight-rated to 350 pounds
- HVAC equipment located on the roof
- Secure storage for student medications

- Adequate power outlets for portable school radios
- Doors in school require a key to lock so students or intruders cannot easily lock doors to gain privacy over a victim
- Classroom doors can be locked from inside the room by teachers during an emergency
- Adequate severe weather sheltering areas are available throughout the school in areas safely and easily accessible during a severe weather incident
- HVAC and cafeteria hood systems can be shut down easily during a hazardous materials incident
- Main entryways allow for passive and positive control of people entering the building; entryways are visible from staff work stations
- Office front counter height affords protection for office staff
- Visitor parking areas visible from main office
- Bicycle racks cannot be used as a ladder to gain access to roof and are in clear view from inside school
- Zig-zag entryways for student bathrooms with washbasins in the hallway
- Vandalism-resistant bathroom stalls
- Bathroom stalls are short, low topped and high bottom partition style to deter multiple students from entering stall at one time
- Drop ceilings are not used in student bathrooms (to prevent contraband concealment)
- Adequate ADA compliant student lockers
- Adequate ADA compliant emergency exits for all areas of the facility
- Adequate fire resistant storage space for materials used to construct stage sets for plays in the auditorium (remote storage in a specially designed fire resistant room is ideal)
- Student lockers have built-in locks
- Student lockers are not large enough for a child to fit in (even high school lockers should not be large enough to contain an elementary child, since the

- facility may be used for programs serving elementary children and other after-hours activities where small children may be present
- Avoids hidden areas created by tall banks of lockers in clusters with aisles
 - Cabinets in classrooms and other areas are designed so a child cannot be locked inside (for example, by placing an item through two loop style door handles)
 - All rooms including custodial closets and mechanical rooms are marked with a number
 - The facility is designed to accommodate portable classroom buildings
 - The building is designed so it is extremely difficult to gain roof access
 - Covered walkways and storm drains are designed so they cannot be easily climbed
 - The main entrance is identifiable by its appearance and, if possible, by a design feature matching the school's mascot or a symbol representing what the school stands for
 - The school resource officer/police liaison officer or security officer office area is located where it affords good security for the officer(s), control over main entryways and good natural surveillance
 - Offices and other areas are visible to nearby staff members to minimize opportunities for molestation or allegations of molestation by students or staff
 - Windows for key administrator's offices should provide an opportunity for support staff to see if they are in danger (for example with irate visitors or students)
 - Playgrounds, athletic fields and other outdoor areas for student activities are designed to block any out of control motor vehicles from entering
 - The building is designed so a vehicle cannot be driven through a wall, window or entry way