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*).

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:

Florida Safe School Design Guidelines: Strategies to Enhance Security and Reduce Vandalism. University of Florida.

1. SCHOOL GROUNDS

1.1. Site Access Control

1.1 a In high threat areas, the perimeter of the site is secured at a level that prevents unauthorized vehicles or pedestrians from entering, and has this effect as far from the school building as possible.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 b In high threat areas, vehicle entry beyond checkpoints can be controlled, permitting entry by only one applicant at a time.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 c In high threat areas, there is space outside the protected perimeter to pull over and inspect cars.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 d All vehicle pathways, access points and interfaces with main thoroughfares are designed to avoid accidents, speeding, blind spots and traffic conflicts. Transitional areas between streets and school access points are clearly marked, such as with "School Zone" signs.

Traffic control options include:
a) Traffic controls or calming devices such as speed humps, bumps, raised crosswalks or traffic circles reduce the likelihood of injury due to speeding vehicles.
b) Driveways curve, change direction, or are broken into short enough segments to prevent cars from building up speed.
c) Driveways access slower streets directly, but not high speed streets.
d) Signs, fences and landscaping at intersections do not block vision.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 e Pedestrian safety is addressed with well designed crossing areas and separation from vehicle traffic.

Pedestrian safety options include:
a) Lighting, traffic signals, flags, painted crosswalks, signs and crossing guards are visible to drivers, and are effective.
b) Electronically controlled "Walk/Don't Walk" lights with countdown displays and push buttons.
c) Pedestrian islands or median strips provide safe havens for students crossing streets.
d) Pedestrian bridges, walking or biking paths provide alternatives to walking near traffic.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 f In high threat areas, manholes, utility tunnels, culverts, and similar unintended access points to the school property are secured with locks, gates, or other appropriate devices, without creating additional entrapment hazards.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 g Perimeter fences, walls, or "hostile vegetation" provide sufficient access control, surveillance and territoriality.

Fencing options, including their pros and cons, include:
a) A solid wall or fence blocks natural surveillance and can attract graffiti.
b) A stone or concrete block wall can be an effective barrier against bullets.
c) A solid wall or fence can enhance privacy.
d) Wire mesh fencing usually provides foot holds, making it easy to climb over.
e) Wire mesh fencing is relatively easy to vandalize but often the most economical option.
f) Smaller gauge wire mesh may deter climbing.
g) Powder-coated wire mesh fencing can be more aesthetically pleasing.

h) Wrought iron fencing is low maintenance, vandal resistant, without blocking surveillance or providing foot holds.
i) A short fence can establish territoriality, but is of limited value for controlling access.
j) Tall, continual fencing can significantly restrict access, but may also block a pedestrian path serving students who walk to and from school, forcing them to take a longer route where they are more exposed to traffic, crime, or environmental hazards. A compromise may be appropriate, such as installing gates at selected locations. Open gates at least define likely entry points; lockable gates provide the school with the ability to further secure the site but can also create an unexpected barrier for a studend trying to escape to or from the site.
(k) "Hositle vegetation" (dense, thorny groundcover or bushes) often can be used effectively to define boundaries of various kinds around and within school property, providing it doesn't interfere with natural surveillance.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 h Site entry points are clearly marked, controllable, and easily seen from the school. Gates are available for closing access points when necessary.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 i Entry points to the site are kept to a minimum.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 j There are at least two entry points so that if one is blocked, the other can be used.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 k In high threat areas, there area perimeter barriers capable of stopping vehicles.

Anti-ram protection may be provided by adequately strengthened bollards, street furniture, sculpture, landscaping, walls, and fences. The anti-ram protection should be able to stop the threat vehicle size/weight at the speed attainable by that vehicle at impact. If the anti-ram protection cannot absorb the desired kinetic energy, consider adding speed controls such as speed bumps to limit vehicle speed. Serpentine driveways can also help slow down the vehicle's approach.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 l Site entry points can be readily observed and monitored by staff and students in the course of their normal activities.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 m Site entry points are positioned so that one individual can monitor as many entries as possible. Nothing blocks this means of visual surveillance, such as signs, trees, shrubs, walls, etc.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 n Unsupervised site entrances may be secured during low-use times for access control purposes and to reinforce the idea that access and parking are for school business only.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 o Site entries provide for the ready passage of fire trucks and other emergency vehicles.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

1.1 p Fire hydrants on the site are readily visible and accessible.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

2. SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

2.1. Building Access Control

2.1 a Access into the building is 100% controllable through designated, supervised, or locked entry points. Windows and service entries are not exceptions. Entry is either granted by supervising staff or by using proximity cards, keys, coded entries, or other devices.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

2.1 b The school layout requires visitors to pass through at least visual screening before they can gain access to bathrooms, service spaces, stairwells, or other amenities inside the school. No one can get inside without being seen close enough by staff to be identified.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

2.1 c Portions of the school that are not being used can be readily secured. This can be accomplished by locking wing doors or accordian-style gates, etc., provided emergency egress is not blocked.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

2.1 d Signs, in all relevant languages and with simple maps or diagrams where needed, direct visitors to designated building entries.

Where appropriate, signs may warn in a friendly but firm way about trespassing and illicit behavior and cite applicable laws and regulations.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

2.1 e High value targets for theft, such as offices, computer rooms, music rooms, shops, and chemical storage areas are protected by high security locks and an alarm system, or at least one all-purpose storage room is available for storing valuables.

Note that chemicals must be stored separately.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

3. COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

3.1. Building Notification Systems

3.1 a A mass notification system reaches all building occupants (public address, pager, cell phone, computer override, etc.) and is supplied with emergency power.

Depending on building size, the mass notification system will provide warning and alert information, along with actions to take before and after an incident.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

3.1 b An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) provides emergency backup power.

-- A UPS should be located at all computerized points, from the main distribution facility to individual data closets and at critical personal computers/terminals.
-- Critical LAN sections should also have uninterruptible power.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

3.1 c In high risk, earthquake-prone, and wind hazard areas, exterior communication system components are adequately braced and supported. In high risk and earthquake-prone areas, interior communication system components are adequately braced and supported.

Post- event communications are vital for issuing instructions to school administrators, students, faculty, and staff. Some components, such as satellite disc antennas, are easily damaged if not adequately supported.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

4. BUILDING ACCESS CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE

4.1. Building Access Control

4.1 a A basic security alarm system is installed throughout hallways, administrative offices, exit doors, and rooms containing high-value property such as computers, shop equipment, laboratory supplies, and musical instruments.

-- As needs and budgets allow, use room alarm, motion detection, and electronic surveillance systems at primary and secondary entry points, stairwells, courtyards, unsupervised or hidden areas inside the building and along the building perimeter, rooms containing valuable equipment or student records, and in rooms containing dangerous chemicals such as chemistry labs and maintenance supply areas.
-- Have expert contractors install and maintain these systems.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

4.1 b Card access systems are installed throughout the campus for use by students and staff.

Card access systems greatly simplify access control and eliminate problems associated with lost keys and massive re-keying.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

4.1 c Where keyed locks are used, a master key control system is in place to monitor keys and duplicates.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

4.1 d Devices used for physical security are integrated with computer security systems.

For example, they are used in place of or in combination with user ID and system passwords.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

4.1 e In high risk areas, magnetometers (metal detectors) and x-ray equipment are installed. Where installed, they are used effectively.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes:

4.1 f Access to information on building operations, schematics, procedures, detailed drawings, and specifications is controlled and available only to authorized personnel.

_Yes _No _Not Applicable _Further Study Notes: