

Considerations for Conducting Disaster Drills

Guidance for Montana Schools



Involvement of Students and Staff in Disaster Drills

Conducting disaster drills are important measures schools can take to prevent and mitigate injury and loss in the event of an actual emergency. However, for some students and staff members, participating in life-like drills may cause distress and unintentionally result in fear of being in school. This is especially true if students or staff have previously experienced traumatic events. Schools are advised to consider the value added in including students in certain disaster drills as well as the potential harm. Schools are also advised to consider the potential harm to staff and are encouraged to communicate with staff about their readiness to participate in certain disaster drills and training.

Community and Cultural Values

Before conducting a disaster drill, it is important to consider the cultural beliefs and values of the students, school staff, and community. For schools serving American Indian students, understanding tribally specific beliefs and practices can better prepare school staff to communicate and conduct disaster drills.

Considerations for Conducting Disaster Drills: Tools and Guides

Consideration	Tools/Guides	Description
Age and developmental stage of the students and staff	Developmental Levels of Safety Awareness Toolkit - Safe and Sound Schools	Guidance on the best way to involve both students and adults in drills based on their levels of development
Community and cultural values	American Indian and Alaska Native Disaster Preparedness Resource - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Recommendations on coordinating with tribal nations to prepare for disasters
Type of drill being practiced	Creating School Active Shooter Drills - The National Child Traumatic Stress Network:	Guidance on how to conduct an active shooter drill while reducing the potential for causing unintentional harm
	Participation of Children and Adolescents in Live Crisis Drills and Exercises - American Academy of Pediatrics	Information and recommendations on how to best involve students in disaster drills without causing unintentional harm