**T-M-T**

**Ten-Minute Tabletop**

IOS3 Scenario Based Training Series

A tabletop exercise simulates an emergency situation in a low stress environment. Participants discuss the scenarios presented and general problems and procedures in the context of response to a specific emergency incident. The focus is on the roles of individuals and departments, protocols, procedures or responsibilities.

All scenario incidents used in this training program are based on actual events that have occurred in Idaho schools. Included are the actual outcome and the After-Action findings.

The purpose is threefold:

* First, to increase awareness and develop an if-then mindset for school staff, building level and district level administrators.
* Second is to determine if current district and building policy, procedure and practice is adequate to the incident in the exercise.
* Last is to facilitate the updating of District and school policy and procedure for the types of incidents that may occur in Idaho Schools.

The entire process is designed to be completed in 10 to 15 minutes during and as a part of a faculty or administrative meeting.

To be most effective a review of your response should be completed as a part of the process. Following is a list of the types of questions that should be used to review your response:

* Is the response adequate to the magnitude of the incident?
* Does the response fall within your current policy and procedure?
  + If not should policy or procedure be changed?
    - If so, who is responsible for the change?
    - What is the time line?
* Is the developed response capable of translation to operational reality? (can you do what you say)?
* Is any individual, agency, or resource tasked as a part of the response aware of their role, trained to act and available?
  + Do you have a current MOU?
* Was communication adequate to the needs of the response?
  + Can you assure that everyone who needed to know notified as a part of the response?
* Are there Public Relations concerns in the scenario?
  + Are they adequately addressed in your response?
* Can an operational change be made to mitigate or prevent a future occurrence of this type of incident?

Be aware your answers to these questions will drive the improvement process for your Emergency Operations Plans.

**Scenario #1**

Season: early-winter

Day: Monday

Time: 4:06 P.M.

Weather: Overcast & threating with heavy snow predicted

Temperature: 33 degrees

School type: k-5 elementary

You are just taking a deep breath following one of those days. The phone rings and a distraught mother of a 3rd grade girl and special needs (autism) kindergarten boy notifies you that her children should have gotten off the bus 20 minutes ago have not come home and cannot be found. The students in question are the last stop on the route. The family is new to the area and your school and you are aware from the student record that there is a custody issue in progress.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome Scenario #1**

The school secretary had left the building. The Principal took the mothers phone number with the assurance they would call back very shortly. He then placed a call to the transportation department asking for route and driver information for the students in question. They then called the SRO stationed at the neighboring high school to notify them of a possible issue. The SRO agreed to come to the elementary school. The transportation director pulled the video record from the parked bus and called the driver of the route in question to meet the principal, SRO and Transportation director at the school.

The principal called the mother to ask what other steps she may have taken and inform her of the steps the school had instituted. The mother noted that she was deeply concerned that her estranged husband had abducted the children. There was a “No Contact” order in place but the mother had not informed the school. This information was conveyed to the SRO upon his arrival at the school a short time later. He began an L.E. response to the incident. The SRO asked the mother to come to the school to help review the video record from the bus camera system.

The bus driver and transportation director arrived at the school and with the principal and SRO began the review of the surveillance record. The girl and boy in question were observed exiting the bus at the proper stop. Four other students from three other families were observed exiting the bus at that stop as well. The distraught mother arrived at the school at this point. The transportation had a record to the students assigned to the stop in question and the principal began to call the families in question. With the second call the principal determined that the students in question had gone to another student’s home failing to notify their mother. The mother was both relived and somewhat angry. Given this the principal followed the mother’s car to the home where her children were to assure a positive reunification for all parties Total elapsed time for this incident from initial notification of the principal was one hour and 13 minutes.

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined that everyone involved followed school policy and procedure and the incident was well resolved. The noted exception was the lack of notification to the school of a “No Contact” order. The mother had notified the school at enrollment that a custody issue was involved.

* Look for ways to ascertain when “No Contact” or other court orders impact school operations.

**Scenario #2**

Season: mid-fall

Day: Tuesday

Time: 9:56 A.M.

Weather: overcast w/ intermittent rain

Temperature: 43 degrees

School Type: Elementary

You noticed a faintly unpleasant smell upon your entrance to the school. The smell becomes much worse through the morning. A teacher sends a student to the report a student in her classroom with a severe asthma attack. As you enter the hall your eyes begin to water and your nose burns.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome Scenario #2**

The principal instated an immediate evacuation using the fire alarm system. Students left the building in the most expedient manor, most failing to take the coats that were available to them in the classroom. The principal called the district office to notify them of the evacuation and the reason for leaving the building. Buses are not dispatched at this time. Both Fire and L.E. respond to the alarm and are onsite eight minutes later. The student with the severe asthma is treated by arriving EMS. Students are beginning to get cold and a light rain has started. The Special education staff spontaneously begin to move eleven medically fragile students into staff cars for shelter.

The Fire captain determines that the school cannot be reoccupied until the gas Co. and maintenance department have determined the source of the smell and resolved the issue.

The rain intensifies. Smaller students are becoming dangerously chilled. The school is now approx. 14 minutes into the incident. The principal requests buses and is told it will be at least 20 minutes before busses will arrive. Some parents begin to arrive, and some students are “leaking” away without any formal record keeping or accountability.

The decision is made to move to a church building four blocks away. However, no one had a key to the facility and prior approval has not been obtained. During the movement the principal is attempting to contact church officials. The special needs students are transported in staff cars. The walk to the church takes about twelve minutes students continue to leak away as they go their homes as they pass. (total incident time 26 min.) A church official has been reached and 7 more minutes pass prior to his arrival. (total incident time 33 min.) Approximately 70% of the student body remain and grin access to the Church for shelter. The first buses begin to arrive at the school unaware the students have been moved. The bus drivers find out from the first responders on site that the students are at the church and begin to move that direction. Buses arrive at the church and students are loaded for transport to another district school. (total incident time 41 min.) Students are unloaded into the Gym of the middle school and parents are notified to retrieve their students. There is no formal process and accountability is not provided. (total incident time 1 hour 51 min.)

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined a number of procedural changes were indicated.

* Evacuation procedure was changed to include students taking their coats when readily available, as a standard part of the school evacuation process.
* District response procedure is changed to provide for coordination with and mobilization of school busses as a part of any unplanned evacuation of a school.
* The use of staff vehicles as shelter and potential transport for medically fragile students is formalized and a form for parental authorization is developed. (this serves as both informed consent and liability coverage)
* Off site relocation sites are identified and MOU’s are developed and executed to provide for both access (Keys) and use.
* Parent/student reunification processes and procedures are developed to provide for positive accountability all students at the school and assure and document only authorized persons receive students in the process.
* Mass notification processes for parents are reviewed and enhanced

**Scenario #3**

Season: late-fall

Day: Tuesday

Time: 12:56 P.M.

Weather: Cold and clear

Temperature: 33 degrees

You are returning to your office following the post lunch loop of the hallways. As you approach the office you hear loud male voices. As you open the office door there is a strong smell of alcohol and you see three males in a heated discussion with your secretary. You recognize one of the men as the father of one of your students.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome Scenario #3**

The school secretary was in her first year in a school and the district had not provided any de-escalation training for office staff in the District. The principal noting the potential issue in the office used his cell phone and called SRO in the physically adjacent middle school. The SRO did not answer his cell phone and the principal left a message. The principal entered the office and began a conversation with the three individuals. The three males were the father and uncles of a 5th grade female special needs student. The group were expressing concern over a playground incident from the previous week. Two 5th grade boys (neighbors of the girl in question) had been disciplined for taking a basket ball away from the girl. The three demanded to know what disciplinary steps were taken. The principal refused any information based on FEPA. The conversation became more heated as the group demanded stronger disciplinary action for the boys involved. One of the men indicated that if the school will not effectively deal with the issue he will handle the issue when the young men get home. At this point a group of six 2nd grade students enter the office. The secretary quickly removes the 2nd grade students then goes to an adjacent classroom and places a 911 call for police assistance. General movement in the school continues as normal. Dispatch notifies the SRO by radio. The SRO arrives 4 minuets later and removes the three men from the school. All members of the group were charged with disrupting the educational process.

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined a number of procedural changes were indicated.

* De-escalation training to be provided at hire and renewed annually for all school office staff.
* A security hold procedure that stops movement in the school but does not stop educational activities is developed and instituted
* Communications processes reviewed and radio connection to the SRO developed
* Review of the procedures for the escalating situation reviewed and updated.

**Scenario #4**

Season: late-fall

Day: Friday

Time: 8:16 A.M.

Weather: overcast w/ intermittent light snow

Temperature: 30 degrees

You are notified by a parent of a bus accident ½ block from your school. A mini-van with 4 high school age girls has rear-ended one of the busses bound for another school in your district. The accident appears severe. Looking out you can see the accident and it is disrupting the traffic flow to and around your bus lane and parent loop.

What steps do you take?

You are the principal of the school near the bus accident.

What steps do you take?

You are the principal in the school the students in the bus accident attend.

What steps do you take?

You are the transportation director in the school district.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome Scenario #4**

Law Enforcement, Fire and Ems had all been dispatched. The bus driver had notified the transportation office and the transportation director was dispatched to the site. The bus had 33 elementary students on board at the time of the accident. The school of the students was notified. The principal of the school near the accident mobilized staff into the parking area to expiate the movement of traffic on his school site. The transportation director arrived on-site and ordered a bus to the accident to move the students from the damaged bus. Fire and EMS were involved in caring for the injured students in the mini-van. Several students on the involved bus were complaining of neck and back pain. A second EMS unit arrived and began assessment of the students on the involved bus.   
The school the bus students attended was sent a list of the students and the office staff began the process of parent notification. The principal from the student’s school dispatched the school’s counselor to the accident site. The counselor from the student’s school arrived on site and joined the students on the involved bus. The replacement bus arrived, and the students were moved on to the new bus. With students on the bus complaining of back and neck pain the decision was made to move them to the local hospital ER for evaluation. The school began a second round of parent notification informing parents of the move to the ER. The replacement bus was used to move the 33 students to the local ER. The ER physician examined the students and all were cleared to return to the school. During this time nine parents arrives at the ER and students were released to them. Total elapsed time from accident until students were returned to the school: 3 Hours 12 minutes

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined the incident was generally well handled with the exception of communications. Cell phone use proved inadequate to the needs of a larger scale highly dynamic situation.

* Communications processes reviewed and a one to many radio system developed and deployed.

**Scenario #5**

Season: early winter

Day: Tuesday

Time: 10:36 A.M.

Weather: overcast w/ intermittent snow -wind N/NE 18-22 mph

Temperature: 23 degrees and dropping

Your school has just suffered a power loss. Your P.A. system, phone system and computer network are down.

What steps do you take?

30 minutes later, you are notified that the power will be out the rest of the school day with restoration scheduled for between 4 and 6 P.M. Power for a 3-mile radius is out affecting a large number of your students’ homes as well.

What steps do you take now?

**Outcome Scenario #5**

Hallway and classroom emergency lights are functioning and provide dim illumination sufficient for student movement. Students from interior classrooms without windows are moved to perimeter classrooms with windows. Directions for this process are delivered classroom to classroom by the principal and office staff. The principal initially called the district office and in consultation with the Supt. the decision is made to wait for more information from the power co. as to the expected duration of the outage. The lack of power effects the heating plant fans and the temperature in the building begins to slowly drop. The kitchen/cafeteria is in the center of the building and largely without windows. Plans are made for sack meals to be prepared at an unaffected school.

The power co. calls and the outage is expected to run the remainder of the school day. The time is now 11:22 A.M. and the Supt has just arrived on-site. The temperature in the building is noticeable cooler with the hall thermometer reading 59 degrees. The sack meals arrive. The decision is made to distribute the meals to classrooms and begin the process to close the school. The local media is notified, and teachers are asked to use their personal cell phones to call parents. The school staff is unable to contact approximately 20% of parents. Lack of access to the student information system (S.I.S.) for emergency contact information complicates this process.

By 1:15 P.M 80% of the student population has been picked-up and have left the building. This leaves just under 100 students in the school.

Movement in and out of the school as parents get their children has caused the temperature to drop under 50 degrees in most of the school. The principal decides to move the remaining student to an unaffected school in the district and utilize access to the S.I.S. to complete the parent notification process. Busses are dispatched and loaded by 1:43 P.M. and the movement to the new school is complete by 2:10 P.M. Notification is not left on the door of the school and no staff members are left at the school.

By 1:55 P.M. the district office is receiving angry and panicked calls from parents who have gone to the now empty school expecting to pick-up their children.

The Supt calls the local media at 2:20 To inform them of the change in student location. At Approximately 2:30 staff begins calls to student’s emergency contacts provided them by the S.I.S. at the relocation school. As parents are coming to the relocation school to pick-up their children a significant number of parents discuss the lack of notification. By 3:10 all students have been returned to the parents. The local TV news runs an uncomplimentary story on the process and this begins a public relations issue that ends with several angry parents at the next board meeting.

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined the loss of power incident was generally well handled with the exception of communications.

* Communications processes reviewed, and a parent mass notification system developed.
* Specific process for school relocation developed to include notification and staff at the school to direct parents to the relocation site.

**Scenario #6**

Season: mid-winter

Day: Wednesday

Time: 2:56 P.M.

Weather: overcast w/ intermittent rain/snow

Temperature: 33 degrees

You are nearing the end of the day. The dismissal bell will ring in 4 minutes. A student reports to you that teacher engaged in a science experiment had dropped a glass beaker containing mercury. The beaker has broken, and an unknown quantity of the mercury has spilled into the carped floor of the classroom.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome Scenario #6**

By the time the principal got to the classroom the end of day bell had rung. The teacher allowed the 19 students to leave the classroom when the bell rang for the end of the day. The teacher was cleaning up the broken glass when the principal entered the classroom. The custodian is called to the classroom. The Custodian is a volunteer firefighter and recognizes the hazmat nature of the mercury spill incident. The local fire chief is contacted. Under his authority the state hazmat team is mobilized. The team arrives at the school just prior to 7:00 P.M. The classroom is closed and abate measures are instated. The hazmat team finds traces of mercury in the hall ways moved from the classroom on students’ shoes. Each of the students is contacted at their home and shoes and clothing is checked for mercury. Two students’ shoes are found to be contaminated. The bus one of the students rode home is found to have trace amounts of mercury.

The entire school is closed for two days as the abatement process are preformed on the classroom, two hallways one school bus and two private homes. The school district is financially responsible for the mercury abatement costs.

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined the hazmat incident was not well handled and no protocol existed in district policy.

* Chemical storage and handling procedure reviewed, and a Chemical Hygiene plan developed
* Curriculum reviewed for chemistry class. Substances in storage and use reviewed.
* Chemicals not directly related to the curriculum identified and removed from storage.

**Scenario #7**

Season: spring

Day: Tuesday

Time: 12:06 A.M.

Weather: clear sunny

Temperature: 71 degrees

You have a large partition of your student body is outside on the school grounds following lunch. You receive a phone call from local law enforcement that the suspect from an armed robbery has barricaded themselves in a house immediately adjacent to the west of your campus. Most of your playground is on the west side of your school. You are informed that the suspect is considered heavily armed.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome Scenario #7**

During the initial call the principal requested a police officer be sent to the school. The dispatcher informed him that SRO from the nearby high school was already on the way. The principal then used the end of recess bell and school P.A. system to notify staff and students to return to the school. There was not an SOP for this process. It takes nearly 9 minutes for all the students to clear the playground and return to the building. Once students are inside the school the principal institutes a lockdown with students and staff moving to the nearest available securable space. The process for accounting for all students and staff in the school is ineffective at this time due to the confusion. The SRO arrives at the school. The SRO suggests moving students and staff away from the west side of the building and using the school structure as a shield. With the lock down in progress the staff will not respond to a P.A. announcement. The principal, secretary, counselor, custodian and SRO move through the school with keys opening locked doors and instructing students and staff to move to the multi-purpose room on the east side of the building. This process takes approximately 35 minutes.

While this is in progress parents notified by text messages from their student begin to arrive at the school and demand access. The SRO using his police radio requests law enforcement assistance to control the growing crowd.

Once in the multi-purpose room the students are returned to their assigned teacher for positive accounting. Nine students and one staff member are determined to be missing.

The custodian begins a sweep through the building looking for the missing staff member and students. 22 minuets later they are found having locked themselves into a janitorial storage space.

The principal went to the main entrance and spoke to the growing number of concerned parents indicating that once all students and staff were accounted for parents would be allowed entrance. The inference that not all students were accounted for further increased the level of concern among the growing crowd of parents. Local media has begun to arrive during this period. By 1:25 P.M. parents are allowed entrance and most choose to remove their student from school for the day at this point. The student check-out/ parent reunification process for an event of this size is not well defined and has not been exercised. Staff confusion slows the process causing further parental distress. The resulting public relations issues consume several days.

**Scenario #8**

Season: any

Day: Tuesday

Time: 10:26 A.M.

Weather: overcast w/ intermittent light rain

Temperature: 63 degrees

You are notified by a highly upset third grade student that their teacher has collapsed in the front of the classroom and is unresponsive.

What steps do you take?

The teacher has passed away from a massive heart attack. The body is removed by ambulance.

What are your next steps?

**Outcome Scenario #8**

The principal directed the office manager to make a 911 call and request an EMS response. The principal and school counselor proceed immediately to the classroom. As they arrive the counselor removes the students to the media center. The principal begins CPR and the first aid trained Special Education Teacher arrives to assist. The secretary notifies the janitor to meet the arriving ambulance and escort them to the classroom. EMS arrives and take over CPR. A defibrillator is used without success. As EMS prepares to remove the teacher the principal returns to the office and using the P.A. system clears the hallways and restricts student to classrooms. EMS removes the teacher and the ambulance leaves the school. The principal makes a general P.A. announcement to the school and indicated that the teacher has been taken by ambulance to the hospital. The Supt. and district office are notified. The school district does not have a crisis team or an SOP for unexpected death. The Supt. calls a larger adjacent school district ad requests their help. The larger district has a well -defined unexpected death SOP and an experienced crisis team. With the help of the larger district the process is well handled and the small district develops both a SOP and crisis team post incident.

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined the incident was well handled but the need for a developed policy and process existed.

* An MOU was developed and put in place to continue the relationship with the helpful larger district in a formal fashion.
* An internal “crisis team” was identified and trained.

**Scenario #10**

**Student Anaphylaxis**

Season: Late spring

Day: Tuesday

Time: 11:46 P.M.

Weather: Warm & Sunny

Temperature: 73 degrees

School type: k-5 elementary

You involved in lunch supervision in and near the cafeteria. 4th and 5th graders are on the playground having finished eating and 3rd graders are finishing eating with 2nd grade moving to the lunchroom to begin their lunch. A frantic 5th grader approaches you and is incoherent about an incident in progress on the playground.

What steps do you take?

Arriving at the playground, with difficulty you identify all three of the playground duty staff in a huddle on the far end of the grass area of your playground. As you approach you note a 5th grader on the ground and observe a swollen face and hands, blotchy red coloring and respiratory distress. What steps do you take?

**Outcome**

The fifth grade student tells the principal that there is no one in the office and the duty aide needs help on the playground. The student is not clear as to the issue. The principal asks a passing teacher to watch the lunchroom and leaves to the playground. Once reaching the playground it takes some time to locate the duty personnel on the grounds. They are not easily identifiable among the students on the playground. Once located the principal joins the group approximately 150 yards from the building. The duty staff indicates that they have just made a 911 call, the student has been down and in increasing distress for approximately seven (7) minutes. The younger sibling of the affected student approaches the group and tell everyone that the child is allergic to bee sting and should have a “pen thing”. Two (2) more minutes pass and the principal sends a staff member to the office to retrive the epi-pen. Approximately five (5) minutes elapse before the staff member returns with the epi-pen. No one is trained to administer the epi-pen and approximately another minute passes. EMS arrives on the scene and a para-medic administers the epi-pen. The student is transported to the hospital. The principal calls to notify parents and gets no answer. They then notify the emergency contact in the S.I.S.

Parents contact the school the following day and are deeply concerned over the time taken to respond to the incident. Total time from the incident to the use of the epi-pen Approximately fifteen (15) minutes.

**After Action Review**

The AAR in this case determined that all of the following factors contributed to unsatisfactory performance in the incident.

* An unacceptable amount of elapsed time between incident onset and response by someone in the school.
  + Communications were inadequate.
  + Cell phones were used and answering system picked up in the office when called repeatedly.
  + The lack of office staff availability when the student tried to report the incident.
* First aid training (Epi-pin use) was lacking
* No access to an Epi-pen on the playground
* Student supervision staff lack visibility
* No notification to student supervision staff of an at-risk student

Policy is changed to provide for consistent office staffing. A one to many radio communications plan is developed and implemented to assure communication between the office and playground. First aid training is both required for initial hire of student supervision staff and provided as ongoing professional development. Students with special health needs are identified and access from the playground to appropriate medical equipment is provided for. All staff engaged in student supervision are required by policy to wear easily identifiable, high visibility clothing for ease of identification.

**Scenario #11**

**Suicidal Student**

Season: Late Spring

Day: Wedneday

Time: 10:37 (3rd period)

Weather: Sunny

Temperature: 47 Degrees

School type: High School

The school office is notified by a student runner that a substitute teacher needs help with a belligerent student. The substitute teacher is on her first day and the student has a known and documented history of defiance. An administrator responds to the 3rd floor classroom to assist and finds the class and the substitute teacher in the hallway highly anxious. The substitute teacher informs you that the student has found an unlocked window and has climbed out onto a parapet overlooking the football field and is threatening to jump if anyone attempts to make contact.

What steps do you take?

**Outcome**

The administrator contacted (through the SRO) local law enforcement. The entire facility was placed into a “Hall Check” response to curtrail normal student movement and students were confined to classrooms. Since the student was directly above one of the primary evacuation routes and in full view of the primary assembly area the school could not be effectively evacuated.   
Students in the affected wings of the building on all three floors were moved to unaffected parts of the building out of view of the incident and the response.

The School Resource Officer and an assistant principal started an initial dialog with the student in an attempt to build rapport while the rest of the students were being moved. City Crisis Negotiators arrived after approximately 30 minutes and were able to support the SRO and the Assistant Principal in their conversations with the student.

The standoff persisted for nearly 2 hours resulting in large disruptions to school operations, including mid-day bussing, lunch service, class changes and garnered a significant level of media interest.

Law enforcement worked in conjunction with a District spokesperson to give clear information and control rumors. Student social media content generation was significant, uncontrollable and created a significant barrier to getting clear information to the parents and community.

Eventually the SRO, Assistant Principal and the Crisis Negotiation team were able to convince the student to come back into the school and receive a medical and mental health evaluation.

**After Action Review**

Overall the school emergency team was faced with a dynamic and unusual situation and handled the incident appropriately and in a manner that protected student safety. As with any incident, the AAR revealed several areas of potential improvement or planning gaps

* High levels of disinformation from student social media accounts effectively buried the traditional media outlets and bypassed the standard informational gatekeepers and fact checkers.
* Alternative evacuation plans and assembly points were developed to allow for an evacuation when a primary route is compromised.
* Meal service, medication delivery and behavioral supports for students developed alternative plans for service delivery during an extended Hall Check or Lockdown.
* Transportation Coordination became a designated role within the district response plan as a result of the continual close management needed for bus cancellation, routing and rerouting.