



Examine the ability of K-12 school and higher education officials and community partners with roles and responsibilities in school safety to identify, prioritize, and plan for potential threats or hazards; establish lines of coordination and communication, share information, execute emergency plans during an incident; and validate training and resources to provide for the well-being of students and staff before, during, and after an incident.

The National Exercise Program (NEP) is a two-year cycle of selected exercises across the nation that examines and validates capabilities in all preparedness mission areas. The 2019-2020 NEP cycle is guided by nine Principals’ Strategic Priorities, established by the National Security Council and informed by national preparedness data.

What are School Safety and Security exercises?

Exercises aligned to this priority should:

- Emphasize the integration of school officials with community partners, such as first responders, emergency managers, public and mental health officials, and children and families
- Assess preparedness at an academic institution, which includes schools for kindergarten through 12th grade and institutions of higher education
- Evaluate the ability to coordinate beyond the initial 12 hours of the incident, to include appropriate recovery elements that impact the overall well-being of students and staff

Related Core Capabilities

- Intelligence and Information Sharing
- On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement
- Operational Coordination
- Situational Assessment
- Planning
- Public Information and Warning

Why is this important?

States, territories, tribes, urban areas, and other communities use the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) to assess their preparedness. FEMA includes the results of the THIRA and SPR, along with several other preparedness indicators, in the annual National Preparedness Report (NPR). Analytic results help shape planning, training, exercise, and other prioritization decisions at all levels.

Lessons Learned and Emerging Threats

- A 2016 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that while most school districts have plans addressing multiple hazards and emergency procedures, the Federal government needs to coordinate to **help ensure consistent guidance, terminology, and messaging**
- The U.S. Department of Education’s *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* emphasized the need to **develop age-appropriate drills** that **focus on roles and responsibilities** during an actual emergency
- The percentage of schools with plans for **procedures to be performed in the event of a shooting** increased from 79% in 2003-04 to 92% in 2015-16



Spotlight: Campus Resilience Program

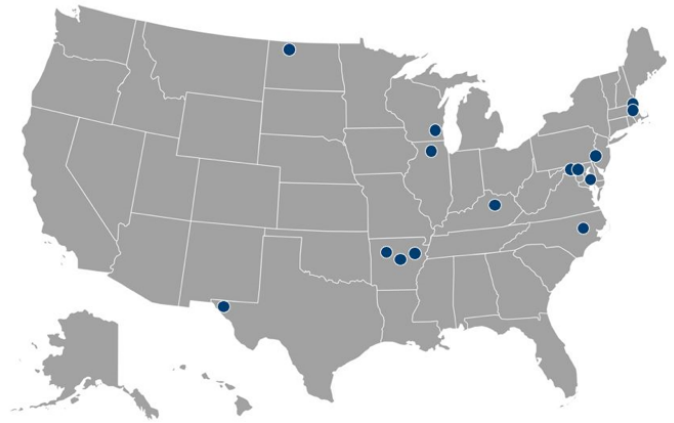
The **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Campus Resilience Program** empowers institutions of higher education to improve preparedness and build resilience for threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to campus communities. By hosting a series of campus-based events to test and promote preparedness, the program enables the higher education community to gain insight into planning, response, and recovery best practices, and to build relationships with other academic institutions and government partners. Learn more at dhs.gov/academicresilience.



What are the major challenges?

An analysis of 15 exercise after-action reports (AARs) revealed common challenges:

- Developing backup communications channels to enhance existing communication mechanisms with students, faculty, and staff during emergencies
- Increasing communication between on-scene responders and dispatchers regarding incident status updates
- Establishing processes to ensure public information officers are available to take phone calls and answer questions from the media
- Creating standard operating procedures that identify previously searched and cleared areas to avoid duplication of effort
- Strengthening facility access so that individuals identify themselves to school administrators prior to entry
- Incorporating communication devices and proper hiding methods into training and exercises to expand operational capabilities



Distribution of jurisdictions that submitted AARs for exercises aligning to School Safety and Security capabilities

What can I do?

Training and exercises can help all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and other partners across the whole community be better prepared. The National Exercise Division at FEMA is committed to providing assistance to partners in planning, designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating their own exercises that validate core capabilities.

Exercise Starter Kits

Exercise Starter Kits are pre-packaged sets of guides and templates to help exercise planners develop tabletop exercises that can be tailored to the specific threats, resources, and operational plans of their community.

Spotlight Initiative

The **Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance (REMS TA) Center**, run by the Department of Education, supports schools, school districts, and institutions of higher education, with their community partners, in the development of high-quality emergency operations plans. REMS TA offers virtual and on-site trainings, technical assistance, and interactive planning tools. Learn more at rems.ed.gov.

Training Courses

Examples of relevant training courses are provided below. Course offerings frequently change; please visit firstrespondertraining.gov for a full list of training courses and resources.

- E-361:** Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools
- IS-100.Sca:** Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS 100) for Schools
- IS-360:** Preparing for Mass Casualty Incidents: A Guide for Schools, Higher Education, and Houses of Worship
- MGT-324:** Campus Emergencies Prevention, Response, and Recovery
- MGT-361:** Managing Critical Incidents at Institutions of Higher Education: A Whole Community Approach
- MGT-417:** Crisis Management for School-Based Incidents for Key Decision Makers

FEMA training courses are provided at no cost to first responders.

Please visit preptoolkit.fema.gov for Exercise Starter Kits, training courses, and additional resources.

Nominate an Exercise to the National Exercise Program

Benefits of participating in the NEP include:

- Receiving technical assistance and support for your exercises from experienced exercise specialists
- Access to exercise templates, tools, and other resources to help you design, conduct, and evaluate your exercises
- The ability to pursue new exercise ideas and broaden the impact of your exercises to a wider group of stakeholders
- The opportunity to influence national preparedness policy and resource allocation decisions at all levels by contributing exercise findings

How to Participate in the NEP

1. Visit fema.gov/nep to learn more about the 2019-2020 cycle
2. Download and complete the Exercise Nomination Form
3. Work with your FEMA Regional Exercise Officer (fema.gov/reos) and submit the Exercise Nomination Form to nep@fema.dhs.gov
4. The FEMA National Exercise Division will respond to discuss your exercise