

Utah Policy

Emergency Preparedness and Safety Policy for Utah K-12 School Districts

Effective Date: [Insert Date]

Purpose

This policy establishes a comprehensive framework for Utah school districts to protect students, staff, and facilities during emergencies, ensuring compliance with Utah Code 53G-4-402, Utah Administrative Rule R277-400, and federal guidelines from FEMA (CPG 101) and Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS). The Board of Education adopts this policy to safeguard welfare, protect property, ensure operational continuity, and address physical, technological, and psychological safety needs, minimizing liability through Utah Code 63G-7-201 and evidence-based emergency management.

Scope

This policy applies to all district schools, facilities, personnel, students, and visitors within Utah. It encompasses prevention, protection, mitigation, response, recovery, and resilience, requiring coordinated planning with school personnel, students, parents, community partners, and emergency responders to address all hazards—natural (e.g., earthquakes, wildfires, floods, severe storms, droughts, landslides, volcanoes), technological (e.g., cyberattacks), and human-caused (e.g., violence)—with protocols tailored to Utah's unique risks.

Section 1: Policy Statement

Utah school districts commit to fostering a safe learning environment through a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that addresses all foreseeable hazards, including Utah-specific risks such as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, and cyberattacks. The EOP ensures accommodations for students and staff with disabilities, limited English proficiency (LEP), and medical needs, while integrating mental health support through tools like Impact Suite and the SafeUT program. This policy establishes a district-wide emergency management program rooted in evidence-based practices to protect lives, property, and operations.

Section 2: Legal Compliance and Liability Protection

2.1. State Compliance:

- Aligns with Utah Code 53G-4-402, R277-400, HB61, HB0135, HB84, HB40, and other relevant Utah laws requiring comprehensive EOPs, emergency standards, threat assessments, and safety measures.
- Districts must certify EOPs annually to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) by July 1.

2.2. Federal Compliance:

- Complies with FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG 101), Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule (42 CFR § 482.15).

2.3. Liability Protections:

- District employees are immune from liability for acts or omissions related to emergency response if made in good faith, within their scope of duties, compliant with this policy, professionally reasonable, and properly documented, per Utah Code 63G-7-201 and HB0135.
- The district ensures training and EOP adherence, documenting deviations with justification to preserve immunity.
- Liability insurance covers bodily injury, property damage, and emergency actions, reviewed annually with legal counsel.

Section 3: Organization and Authority

3.1. District-Level Roles:

- **Superintendent:** Appoints a District Emergency Manager (DEM) with FEMA ICS-100 training, establishes a District Emergency Operations Team (DEOT), secures funding, coordinates with the Utah Division of Emergency Management for grants, conducts annual compliance audits, participates in state safety data collection, and ensures SRO contracts and policies are in place as per HB84.
- **DEM:** Chairs the District Emergency Planning Committee (DEPC), oversees district-wide planning, training, drills, threat assessment, compliance, liaisons with responders, and utilizes tools like Impact Suite.
- **DEPC:** Includes district administrators, school representatives, local emergency responders, mental health professionals, parents, public health representatives, transportation coordinators, and cybersecurity specialists, with at least one member trained in emergency management.

3.2. School-Level Roles:

- **Principals:** Chair School Emergency Planning Committees (SEPCs), develop and update school EOPs annually, implement training/drills, maintain supplies, and establish a clear chain of command, coordinating with SROs.
- **SEPC:** Includes administrators, teachers, support staff, mental health professionals, parents, School Resource Officers (SROs), and special education representatives, with at least one trained member.

3.3. School Guardian Program:

- Per Utah HB84, districts may implement a school guardian program allowing trained employees to carry firearms. Guardians must complete state-mandated training, coordinate with SROs, and ensure secure firearm storage per regulations.

Adaptability: Small districts may consolidate roles (e.g., superintendent as DEM); large districts may appoint dedicated staff and leverage advanced technology.

Section 4: Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Components

The EOP includes:

4.1. Prevention and Mitigation:

- Conduct triennial safety audits and annual risk assessments.
- Establish Threat Assessment Teams (TATs) per HB0135 with administrators, SROs, mental health professionals, and special education representatives, trained annually, documenting assessments as protected records.
- **Mandatory Threat Reporting:** All staff must report threats via established procedures, integrated with the SafeUT Crisis Line per HB84.

4.2. Preparedness:

- Develop procedures for evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place, and cybersecurity.
- Maintain maps, contact lists, supplies, and reunification processes with ID verification and custody logs.

4.3. Response:

- Implement all-hazard protocols with silent panic alerts per HB61, responder maps, and immediate notifications to parents/off-campus students.
- Ensure panic alert devices and video camera access per HB84 for classrooms.
- Coordinate emergency call information as per HB84 with the state's intelligence system.

4.4. Recovery:

- Address academic, physical, and emotional recovery with Crisis Response Mental Health Teams (CRMHTs) available 24/7 via SafeUT, ensuring FERPA/HIPAA compliance.

Section 5: Communications

The district maintains:

- Internal channels (radios, PA, emergency messaging).
- Parent notifications (automated multilingual alerts, immediate threat updates, post-incident reports within 24 hours, annual procedure notices).
- Responder connections (direct police/fire/EMS links).
- Media protocols (designated spokesperson).
- Mental health hotlines and cybersecurity reporting via SafeUT and other Utah resources.
- **Bullying Incident Communication and Policy Updates Per HB84:**
 - Provide regular updates to parents on bullying policies and incident responses.
 - Designate a bullying incident response individual with outlined duties.
 - Update the LEA's bullying, cyberbullying, hazing, abusive conduct, and retaliation policy related to certain social media use of a student.

Section 6: Special Populations

The EOP accommodates:

- **Disabilities:** Evacuation assistance, visual alarms, individualized plans per ADA/IDEA/Section 504, developed with families.
- **LEP:** Multilingual resources and trained personnel per Title VI.
- **Medically Fragile:** Emergency medications and specialized transport.
- **Temporary Housing/Foster Care:** Support per McKinney-Vento.
- **Mental Health:** Immediate crisis response, tested in drills.

Section 7: Cybersecurity and Technology Resilience

Schools must:

- Establish protocols for cyber threats/data breaches with staff training, backups, multi-factor authentication (MFA), offline critical data, and audits.
- Comply with the Utah Student Data Protection Act and HB40's enhanced cybersecurity standards, with incident response and recovery procedures.

Section 8: Additional Required Procedures

8.1. Transportation:

Bus evacuation protocols, driver training, weather plans, and student accounting.

8.2. Weather/Environmental:

Plans for earthquakes, wildfires, floods, severe weather, air quality, and utility failures per Utah Division of Emergency Management guidance.

8.3. Pandemic:

Continuity of Operations (COOP) for remote learning, PPE, health screenings, and coordination with the Utah Department of Health.

Section 9: Training and Drills

9.1. Training:

- Annual training by October 1 on EOP roles, special needs, cybersecurity, mental health, threat assessment, and crisis communication, with records maintained.
- **Enhanced Training Requirements:** Include modules on threat assessment, cybersecurity, and crisis response.

9.2. Drills:

- Schools must conduct an emergency drill within the first 10 days of the school year and within the first 10 days after winter break. Elementary schools hold monthly drills, while secondary schools conduct a minimum of four per year, with accommodations for special needs.
- Drills may include fire, lockdown, shelter-in-place, and earthquake drills, with After Action Reviews (AARs).

Section 10: Documentation and Review

10.1. Records:

- Maintain drill logs (3 years), threat assessments (graduation +3 years), training records (3 years), mental health records (per HIPAA), security incidents (30 days minimum), AARs (7 years), the annual school disciplinary report per HB84, and school safety data for annual reporting.

10.2. Review:

- Update EOPs annually by July 1; noncompliance triggers board action.

- Conduct annual assessments using FEMA's Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR).

Section 11: Funding and Resources

11.1. Budget:

- Prioritize supplies, training, technology; document shortfalls with mitigation plans.

11.2. Resources:

- Maintain emergency supplies, PPE, communication equipment, and mental health support.

Section 12: Adoption and Implementation

12.1. Adoption:

- Board-approved post-public hearing.

12.2. Implementation:

- Effective [Date], compliant by [School Year].

Legal References:

Utah State Laws:

- Utah Code 53G-4-402
- Utah Administrative Rule R277-400
- Utah Code 63G-7-201
- HB0135 (Threat Assessment Teams)
- HB61 (Panic Alert Systems)
- HB84 (School Guardian Program, SRO Requirements, SafeUT Crisis Line)
- HB40 (Enhanced Cybersecurity Standards)
- Utah Student Data Protection Act
- Utah School Safety and Crisis Line Act
- Utah Code 53G-9-604 (Threat Assessment Records)
- Utah Code 63G-7-604 (Liability Insurance)

Federal Laws:

- ADA, FERPA, IDEA, Title VI, McKinney-Vento, HIPAA, FEMA CPG 101, REMS Guide, CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule (42 CFR § 482.15), International Fire Code Chapter 4.

Related Documents:

- District Emergency Operations Plan
- School Emergency Operations Plans
- Emergency Response Procedures
- Threat Assessment Protocols
- Mental Health Crisis Procedures
- Transportation Safety Procedures
- Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan
- Public Health Emergency Procedures
- SafeUT Implementation Guidelines
- Impact Suite User Manual
- School Guardian Program Procedures
- SRO Contract Templates and Policies

Implementation Notes for Utah School Districts:

1. **SafeUT Integration:** Ensure all staff are trained on SafeUT Crisis Line procedures and integration with existing mental health protocols.
2. **Impact Suite Utilization:** Train designated personnel on Impact Suite tools for emergency management and threat assessment documentation.
3. **HB84 Compliance:** Review and update all SRO contracts, bullying policies, and social media policies to ensure full compliance with HB84 requirements.
4. **Panic Alert Systems:** Implement panic alert systems per HB61 with proper training for all staff on activation procedures.
5. **Cybersecurity Enhancement:** Align cybersecurity protocols with HB40 enhanced standards and Utah Student Data Protection Act requirements.
6. **Threat Assessment Teams:** Establish TATs per HB0135 with proper training and documentation procedures as protected records.
7. **Drill Requirements:** Ensure compliance with Utah's specific drill timing requirements, particularly the first 10 days of school year and post-winter break requirements.
8. **Annual Reporting:** Prepare for the annual school disciplinary report per HB84 and ensure all safety data collection requirements are met for USBE reporting.

This policy provides a comprehensive framework that meets all Utah-specific requirements while maintaining alignment with federal standards and best practices in emergency preparedness for K-12 education.