

Policy

These guidelines should be put into action in the event of a lockdown or during a lockdown drill. Although each school / church should draft their own lockdown policy with details pertaining to their specific needs and facilities, this policy will help give church leadership a place to start.

T. Lockdown Guidelines

1. Identify green zones and red zones within the facility.
Green Zones: more secure - rooms that have doors that lock.
Red Zones: open areas, including gymnasiums and auditorium.
2. As soon as the facility is put on "Lockdown Alert", the designated person in charge will announce "Code Red" to all classrooms and staff: "Announcement: *Emergency Code Red, the facility is going into lockdown, repeat, Emergency Code Red, the facility is going into lockdown.*"
3. Immediately call 911, unless it is a situation where the police first alerted the church / school. Instruct all individuals present to shut off cell phones.
4. All present must clear away from red zones as quickly as possible. They will go to the nearest green zone, or if an outside door is closer, they will evacuate the building.
5. Prior to locking doors, those in charge of classrooms should ensure that any individuals walking the halls within their classroom's proximity be ushered quickly into the room. The door should then be closed and locked. If the classroom door has a window, ministry personnel should cover it and turn off the lights.
6. Those in charge of classrooms will assist students in turning tables on their sides and position them away from the door and windows. The students should then take refuge behind them.
7. Attendance will be taken, including a list of all missing and extra students in the room. This list will be emailed to the office, and the teacher should take the list with them if directed to leave the classroom.
8. Custodians and / or ushers will check all washrooms in the facility, remove any individuals who may be within, and lock the washrooms from the outside.
9. Everyone is prohibited from leaving green zones until they are instructed to do so by the designated person in charge or a police officer. Those in charge of classrooms are to remain in the rooms, maintain silence and keep the students calm. Do not contact the church office, the office will contact you when it is safe to do so.
10. When instructed to evacuate the building, do so quickly and silently.
11. Once the police arrive on the scene, they have the ultimate command of the incident and their instructions will be followed without protest.
12. At least twice during a calendar year, the school / church will perform a lockdown drill. Church leadership will notify the school / church community of a lockdown drill the week / day prior to the drill.
13. Circumstances and details of the drill will be recorded and kept on file. It is strongly recommended to have a debriefing with participants, and keep notes of these debriefings on file.



plan

These procedures should be implemented prior to the event of a facility lockdown or a lockdown drill.

- Green and red zones have been identified in the facility.
- The school / church community have been informed of the meaning of a Code Red

○ The school / church community have been instructed on lockdown procedures

○ plans have been made to schedule at least two lockdown drills during a calendar year

○ The school / church community have been given prior notification of a lockdown drill

○ An individual has been designated responsible for recording the details and debriefing of each drill

Protection

Although the information regarding lockdowns is mainly targeted to schools, it is important for churches, especially larger churches, to know how to handle a threat in their facility or in the community.

Since fall 2006, there have been five school shootings, resulting in six deaths and 27 injuries in North America.¹⁷ “Although infrequent, the possibility of a major violent incident in one of our [churches] is a reality. The level of preparedness to deal with such an incident by [church] staff, [congregants] and police will have a major impact on the outcome of the incident.”¹⁸

“Police and [schools / churches] impose lockdowns when [facilities] cannot be evacuated safely in the event of an emergency and when they deem it is safer for students to remain in rooms behind locked doors.”¹⁹ The lockdown of a school / church must occur when:

- there is an active shooter or suspected shooter in the facility, or
- there is a suspected shooter in the community, or
- the school / church is contacted by police and are told there is a threat of danger in the community surrounding the facility.

“Some parents say lockdown drills have the potential to scare the ... [children], particularly younger ones, and real lockdowns create a culture of fear. ... Police and school boards, however, say that while

17 (York Police 2008)

18 (Trillium Lakelands District School Board 2008, 1)

19 (Draaisma 2007, 1)

Protection *continued ...*

lockdown drills and real lockdowns might be controversial, they are here to stay because drills prepare students for the real thing and lockdowns imposed in the face of a threat have the potential to save lives.”²⁰ By making lockdown drills a usual part of the calendar year, like fire drills have become, students and the community at large may be calmer and know how to behave should a real lockdown be imposed.

If in the event a lockdown is initiated, the designated person in charge will call 911 and provide the following information:

- identify yourself, the facility name, and full address,
- describe situation and provide all known information,
- identify whether anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries,
- stay on the line and continue to provide information as requested by the emergency operator,
- explain safe approach (routes / entrance) for police and advise police where they will be met, and,
- begin to document times and events relating to the incident. ²¹

It is important that daycares and schools meeting within a church facility should make sure their name is added to the police force emergency contact list to be notified in the event of a possible violent incident.

“Remember: although police will be there to assist with training, implementation and drills, this plan is fully the responsibility of the [school / church]. If a major incident occurs, it is highly unlikely the police will be in the [facility] at the outset of the incident. The entire [organization] including staff, students, administrators, and visitors must be prepared to implement this plan quickly and effectively. These types of incidents are over in a matter of minutes. The extent of the impact of such an incident will be dependent on the ability of the [church] to lock down as quickly as possible.” ²²

Making sure all students and those in charge of a classroom shut off their cell phones is important because:

- cell phones may alert the gunman that someone is in that room, and,
- excessive use of cell phones blocks phone lines and communication channels.

Alert family not to expect calls from their children in the case of a drill or emergency.

Keeping the students safe and calm should be the teacher’s number one priority during a lockdown or drill. Children should be able to feel safe in their school / church and it is up to those in charge of classrooms to provide that sense of safety to their students. No matter how long the wait inside a locked classroom may seem, it is imperative that no one leave the room until they are instructed to do so by the police or the principal / pastor. Under no circumstances should a student, teacher, or school / church leader confront the suspect. Insurance companies also warn that fire alarm activation should be ignored, as this will never be used by the police to evacuate the building in the event of a lockdown. ²³

Prevention reduces risk. Preparation reduces impact. ²⁴

20 (Draaisma 2007, 2)

21 (Trillium Lakelands District Church Board 2008, 6)

22 (Trillium Lakelands District Church Board 2008, 1)

23 (Potttruff & Smith Insurance Brokers Inc. 2007, 2)

24 (York Police 2008)