

Exercise – Kitchen Fire

Introduction

Time: January

It is bitterly cold outside. The forecasted temperature for the day is 15 degrees and the wind is blowing from the north at approximately 10 mph.

School Profile

The Middle School is located in a single building with 6-8 grade students. The office is located at one end of the building, opposite end of the building where the cafeteria and kitchen are located. The classrooms occupy the first and second floors of the building

Inject Set One

It is noon and students are entering the cafeteria for lunch. Suddenly, a fire breaks out in the kitchen, but the fire suppression system is ineffective in putting out the flames. The kitchen staff activates the fire alarm as smoke begins to fill the kitchen. Students in the cafeteria immediately realize this is not a drill and quickly begin running to the exits.

1. Besides activating the fire alarm, what other responsibilities does the kitchen staff have, if any, in this situation?
2. Is there other (non kitchen) staff present in the cafeteria during lunch? What are their roles and responsibilities in this situation?
3. Where will the students that are still in or exiting the cafeteria gather?
4. Who is responsible for calling 911?
5. What information should the caller be prepared to provide to the 911 operator/dispatcher?

Inject Set Two

Students are gathered outside the building in open areas around the school grounds. Most do not have coats since they were not planning on going outdoors during lunch.

The fire department arrives and attempts to identify where the fire is located.

1. Who is responsible for meeting the fire department personnel on their arrival?

Exercise – Kitchen Fire

2. How long do you anticipate it will take the fire department personnel and equipment to arrive?
3. How long do you think the students should be expected to wait outside?
4. Where do you think they should be taken to get out of the weather?
5. Who should make that decision?

Inject Set Three

The fire department takes 15 minutes to arrive and in that time the fire has caused significant damage to the kitchen and smoke permeates the building. It has been decided by the school principal that the students should walk to a nearby church to get warm and await reunification with a parent or guardian.

1. Who coordinates the reunification efforts?
2. Is it a designated person?
3. If so, is the reunification coordinator known by the staff?
4. What are the responsibilities of the reunification coordinator, i.e., what does “coordination” mean or require?
5. How do you begin the reunification process?
6. How do you account for students?
7. Who is responsible for student accountability?
8. What if a student is missing? What actions are taken?
9. How do you communicate with parents and guardians?
10. What do you communicate to them?
11. How do you communicate with church staff?
12. Do you have pre-identified reunification sites? Is the church mentioned one of these sites? Is the site/church always available during school hours? What if the door is locked and the church staff is at lunch?
13. Do you have a reunification plan? If so, are all the items just mentioned addressed adequately in the plan? Do you drill the plan? How frequently?
14. Besides those already mentioned (student accountability, movement to offsite location, communication with staff/students/parents/and offsite personnel) what other items does your reunification process entail?

Exercise –
Kitchen Fire

15. Are there materials and equipment needed to carry out your reunification process? Who is responsible for making sure these items are deployed?
16. Under the situation portrayed here, how long do you anticipate the process will take?

Inject Set Four

Parents begin to arrive at the church and some are obviously concerned about both the fire and their child having to evacuate in dangerously cold weather.

1. Are you prepared to manage angry parents? What does “preparation” look like/entail?
2. Who is responsible for addressing the concerns of parents and guardians picking up children?
3. Have you thought about pre-drafting messages for this type of event? What might those messages include?
4. How do you ensure that students depart the reunification with the correct/authorized parent or guardian?

NOTE: As with any evacuation and reunification effort, the two key components for success are Safety and Security. Do everything possible to ensure you preclude a student (s) from being injured or lost/taken.