

Use the following questions to think about ways of increasing safety and security in your school. For more information, see *Mitigating Hazards in School Facilities*, <http://www.ncef.org/safeschools/index.cfm> and related assessment guides: *ART, MUSIC, AND DANCE ROOMS and LABS, SHOPS< AND COMPUTER ROOMS*.

Room No \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Natural Surveillance

■ Are all parts of the classroom visible from the classroom door, with no parts of the classroom hidden from sight? This aids natural surveillance and reduces opportunities for misbehavior.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do interior windows between classrooms and corridors promote visual surveillance in both directions? Are they obstructed by posters, pictures, or other posted materials?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do classroom windows enhance visual surveillance of the school grounds?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do retractable classroom partitions fully recess into permanent, lockable niches to eliminate hiding places?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do retractable classroom partitions contain windows or otherwise provide visual access into adjoining spaces when they are in use?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are classrooms well lit, with as much natural light as possible? Well lit classrooms are safer classrooms, and natural light does not depend on a power source.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are small water fountains integrated into sinks in classrooms? This keeps students from leaving the classroom for water and reduces the avoidable expense of supplying paper cups adjacent to sinks.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

## 2. Windows in High Risk Areas

■ In high risk areas, are windows and their framing and anchoring systems designed and located to resist the effects of explosive blasts, gunfire, and forced entry? Windows overlooking or directly exposed to public streets or dangerous areas should be either minimized or protected.

- The greatest risk to occupants from an explosive blast originating near the school or even blocks away is injury from flying glass shards, so window glazing should be laminated or protected with an anti-shatter film. Glass-clad polycarbonate and laminated polycarbonate are two types of alternative glazing material.
- Bullet resistant glazing should meet the requirements of UL 752.
- Security glazing should meet the requirements of ASTM F1233 or UL 972.
- Window assemblies containing forced-entry-resistant glazing should meet the requirements of ASTM F588.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

### 3. Electrical Lighting

■ Are lights easy to clean and bulbs and tubes easy to replace? Are light levels appropriate and uniform, creating minimal glare or pockets of shadow? Are they well maintained? Well lit classrooms are safer classrooms.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Fluorescent lighting fixtures manufactured before 1979 contain both mercury and PCBs. Have they been replaced with PCB-free models and been disposed of as required by law? Most types of high-intensity discharge (HID) lamps (mercury vapor, metal halide, and high-pressure sodium) also contain mercury. (See [http://www.epa.gov/Region9/cross\\_pr/p2/projects/pcbs.html](http://www.epa.gov/Region9/cross_pr/p2/projects/pcbs.html))

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

### 4. Communications

■ Are all classrooms, including portable classrooms, on the public address system? Do intercoms, phones, or radios allow for two-way verbal communication between all classrooms and the school's administrative or security offices?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Can cell phones be used to communicate within the building and to the outside world?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

### 5. Doors and Secondary Escape Routes

■ Does door hardware allow staff to quickly lock down classrooms from the inside without having to step into the hallway? Dual cylinder, ANSI F88 locksets are recommended for all classroom doors. They allow doors to be locked from either side to prevent entry into the classroom from the corridor side, but they cannot be locked (in accordance with building and fire code requirements) to prevent egress from the classroom. The capability to quickly lock the door from either side is the fastest solution for "lockdown" situations. Additionally, F88 locksets meet all ADA requirements. Installation costs are a few hundred dollars per door.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do door access devices such as master keys or proximity cards allow staff to gain quick entry to any room where students have secured themselves?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Does door hardware permit criminals or vandals to lock or chain classroom doors as a way of significantly slowing down security officers in pursuit?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Can classroom doors always be opened from the inside for emergency egress purposes?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are exterior classroom doors made of metal or solid wood, with heavy duty, vandal-resistant locks?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Does door and window security hardware allow egress from classrooms at all times?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do all classrooms have secondary escape routes where required by the building code? Does the room layout help teachers maintain surveillance and control over these routes?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are egress paths along the secondary escape route at least 28 inches wide? Examples of violations include a space of only 17 inches between a desk and wall in an egress path or only 14 inches between rows of desks or tables.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are windows designated for escape readily operable and not blocked by grills or screens?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are classrooms for mobility-impaired students on the first floor, or are they otherwise easy to evacuate without relying on elevators?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

## **6. Fire Safety**

■ Are heat-producing appliances properly guarded? As a fire safety measure, heat-producing appliances should be avoided in elementary classrooms and controlled via a "kill switch" with pilot light in middle and high schools.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Do teaching materials and children's artwork cover more than 20 percent of the wall area? Section 14.7.3.3 of the NFPA 101 *Life Safety Code* prohibits greater than 20 percent coverage for reasons of fire safety.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ Are decorative materials, curtains, draperies, streamers, and fabrics flame resistant?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

## **7. Nonstructural Hazards**

■ Are bookshelves, aquariums, file cabinets, wall- or ceiling-mounted televisions, projectors, screens, and other heavy objects secured from falling due to student misbehavior or natural disasters?

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ In earthquake-prone areas, are partitions that terminate at hung ceilings properly braced to the structure above? Heavy partitions are particularly vulnerable to strong earthquake or explosive forces because of their stiffness and mass and are prone to damage.

Yes  No  Not applicable  Further study

Note:

■ In earthquake-prone areas, are plaster and gypsum board ceilings adequately supported and secured to structural framing?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Further study

Note:

■ In earthquake-prone areas, are suspended lighting fixtures, suspended ceiling systems braced and provided with safety wires?

- Lighting fixtures, ceiling systems, and other overhead components or objects should be mounted to minimize the likelihood that they will fall and injure building occupants.
- Lay-in fluorescent lights should be supported independent of the ceiling grid. Spot lights and track lights should be securely attached to the structure.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Further study

Note:

**Additional notes and comments:**

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