

The Vital Role of Medical Emergency Response Teams



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COVID-19 created a need to develop safety planning related to health emergencies. [In this training](#), participants learn how schools can prepare for and respond to public health crises, strategies for responding to medical emergencies in a distance learning environment, and ways leaders should begin preparing for schools post-crisis.

Learning Outcomes

- » Recognize the intersections between school safety and public health emergency preparedness and response.
- » Recognize the importance of having a Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) and plan in the distance learning environment.
- » Identify considerations for adapting school safety practices in alignment with COVID-19 public health procedures.
- » Recognize the role of the school nurse in school safety efforts.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Preparedness, as defined by [PPD-8](#), includes five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.
- ✓ Medical Emergency Response Protocols should take the distance learning environment into account.
- ✓ Post-COVID-19, it is vital that MERTs consider their effects on social inequalities and the mental health needs of students and staff.
- ✓ It is critical that MERTs debrief after they respond to a crisis to identify what can be done better next time.

Additional Resources

[Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) (also known as the School Guide) - This guide was prepared by teams from the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice, the FBI, and FEMA. Schools can use this guide to create new plans or revise existing plans and align their practices with those at national, state, and local levels.

[Ready.gov/campus](#) - This site features resources to help you prepare for a variety of hazards that may occur on school campuses.

Questions for Discussion

- » How has your MERT accounted for emergencies occurring in the distance learning environment?
- » How will your team respond to emergencies that occur outside of normal class time (e.g., recess, lunchtime)? Do all staff members understand their role (school nurses, teachers, custodians, cooks)?
- » Who else will be involved in or informed about your medical emergency response plans? How will you involve parents (such as parents of students who have chronic health conditions)?
- » Are you training on situational awareness during drills? Are staff checking whether your designated meeting place is safe?

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