

**Coalition for Safe Schools  
& Communities**

# **Hazard Responses**



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Safe Schools &  
Communities**



**SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION**

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

Knowledge of the location of existing pipelines near or on school property is essential for preparedness in the event of a hazardous chemical or gas leak. Pipeline markers are generally yellow, black, and red and can vary in shape and size. Excavation is a leading cause of pipeline damage, so it is important to follow strict on-site protocol prior to digging on school property. The facilities supervisor should call **811** to confirm the planned dig location is safe.

All school personnel, including cafeteria managers and custodians, shall immediately report any hazardous chemical or gas odor or leak to the School Incident Commander.

Design school bus routes and student pick-up/drop off locations to avoid contact with pipelines and pipeline rights-of-way. This helps to ensure evacuation routes are safe in a pipeline emergency.

## HOW TO DETECT A GAS LEAK:

A gas leak can be detected by a sulfur-like odor, a hissing, whistling, or roaring sound coming from underground or a gas appliance, dirt spraying into the air, or the appearance of dead vegetation in an otherwise moist area.

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS: INSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:

- Assume Incident Command role and call **911** from a safe location. Must be ready to provide location, status of campus, and all available details of the situation
- If a gas leak is discovered inside the building, evacuate the affected building immediately to an area that is upwind of the suspected leak. Follow **EVACUATION** Protocol
  - Do *not* use a telephone of any kind until in a safe area
  - Do *not* take any action to cause heat or sparks
- Consult with emergency personnel and utility company to determine next steps
- When able, alert the Superintendent's Office
- Deploy Incident Command System (ICS) Safety Team to isolate and restrict access to potentially contaminated areas
- A Unified Command Post will be established at a safe location away from the building to determine any further action. The Fire Department Incident Commander or other emergency personnel will assume responsibility of the scene and determine the appropriate actions to further mitigate the emergency. The School Incident Commander will coordinate directly with fire and police commanders and utility company.
- In consultation with the Fire Department Incident Commander and utility company, the School Incident Commander will make a determination to implement procedures to cancel school or resume normal building operations
- In the event of a suspected hazardous chemical or gas odor or leak, immediately notify School Incident Commander
- At the direction of the Incident Commander, evacuate students from immediate vicinity of danger. If odor is severe, leave the area immediately; do not wait for Incident Command
- Follow Evacuation protocol and use designated routes or other alternate safe routes to an assigned Assembly Area located upwind of the affected room or building
- Leave any equipment or machinery "as is"
  - Do *not* switch lights on or off

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

## SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

### INSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS (*continued*):

- Leave doors open. Do not operate lights or any electrical equipment, including cell phones
- At the designated Assembly Area take student attendance and report any missing students to School Incident Commander
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a brief description of the emergency, the school's response, and what steps are being taken to ensure safety of students and staff

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS: OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:

- Assume Incident Command role and instruct designee to call **911** to provide the exact location and nature of the emergency
- If it is determined that a hazardous chemical or gas leak has occurred away from the school campus, initiate **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** with a public address announcement. Clearly instruct teachers and staff to immediately follow **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** protocol
- Once **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** is implemented, direct Incident Command Safety (ICS) Officer or Security/Utilities Team to turn off fans in the area; close doors and windows; shut down all air handling systems, and turn off sources of ignition
- When able, alert the Superintendent's Office
- In accordance with the **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** protocol, students and staff who are outdoors should proceed immediately to nearby classrooms or buildings (e.g., auditorium, library, cafeteria, gymnasium). Teachers who assemble their classes in a location other than their assigned **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** assembly point should communicate their locations to the School Incident Commander via standard communication channels without leaving the building
- The School Incident Commander will coordinate further action with representatives from fire and police commanders and utility company

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

## **SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:**

### **OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS (*continued*):**

- The **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** protocol will remain in effect until the appropriate agency or Site Administrator declares the emergency is resolved
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a brief description of the emergency, the school's response, and what steps are being taken to ensure safety of students and staff

## **STAFF ACTIONS: OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:**

- Initiate **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** immediately by clearing students from the hallways and grounds. Stay away from all doors and windows
- Secure individual classrooms: a) close doors and windows; b) shut down the classroom HVAC system; c) turn off fans; d) seal gaps under doors and windows with wet towels, duct tape, or other materials if instructed by Incident Command
- Keep all students in the classroom until further instructions are received. Support those needing special assistance
- Take attendance and call or email status to School Incident Command staff, according to site protocol
- Wait for another action or, if ALL CLEAR announcement is issued, return to normal class routine

# HAZARDS: FIRE OFF-SITE

A fire in the surrounding community can threaten school buildings and endanger students and staff. Response actions are determined by location and size of the fire, whether it is a wind-driven or chemical-driven fire, and how the surrounding terrain might influence the flames. Responding to a fire in the surrounding community requires “think-on-your-feet” alertness.

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command role
- Contact local fire department (call **911**) to determine location of fire and the correct action for school site
- Access the School “Emergency Response Box” (p. 43) that includes site maps, keys, rosters, etc.
- If appropriate, **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** or begin **EVACUATION** to off-site evacuation location according to site emergency plan. If needed, contact bus dispatch for transportation by bus to evacuation location
- In order to ensure that all students and staff have left the building and are free from injury, direct Operations Chief to engage the Search and Rescue team
- Monitor radio stations and other public information sources for current status reports
- Determine if Student Release should be implemented. If so, notify staff, students and parents

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- If students are to be evacuated and it is safe to do so, take attendance prior to leaving the building site
- Remove staff ID placard from emergency packet and put it on
- *Evacuate immediately to assembly area. DO NOT STOP* to collect belongings, but be sure to bring the classroom Go Pack which should include attendance roster and emergency supplies. Leave windows and doors closed, but unlocked.
- Stay calm. Maintain control of the students at a safe distance from the fire and fire fighting equipment

## HAZARDS: FIRE OFF-SITE

- Take attendance at the assembly area. Report any missing students to the School Incident Commander/site administrator and emergency response personnel
- Remain with students until Incident Command has determined it is safe to return
- Follow school emergency protocols for return to school

# HAZARDS: FIRE ON-SITE

An on-site fire necessitates quick and decisive action to prevent injuries and further spread of fire. All doors leading to the fire should be closed. Do not re-enter the area for belongings. If the area is full of smoke, students and staff should be instructed to crawl along the floor close to walls to enable easier breathing and provide direction. Before opening any door, place a hand an inch from the door near the top to see if it is hot. Be prepared to close the door quickly at the first sign of fire. All fires extinguished on-site by school staff, regardless of size, require that the Fire Department be notified.

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS: FIRE WITHIN SCHOOL BUILDING:

- First, sound the fire alarm to implement **EVACUATION** of the building
- Assume Incident Command role. Put on emergency IC/Admin vest and continue as Incident Commander until relieved by emergency personnel
- Instruct designee to call **911**. Designee must be ready to provide location, status of campus, all available details of situation
- Access the school “Emergency Response Box” (p.43) in order to provide emergency responders with maps, keys, rosters, etc.
- Immediately **EVACUATE** the building or the school using the primary or alternate fire routes
- When able, alert Superintendent’s Office
- To ensure that access roads are kept open for emergency vehicles, direct Safety Officer to open gates and clear pathways
- To ensure that all students and staff have left the building and to locate injured students/staff, direct Operations Chief to engage the Search and Rescue team or communicate to Unified Command
- Have Safety Officer report to Incident Command Post
- To ensure injured students and staff members receive medical attention, direct Operations Chief to engage Medical Team
- If needed, notify bus dispatch for off-site evacuation or communicate with Unified Command to engage SAMTRANS
- Do not allow staff and students to return to the building until the Fire Incident Commander declares that it is safe to do so

# HAZARDS: FIRE ON-SITE

## STAFF ACTIONS: FIRE WITHIN SCHOOL BUILDING:

- *Evacuate immediately to assembly area. DO NOT STOP* to collect belongings, but be sure to bring attendance roster and emergency supplies. Leave the windows and doors closed, but unlocked
- Stay calm; maintain control of the students at the designated assembly area
- Take attendance. Report missing students to the School Incident Commander/Site Administrator and emergency response personnel
- Maintain supervision of students until the Fire Department determines it is safe to return to the school building

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

If strong winds and dry conditions, combined with a heightened fire risk, are forecasted to threaten a portion of the electric system, it may be necessary for Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) to turn off electricity for safety. In the event of a planned or unplanned power outage (due to weather, construction or a downed line), school district and site administrators will need to determine if school closures are necessary.

For residents who live in impacted communities, PG&E will attempt to contact individuals via telephone, text, and email. Outages for a weather event could last longer than 48 hours. PG&E suggests customers prepare for outages that could last several days.

## **SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: ACTIONS TO TAKE BEFORE A PLANNED POWER OUTAGE**

- PG&E will send out notification for Planned Power Outages when the forecasted conditions threaten the integrity of the electric system. PG&E will notify the assigned account holder/contact name on the PG&E account. Individuals will not automatically receive notifications
- The Account Holder/Contact Name on the Account should continually update their contact information to ensure consistent receipt of emergency notifications
- Site Administrators, Facilities Managers, and key District Staff who are non-account owners are encouraged to register with PG&E to receive notifications of planned power outages 48 hours prior to the outage
- One phone number can be enrolled per call, but an individual may choose to receive alerts for one or more ZIP Codes within PG&E's service territory
- Individuals must re-enroll each year to maintain this service

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

- To sign up to receive Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) ZIP Code Alerts for an area where an individual is not the account holder:  
Call 1-877-900-0743 to enroll or enroll online at: Power Shut-Off Alerts
- How PSPS alerts work for non-account holders:
  - Alerts are sent out according to ZIP Code
  - Contacts are notified in advance at 48 hours, 24 hours, and just before power is shut off for safety in all or part of the ZIP Code(s) selected
  - The message informs the receiver how to get additional information about the potential outage, including specific areas potentially impacted

## **SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER ACTIONS: AT NOTIFICATION OF PLANNED POWER OUTAGE**

- Assume Incident Command role. Continue as Incident Commander until relieved by emergency personnel
- As soon as possible, communicate with the Superintendent's Office
- Determine when Outage might occur and create a timeline for actions
- Work with Site and District Facilities staff regarding need for generator use to keep key equipment operating (student medical equipment, kitchen facilities, science lab equipment, athletic center mechanical equipment)
- If the planned Outage occurs during a school day, determine if Student Release should be implemented. If so, notify staff, students, and parents
- If the planned Outage is scheduled for subsequent days, determine the need for school closure or relocation of services
- Appropriately notify staff, students, and parents

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER ACTIONS: UNPLANNED POWER OUTAGE

- Assume Incident Command role. Continue as Incident Commander until relieved by emergency personnel
- As soon as possible, communicate with the Superintendent's Office
- Gather information as to the cause of the outage (construction, circuit breaker, downed power line or PG&E Shut-Off)
- Determine the potential timeline for Power Restoration
  - View or Report Outages or call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000
- Appropriately notify staff, students, and parents of the immediate plan regarding school closure
- Work with Site and District Facilities staff regarding need for generator use to keep key equipment operating (student medical equipment, kitchen facilities, science lab equipment, athletic center mechanical equipment)
- If power will not be restored quickly, determine the need to implement STUDENT RELEASE procedures
- Continue to communicate clearly to staff, students, parents, and community members
- If site is designated unsafe to remain open, initiate STUDENT RELEASE procedures

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- In the event of a prolonged power outage, the Incident Commander may implement an early release or school closure. Follow Big Five protocols for EVACUATION and STUDENT RELEASE procedures as directed
- If directed to evacuate, gather emergency supplies/materials (Go Bag) including the student roster for current class and that of “Buddy Teacher”
- Remove staff ID placard from emergency packet and put it on
- Bring all belongings
- Leave windows and doors closed, but unlocked
- Stay calm. Follow the EVACUATION route that keeps students the safest distance from any downed powerlines or PG&E equipment
- According to site protocol, take attendance once class is safely in assembly location
- According to site protocol, report missing students
- If directed by Incident Command, initiate STUDENT RELEASE procedures
- Remain with students until STUDENT RELEASE procedures are complete

# HAZARDS: POOR AIR QUALITY

## DURING A SMOKE EVENT:

If a smoke event occurs, schools should stay informed as conditions can change throughout the day and take steps to minimize the risk to both students and staff.

- Continue to monitor the EPS's AirNow website ([www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)), which reports air quality using the Air Quality Index (AQI). The AQI tells the public how clean or polluted the air is using standard descriptors.
- Stay indoors. However, the usefulness of this strategy depends on how well the building limits smoke from coming in from outdoors.
- If the filter was upgraded, set the central system's circulating fan to operate continuously (set to "ON" rather than "AUTO") to obtain maximum particle removal by the central air handler filter.
- In general, buildings should be operated at slight positive pressure in order to keep contaminants out and to help exhaust air systems function properly.
- Respirators (masks) should only be used after first implementing other, more effective methods of exposure reduction, including staying indoors, reducing activity, and using HEPA air cleaners indoors to reduce overall smoke exposure.
- Refer to the *School Air Quality Activity Recommendations* for guidelines about when and how to modify outdoor physical activity based on the AQI.
- When air quality improves, even temporarily, "air out" buildings to reduce indoor air pollution.
- Damp mop, dust, and clean with a high efficiency particulate air [HEPA] filter-equipped vacuum.