



School Safety and Emergency Management

← Monthly Minute: Summer Exercises →

July 2024

Monthly Minute is a newsletter providing insight and tips on potential threats and hazards brought to you by the Oregon Department of Education.



Summer is here and most staff and students are out for vacation except those involved in summer learning programs. Facility updates are finally getting done, floors are getting waxed and polished, and paint is getting touched up—otherwise the halls are abnormally quiet. The school is recovering from this last year and getting ready to start a new one. While the building is getting ready, now is the time to prepare ourselves with planning. Time for master scheduling!

No plan is complete without testing it and assessing what works, what doesn't and what needs improvement. It is crucial to maintain focus on the safety and preparedness measures within our institutions. One of the most effective methods for ensuring readiness in the face of

emergencies is through **a table-top exercise (TTX)**. These exercises provide a powerful platform for testing, refining and reinforcing our response plans, ultimately bolstering the safety and preparedness of our students and staff.

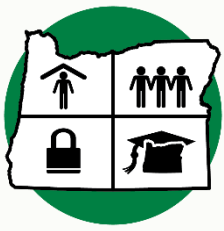
So if you're going over your summer to-do list, make sure to include the task of pulling your admin team together to conduct a table-top exercise (TTX). While things are quiet, this is the perfect time to sit down with your team and run through a couple TTX scenarios. This can be done by simply conducting a discussion of what you would do if a given incident happens. Or your TTX can be a pre-planned, minute-by-minute scenario you've developed that walks you through an event. Either way, the point of the exercise is to get staff in the mindset of what they should do when an event occurs.

TTXs are structured, discussion-based sessions where key decision makers gather to simulate various emergency scenarios in a low-stress environment. Unlike full-scale drills involving large groups of people and equipment (think of a movie set simulating an emergency event, only without the cameras), table-top exercises rely solely on conversation and hypothetical scenarios to evaluate preparedness.

TTXs have several significant benefits. By working through potential emergency scenarios,
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This Month... Conduct a table-top exercise (TTX) with your staff. Be sure to include first responders in these scenario-based discussions. **Visit the SSEM website** for samples of some scenario-based TTXs you can use in your school or district.

Up Next... In August we will review considerations for the beginning of the year.



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Summer Learning Safety

With summer activities comes the hazard of extreme heat and reduced air quality. Stay ahead of heat-related illnesses and respiratory and cardiovascular health effects by bookmarking two important resources: Oregon Health Authority's page on [preventing heat-related illnesses](#) and the Environmental Protection Agency's page on [wildfires and indoor air quality](#).



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they allow you and your team to foster collaboration, strengthen relationships and enhance coordination during emergencies. So when a real event does occur, your staff will have a reference point from the TTX that will better inform their own response and participation in the command structure.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when planning and conducting a TTX:

- **Include your first responders in your TTXs:** It is okay to occasionally conduct a scenario-based exercise internally with just your staff. But the point of emergency planning and preparedness

is to know how everyone will respond. That includes the people who will put out the fires or stop the crime.

- **Keep an open mind and permit critical discussion:** Don't let the discussion devolve into a finger-pointing session but do make sure to use the session to identify improvement points.
- **Revisit past events:** If your school had an event or near miss this last year, revisit your response to that event: what happened? What went well, what went right and what can you do better next time?

Visit our website for a few samples of scenario-based TTXs. **Contact us** if you would like help developing or implementing a TTX for your school or district.

Contact Information

Scan the QR code below or [click this link](#) to connect with a school emergency management professional for help on this or any other school emergency topic.



Join us on the **2nd Wednesday of every month at 8:30am** to get assistance with this or other emergency preparedness topics: [ZOOM LINK!](#)

Resources

[ODE's page on Emergency Operations Plan resources](#) including sample TTXs.

[Schoolsafety.gov resource page](#) for exercise starter kits

Sign up for local alerts: [oralert.gov](#)

Oregon Emergency Management [local contacts list](#).