

School safety

Training for emergency events

Keeping students and staff safe is a top priority for every school. Emergencies can happen anywhere and at any time, which is why it's so important to be prepared.

At EMC Insurance, we encourage schools to practice training, tabletop exercises, and drills that follow an *all-hazards approach* — meaning you're ready for many types of emergencies, not just one.

Making drills safe and effective

Drills are one of the best ways to prepare, but they should always be done with care. The goal is to educate and build confidence — not create unnecessary risks. When conducting drills, keep these precautions in mind:

- Avoid full-speed drills (no running)
- Don't allow physical contact between participants
- Never use simulated or real weapons
- Don't require climbing, moving furniture, or using windows
- Keep participants on their feet or seated — never off the floor

These simple steps help you get the benefit of practice while protecting everyone involved.

Security best practices for schools

Preparation doesn't stop with drills. Strong security policies and daily habits play a big role in preventing and responding to threats. We recommend these six best practices:

1. **Build trust and open communication:** Students often notice things adults don't; give them a safe, confidential way to report concerns so issues can be addressed early
2. **Control building access:** Lock perimeter doors and require all visitors and vendors to check in through a monitored entry point
3. **Add layers of protection:** Go beyond keeping people out — install lockable classroom doors or create safe rooms where needed
4. **Make observation easier:** Clear sight lines at entrances, parking lots, and classrooms help staff and students stay aware of potential threats
5. **Establish lockdown procedures:** Always include evacuation training for scenarios where leaving is safer than staying put; every school needs a clear plan — practice three levels of lockdown to match different situations:
 - **Clear the halls:** Limit traffic for medical emergencies or searches
 - **Exterior lockdown:** Protect against threats outside the building
 - **Lockdown:** Secure against dangers inside or nearby. Always include evacuation training for scenarios where leaving is safer than staying put.
6. **Practice, practice, practice:** Written plans aren't enough — regular training and rehearsals make sure everyone knows what to do and when