

Schoharie Central School District

PROJECT: SAVE (SAFE SCHOOLS AGAINST VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION)

District School Safety Plan

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

INTRODUCTION

Schoharie Central School District is a rural school district that houses approximately 880 students. The district facility consists of an Elementary School, grades K-6, and a Jr./Sr. High School, grades 7-12. There are also on-site about 60 Pre-K pupils and 160 staff members.

The philosophy that guided the planning process includes a unified commitment of district staff and community involvement and support. The plan calls for the assistance of community resources in the event of an emergency. In order to maintain efficiency during emergency situations, an on-going relationship has been fostered between the school community and the outside crisis resources.

Schoharie Central SD has developed a district-wide school safety plan designed to prevent or minimize violent incidents and serious emergencies and to facilitate the coordination with local and county resources in the event of such incidents. The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of both elementary and secondary schools within the district and is consistent with the detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. School districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural and technological disasters. To address these threats, Schoharie Central SD has created a plan in accordance with the State of New York Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Law. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and the buildings.

The Schoharie Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation, and has tailored its safety plan to meet the specific needs of the district. The Superintendent of the school district encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

What follows are aspects of the Districtwide School Safety Plan that are considered as public information. Consistent with Project SAVE tactical response protocols, floor plans and all other confidential information are accessed only by authorized school district employees and emergency response personnel, such as police, fire and emergency medical services.

C. Concept of Operations

The Schoharie Central School District is a unified K-12 campus. This enables the district-wide school safety plan to be similar to the building-level safety plan. The elementary school, which houses K-6 students, is directly linked to the Jr./Sr. High School by a gymnasium addition. Protocols reflected in the district-wide school safety plan are congruent to those in the building-level plan.

Enlisting the help and involvement of the community was essential in establishing this plan. Local schools, fire departments, police, and childcare centers were contacted to discuss and evaluate information before implementation.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies will be by the School Emergency Response Team. The Superintendent will contact the facilitators who will notify and enlist the help of the Emergency Response Team. Facilitators will send "runners" to collect the team members and they will immediately begin diagnosing the situation and enacting all levels and positions of the plan to rectify the situation.

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Once the Emergency Response Team is deployed, the Superintendent will notify local emergency officials as necessary, as well as the BOCES District Superintendent and the Commissioner of Education. County and state resources will also be utilized if appropriate, as stated in existing protocols. For security and/or law purposes, the County Sheriff's Department will be notified, counseling and emotional needs will be addressed by the County Mental Health Department, crises will be directed to the County Emergency Management Office, and the Health Department will be contacted for any medical or health related emergencies or concerns.

D. Plan review and public comment

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 (e) (3), this plan was made available for public comment 30 days prior to its adoption. The School Board may adopt the district-wide and building-level plans only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must then be formally adopted by the Board of Education.

Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. Building-level Emergency Response Plans will be supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.

While linked to the District-wide School Safety Plan, Building-level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

When creating the district-wide safety plan, the school district Safety Committee wanted to have many different stakeholders involved in the process of guaranteeing the safety of the district's students. Each member of the safety team represents a different perspective and interest in the safety of students, their families, staff members and the district. School safety issues were identified and diagnostic plans and procedures were developed through administrative, support staff, teachers, students, and community consultation and collaboration. The plan will be reviewed each year.

A. Purpose

The Schoharie Central SD Emergency Response Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Board of Education, the Superintendent appointed a School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the Emergency Response Plan.

B. Identification of School Team

The Schoharie Central School District has created a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows: Superintendent (or designee), Director of Facilities, Director of Transportation, Jr./Sr. High School Principal, Elementary Principal, Assistant Principal, Teacher, Secretary, School Nurse, School Social Worker, Guidance Counselor, Board of Education Trustee, Student and Parent.

RESPONDING TO THREATS AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE

A. Continuity of Operations

In the event of an emergency, the Superintendent or designee will serve as Incident Commander. A member, of a local emergency response agency, may replace the School Incident Commander. After relinquishing command, the Superintendent or designee may be asked to serve in a support role as part of a unified Incident Command, if established, by the local emergency response agency. The school district has an established chain of command to ensure continuity of operations.

B. Staff Obligations

In the event of an emergency, all employees of the Schoharie Central District have a responsibility to protect and maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the district's pupils. Staff members will be assigned to accompany and supervise pupils. In the case of an emergency, ordinary rules of work hours, work site, job descriptions and any other contractual provisions will be subject to state, county, or school district directives. Transportation staff members will be expected to report to work when alerted of the emergency. If a given driver is unavailable when the call is placed, the next named person on the emergency call list will be alerted.

C. Situational Responses

The safety plan outlines the policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, school personnel and visitors to the school. It also contains a list of appropriate actions for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence.

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

A. Program Initiatives

The programs and activities implemented in the district have improved communication between students and staff. Reporting of potentially violent incidents has improved, yearly meeting of the high school student body by grade with the High School Principal and Assistant Principal to explain rules and opened the lines of communication. Some of these programs are:

- **Retention Attention Program (RAP)** - Risk identified students at the middle school level stay after school for extra help and mediation with their teachers.
- **Peer Tutoring** - Middle school students tutor elementary school students to help in areas of reading and writing. Students act as mentors for the elementary students.
- **"Be Cool" Anger Management Workshops** - These workshops are facilitated by the guidance counselors and are offered to identified students who have exhibited or who potentially exhibit explosive outbursts.
- **Mediation** - Offered on an open-door policy by the guidance counselors to assist students in conflict situations.
- **Project Save** - This 2-hour workshop is presented to all staff and faculty members to help train, identify and prevent potential conflicts and violence within the school.

On an on-going basis, programs are developed and reviewed as needs arise.

B. Training, Drills and Exercises

- **Violence Training** - Faculty and staff members receive training once per year to help them recognize potentially violent situations. This is a 2-hour training workshop designed to identify these attitudes and behaviors and how to de-escalate or modify them once they are recognized.
- **HAZCOM Training** - Annual Multi-Hazard Training for All Staff - Annual multi-hazard training is a mandatory exercise for all staff members. The training is provided by School Support Services of the Risk Management division of BOCES. Right to Know and Project SAVE training are mandatory two-hour sessions provided on Superintendent's Conference Day. Also fire drills, lock-down drills and go-home early drills are conducted annually.
- **Incident Command/Tabletop Drills** - A tabletop drill is performed every year to test the preparedness of the Emergency Response Team. This exercise takes place in the fall with all members present. The facilitators had the team members a type-written scenario and members are required to react as they would if it were a real-life case. Each team member performs their duty(ies) as they normally would, contacting and utilizing any resources they need.
- **Early Dismissal Drill:** The District participates each year in the "Go-Home-Early" drill, as prescribed by the Capital Region BOCES.
- **Staff and Student Information:** In keeping with this section, information about emergency procedures shall be provided each school year no later than October 1st.

RECOVERY

In the event of a state-wide event, the Post-Incident Response Team has developed procedures for dealing with the aftermath of an incident.

A. Short Term

- Mental health counseling for students and staff will be provided by the School Social Worker
- Facility restoration for returning to normal operating conditions
- Building security check by Transportation Manager/Head Custodian
- Post-incident response critique

B. Long Term

- Mental health counseling to monitor for post-traumatic stress behavior, to be provided by Schoharie County Mental Health
- Mitigation: Emergency Response Team meets and assesses the procedures to determine if adjustments are needed in the Emergency Response Plan.

GLOSSARY AND TERMS

Action Plan (Incident Action Plan): An oral statement or written document that contains the overall incident strategy as well as specific tactical actions and supporting information for the next operational period. If written, the plan may have a number of forms as attachments such as traffic plan, safety plan, communications plan, map, etc.

Activation: The act of bringing a standby or reserve component and/or system into operation.

Administration/Finance Section: The section responsible for all incident costs and financial considerations. Possible positions in an expanded ICS organization include Time unit, Procurement unit, Compensation/Claims unit and Cost unit.

Air Pollution: The presence of foreign substances in the atmosphere, which pose a serious threat to human life.

Agency: Any department, division, commission, authority, government, corporation, independent establishment, or other entity of State or local government. In ICS, agencies are identified as jurisdictional agencies, assisting agencies or cooperating agencies.

Agency Representative: An individual assigned to an incident from an assisting or cooperating agency who has been delegated authority to make decisions on matters affecting that agency's participation at the incident. Agency Representatives report to the Liaison Officer.

Aide: An individual assigned to provide general or specific support to scene managers.

Area Command: An organization established to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by one ICS organization or to oversee the management of a very large incident that has multiple Incident Management Teams assigned to it. Area command has the responsibility to set overall strategy and priorities, allocate critical resources based on priorities, and ensure that incidents are properly managed (with strategies being followed and objectives being met.)

Base: The location at which primary logistics functions for an incident are coordinated and administered. There is only one base per incident. (Incident name or other designator will be added to the term base.) The command post may be consolidated with the base.

Cache: A pre-determined complement of tools, equipment and supplies stored in a designated location that are available for incident use.

Chain of Command: A series of management positions in order of authority.

Chemtree: The Chemical Transportation Emergency Center. A public service of the Chemical Manufacturers Association that provides immediate advice for those at the scene of an emergency involving chemicals and then contacts the shipper for more detailed assistance and appropriate follow-up. The service is available 24 hours a day by dialing number 1-800-424-9300.

Chief: The ICS title for individuals responsible for command of functional sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics and Administration.

Chief Executive: 1. A County Executive or County Manager; 2. In a county not having a County Executive or County Manager, the Chairman or other presiding officer of the county legislative body; 3. A mayor of a city or village, except where a city or village has a manager, it shall mean such manager; 4. A supervisor of a town, except where a town has a manager, it will mean such manager.

Civil Disturbance: An individual or collective action causing intense interference with the peace, security and normal functioning of a community.

Crisis Counseling: Assistance provided to victims of disasters by trained personnel to help allay fears brought on by the incident. Usually provided by Social Services and Mental Health Professionals.

Command: The act of directing, ordering and controlling resources by virtue of explicit legal, agency or delegating authority.

Command Post (CP): The location at which the primary command functions are executed. The CP may be consolidated with the base or other incident facilities.

Command Staff: Consists of the Information Officer, Health & Safety Officer, Liaison Officer. A school district may expand the number of positions as needed. Typically, this might include an Incident Log/Scribe and Agency Representatives. Individuals filling command staff positions report directly to the Incident Commander (except Agency Representatives, who report to the Liaison Officer) and may have assistants as needed.

Communications Unit: An organizational unit in the Logistics section responsible for providing communication services at an incident. A communications unit may also be a particular facility such as a trailer or mobile van used to provide the major part of an incident communications center.

Control Center: An area designated within a school facility from which key officials will operate an emergency.

Damage Assessment: Procedure to assess and describe the nature, and estimate the dollar value of damages resulting from an emergency or disaster.

Deputy Incident Commander: The IC may have one or more Deputy ICs. Deputies must always be as qualified as the person for whom they work, in the event they need to assume the IC position. Deputy IC performs tasks as requested by the IC; can perform the IC function in a relief capacity; and can represent an assisting agency that may share jurisdiction or have jurisdiction in the future.

Disaster: The occurrence of widespread or severe damage or injury to health, social structure, or processes, or the loss of life or property, resulting from natural or man-made causes.

Disaster Preparedness Commission (DPC): A body created under Article 2B of the New York State Executive Law to encourage and promote appropriate planning and management of emergencies both at the state and local levels. Its membership consists of the heads of 17 state agencies and 3 appointees of the Governor.

Early Dismissal: Returning students to their homes or other appropriate locations before the end of the normal school day. Also referred to as a "Go Home" activity during an annual drill.

Earthquake: A vibration or breaking of ground caused by the sudden release of strain energy within the earth.

Educational Agencies: Public and non-public elementary and secondary schools, public and private nursery schools, approved private schools for the education of pupils with handicapping conditions.

Emergency: A situation, including but not limited to a disaster, that requires immediate action, occurs unpredictably, and poses a threat of injury or loss of life to students or school personnel or of severe damage to school property.

Emergency Broadcast System (EBS): A network of commercial radio and television stations that provides emergency information to the public during and actual or impending emergency.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): A facility with the necessary plans, procedures and equipment from which essential emergency functions can be directed, controlled and coordinated on 24-hour basis.

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP): A document containing the operational procedures to be used during an emergency.

Emergency Services Organization: A public or private agency, organization or group other than a governmental agency, which provides police, fire, medical, ambulance, rescue, housing or other services for the relief of human suffering, injury or loss of life or property as a result of an emergency.

Energy Supply Loss: Interruption in the supply and/or distribution of energy.

Epidemic: The occurrence of disease to an unusual number of individuals or proportion of the population.

Evacuation: The moving of students for their protection from a school building to a predetermined location in response to an emergency.

Explosion: A rapid and violent expansion of matter emitting noise, heat and/or particles.

Flash Flood: A sudden, violent flood, typically occurring during or after a heavy rain or the melting of a heavy snow. Flash flooding may also occur during or after hurricanes, tropical storms and other severe water bearing weather.

Flood Warning: A warning that flooding is imminent or in progress, and that people in the affected area(s) should take necessary precautions immediately.

Flood Watch: An alert that (flash) flooding is possible. Those in the affected area(s) are urged to be ready to take additional precautions if a flood warning is issued or if flooding is observed.

Function: In ICS, this refers to the five major activities: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics and Finance/Administration. The term is also used when describing the activity involved such as the planning function or the operation function.

Gas Leak: The presence of vapors from certain gaseous fuels (natural gas, liquefied petroleum (LPG) propane) in areas of a building in which high concentrations could cause an explosion if an ignition source is present.

Hazard Area: A geographically identifiable area in which a specific hazard presents a potential threat to life and property.

High Wind: A condition normally indicating that sustained winds of 40 mph or greater are expected to persist for one hour or longer, or that wind gusts of 58 mph or higher, regardless of duration, are expected.

Hurricane: A warm-core tropical cyclone in which the minimum standard surface wind is 74 mph or more. When a hurricane loses strength -- as measured by its wind speed -- it is reduced to "tropical storm" status. This usually happens after the storm hits land.

Hurricane Warning: A warning that one or both of the following dangerous effects of a hurricane are expected in a specified coastal area in 24 hours or less:

- * sustained winds of 74 mph
- * dangerously high water or a combination of dangerously high water and exceptionally high waves (storm surge), even though expected winds may be less than hurricane force.

Hurricane Watch: An alert for specific areas that a hurricane or incipient hurricane conditions may pose a threat to coastal and inland communities within 36 hour.

Hazardous Materials Leak: The accidental release of elements or compounds, which, present such properties as flammability, thermal instability, toxicity, corrosiveness and/or combustibility.

Incident: An event that poses a threat or potential threat to students, school personnel or school property. Action by school personnel will be required to prevent or minimize the danger to life and/or property.

Incident Action Plan (or Action Plan): An oral statement or written document that contains the overall incident strategy as well as specific tactical actions and supporting information for the next operational period. If written, the plan may have a number of forms as attachments such as traffic plan, safety plan, communications plan, map, etc.

Incident Commander (IC): The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident site. During an incident, the IC is located at the Command Post (CP). Although other ICS functions may be left unfilled, there will always be an IC. There is only one IC on any incident. The IC retains responsibility for all ICS functions until the specific function is activated. The Incident Command may be carried out in two ways: Single Command or Unified Command.

Incident Command Post (ICP): The location at which the primary command functions are executed. The Incident Command Post may be grouped or placed side-by-side the incident base or other incident facilities.

Incident Finance/Administration: The Finance/Administration Section is responsible for keeping track of incident-related costs, personnel and equipment records, and administering procurement contracts associated with the incident or event.

Incident Log/Scribe: This is not an official ICS term, but is a function that must be carried out during an incident. The Incident Log/Scribe is charged with keeping a written log of all incident events and updating appropriate command post personnel on significant developments. This function is crucial as it serves as a basis of documenting the information needed to effectively manage an incident and to prepare after-action reports and claims needed for the district to resume normal operations. The information captured by the Incident Log/Scribe also serves as the cornerstone for analysis and training that will aid the district's response to future events. The responsibilities of the Incident Log/Scribe are to: Maintain a command post journal, including minutes from command post briefings; Periodically distribute a "situation report" to command post personnel; Refer pertinent information to Public Information Officer; Maintain and display an updated map of the incident location.

Incident Logistics: The Logistics Section is responsible for providing adequate services and support to meet all incident or event needs. This is done under the direction of the Logistics Section Chief. The Logistics Section Chief has responsibility for six principal activities at an incident: 1) Communications, 2) Medical support to responders, 3) Food for responders, 4) Supply, 5) Facilities, and 6) Ground Support. A deputy Logistics Section Chief may be assigned. Example: Logistics orders resources; Operations uses those resources; Planning keeps tracks of those resources.

Incident Management Team (IMT): The Incident Commander and appropriate Command and General Staff assigned to the incident.

Incident Objectives: Statements of guidance necessary for the development of appropriate strategies and tactical direction. Incident objectives should be based on realistic expectations of what can be accomplished when all allocated resources have been deployed effectively. They must also be achievable, measurable and flexible enough to allow for alternatives as conditions warrant.

Incident Operations: The Operations Section is responsible for directing the tactical* actions to meet incident objectives and directs all resources. This is done under the direction of the Operations Section Chief. There is only one Operations Section Chief for each operational period. The Operations Section Chief may have deputies; using deputies from other agencies often helps in the coordination of actions. Example: Logistics orders resources; Operations uses those resources; Planning keeps tracks of those resources.

*Tactical: small-scale actions serving a larger purpose; carried out with a limited or immediate end in view.

Incident Planning/Intelligence: The Planning Section is responsible for the collection, evaluation, and display of incident information, maintaining status of resources, and preparing the Incident Action Plan and incident-related documentation. Maintains resources status. This is done under the direction of the Planning Section Chief. The Planning Section Chief may have a deputy. The Planning Section may be organized into four unit-level positions: Resources Unit, Situation Unit, Documentation Unit, and Demobilization Unit. **One of the most important functions of the Planning Section is to look beyond the current and next operational period, and anticipate potential problems or events.** Example: Logistics orders resources; Operations uses those resources; Planning keeps tracks of those resources.

Inner Perimeter: A geographically identifiable area in which a specific hazard presents a potential or an actual threat to life and property.

Intrusion: The entry into areas of the facility by unauthorized individual(s).

Jurisdiction: The range or sphere of authority. Public agencies have jurisdiction at an incident related to their legal responsibilities and authority for incident mitigation. Jurisdictional authority can be political/geographical (such as local, state or federal boundary lines) or functional (such as police, fire, health department, etc.). See multi-jurisdiction.

Jurisdictional Agency: The agency that has statutory responsibility for incident mitigation.

Liaison Officer: A member of the Command Staff responsible for coordinating with representatives from cooperating and assisting agencies. There is only one Liaison Officer on any incident. Very large incidents may require the use of assistants.

Local Emergency Management Office (LEMO): A unit of local government responsible for the coordination of response actions in time of emergencies.

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC): A county level organization charged with developing the hazardous materials component of the county emergency plan with particular emphasis on the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act.

Local Government: Any county, city, village, town, district, municipality, Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, rural community or unincorporated town or village.

Lockdown: Protecting students, faculty and staff from an internal or external threat by excluding or isolating that threat, such as securing classrooms and exterior doors to keep a violent person from entering. All activities inside and outside of the building are curtailed until the lockdown is over.

Lockout: Used for lesser emergencies than a lockdown. All outside doors are locked, including the front door. Anyone let in or out has to be allowed in or out. Curtail all outside activities (playground, gym, field trips). All activities within the building are conducted as usual. This procedure allows a school building to limit interruptions. Some examples of this may be used: 1. When a group is demonstrating in front of the building 2. Whenever any school building in the district is in a lockdown, 3. Other times when activity within the building is safe but a potential danger needs to be kept outside.

Major Disaster: Any emergency which, in the determination of the President, causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, as amended.

Mass Casualty Incident (MCI): A major casualty incident where the emergency medical resources of the local jurisdiction and mutual aid areas are overwhelmed due to the number of casualties and/or damages to the medical facilities. An MCI requires a more extensive mutual aid response and/or the use of extensive state/federal medical resources. This is in comparison to a multiple casualty incident, a localized emergency, wherein the local medical resources are available and adequate to provide for the field triage, stabilization and treatment.

Multi-agency Incident: An incident where one or more agencies assist a jurisdictional agency or agencies. May employ a single or unified command.

Multi-jurisdictional Incident: An incident requiring action from multiple agencies that have a statutory responsibility for incident mitigation. In ICS, these incidents will be managed under a unified command.

Mutual Aid: A formal or informal agreement with other agencies or school districts to provide assistance during emergencies. For school districts, the mutual aid is usually provided through contact with the Superintendent of Schools.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): A division of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

National Weather Service (NWS): An office within NOAA. Maintains offices at various locations in each state. Provides notifications of severe weather to the public through various means e.g. NOAA Weather Radio.

New York State Police Information Network (NYSPIN): A computer based statewide information network, which serves police agencies throughout the state. Severe weather watches and warnings are provided directly from the National Weather Service to NYSPIN.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): A federal agency mandated to administer safety and health statutes in the workplace. In New York State, the Labor Law duplicates OSHA requirements for the public sector.

Officer: The ICS title for the personnel responsible for the Command Staff positions of Health & safety, Liaison and Information.

Operational Period: The period of time scheduled for execution of a given set of operation actions as specified in the Incident Action Plan. Operational periods can be various lengths, although usually not over 24 hours.

Operations Post: The location at which the primary operational functions are coordinated and administered. It should be located at or near the scene of the incident. Each agency involved can establish an operations post, or they can choose to co-locate with another agency.

Operations Section: The section responsible for all tactical operations at the incident. Includes branches, divisions and/or groups, task forces, strike teams and single resources and staging areas.

Outer Perimeter: Traffic control points designated to limit and control access to the incident area.

Planning Section: Responsible for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of tactical information related to the incident, and for the preparation and documentation of incident action plans. This section also maintains information of the current and forecasted situation, and on the status of resources assigned to the incident. Includes situation, resource, documentation and demobilization units as well as technical specialists.

Public Information Officer (PIO): A member of the Command Staff who is the central point for dissemination of information to the news media and other agencies and organizations. Only one PIO will be named to an incident, including those incidents that are multi-jurisdictional. The PIO may have assistants as needed, and the assistants may also represent other agencies or jurisdictions.

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES): An organization of licensed amateur radio operators dedicated to providing communications services during emergencies.

Radiological Incident: An occurrence involving release of radioactive material, which may require community, public and/or private protective action.

Relocation: Vacating facilities so they can be used as emergency centers.

Resources: Personnel and equipment available or potentially available for assignment to incidents. Resources are described by kind and type.

Safety Officer: A member of the Command Staff responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards or unsafe situations as well as for developing measures for ensuing personnel safety. The Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to directly stop unsafe acts if personnel are in imminent, life-threatening danger. Only one Safety Officer will be named to an incident. The Safety Officer may have assistants as needed, and the assistants may represent other agencies or jurisdictions.

Section: The organizational level with responsibility for a major ICS functional area of the incident. They are Operations, Planning, Logistics and Administrative/Finance. The section is organizationally between branch and Incident Commander.

Shelter-In-Place: Keeping students, faculty and staff in school buildings and providing them with shelter when it is deemed safer to remain inside rather than return home or be evacuated.

Span of Control: The supervisory ratio of three-to-seven individuals for each supervisor, with five-to-one being optimum.

Staging Areas: Locations set up at an incident where resources can be placed while awaiting a tactical assignment. The Operations section manages staging areas.

State Emergency Management Office (SEMO): The staff arm of the New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission. It coordinates emergency planning and training as well as emergency response on behalf of the Commission.

Strike Team: Specified combinations of the same kind and type of resources with common communication and leader.

Thunderstorm Warning: A warning that a severe thunderstorm is imminent or in progress, and that people in the affected area(s) should take necessary precautions immediately.

Thunderstorm Watch: An alert that a severe thunderstorm is possible. Those in the affected area(s) are urged to be ready to take additional precautions if a severe thunderstorm warning is issued or if such a storm is observed.

Task Force: a combination of single resources assembled for a particular tactical need, with common communications and leader.

Tornado: A violent rotating column of air forming a pendant, usually from a cumulonimbus cloud, and touching the ground. It usually starts as a funnel cloud and is accompanied by a loud roaring noise. On a local scale, tornadoes are the most destructive of all atmospheric phenomena.

Tornado Warning: A warning of an existing tornado or of one suspected to be in existence. People in the affected area(s) should take immediate shelter.

Tornado Watch: An alert of the possibility of a tornado. People in the affected area(s) should be prepared to take immediate shelter if a tornado warning issued or if a tornado is observed.

Unified Area Command: A unified area command is established when incidents under an area command are multi-jurisdictional, See command and unified command.

Unified Command: In ICS, unified command is a unified team effort which allows all agencies with responsibility for the incident, either geographical or functional, to manage an incident by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies. This is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility or accountability.

Unity of Command: The concept by which each person within an organization reports to one and only one designated person.

Weather Radio: The NOAA Weather Radio system, with New York State related programming transmitted from local NWS facilities in Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Burlington (VT), Elmira, Erie (PA), Kingston, New York City, Riverhead, Rochester, Scranton (PA), Syracuse and Watertown.

Winter Storm: Snowstorms; blizzards; ice storms are encompassed in this category. Usually predicted by the National Weather Service.