

Considerations for Schools and Summer Camps

By and large, the entire contents of this manual apply to religious schools and summer camps. However, some specific recommendations for organizations that deal with large numbers of children may be helpful.

Schools

Hebrew schools and Jewish day schools represent a key arena of concern. Parents are keenly aware of the visibility of many these schools and past targeting of Jewish institutions by those who would do harm by attacking our children. Therefore, pressure is brought to bear by parents — often in a highly emotional and unstructured manner — demanding that schools spare no expense to ensure the safety of their children. It behooves the principal/director, staff and lay board to consider the implementation of a serious, ongoing security program, if one is not in place, before events — which typically happen outside the institution — result in rapid, ill-considered and potentially costly steps.

This chapter will not focus on the cause and prevention of student-initiated violence. However, some of the items discussed may be applicable.

Everything we have said about building relationships with police applies here. Indeed, your location may be considered ideal for SWAT or other police training exercises.

Physical Security

- Follow the steps discussed elsewhere in the manual. However, in conducting your assessment/audit, recognize that Jewish day schools and Hebrew schools are attractive targets to those who may wish Jewish communal institutions harm. They may also be targets of those who wish children harm in general.
- It is vital that all staff wear photo identification and that all visitors understand that visitors' ID must be worn without exception. There must be 100

percent compliance by all staff and visitors. Your institution should decide how that compliance is to be achieved. Failure to comply with the badge program diminishes, both in reality and in the eyes of key constituencies, the commitment of the institution to the security of those in their charge.

Special Evacuation Concerns

- You must provide for sufficient and age-appropriate supervision.
 - Responding emergency personnel will need to know the numbers and ages of the children who are involved as well as the numbers of staff involved.
 - An effective method of informing parents such as a telephone tree must be established to prevent panic on the part of parents hearing of an evacuation or threat.
 - Information for the telephone tree should be simple so as to avoid confusion and prevent muddling of information as it is passed from person to person.
 - Information should be calmly conveyed.
 - It is extremely important to let parents know where the children are being taken as well as when and how the children can be picked up.
- Note:** It is recommended that parents as well as staff be informed at the beginning of every school year of the evacuation plans an institution may have. Remember, rumor and innuendo are the most toxic forms of communication.
- Children, especially young ones, need to be taken to a sheltered environment. This can mean any location that is sufficiently far from your institution to ensure safety and is protected from the elements, etc. Examples may include a neighboring school, church, business, etc. You should, of course, make plans in advance to use such a facility. You may need to work to find a facility or combination of facilities that are open during your entire range of business hours.
 - Be prepared for the possibility that staff or children may have to remain in that location for a number of hours. Consider the desirability of creating “to go” bags — i.e., disaster preparedness kits — for each classroom. Such kits could be readily taken by each teacher in any kind of emergency, particularly those requiring evacuation. Each bag might have a contact list for every

child in the classroom (possibly along with a secondary, out-of-area contact) as well as some food, water and sunscreen. Such a kit would also be useful in lockdown situations.

Lockdown

There are a number of reasons to initiate lockdowns, the most serious of which is the presence of a dangerous intruder where clear lines of safe evacuation are unavailable. Other circumstances include nearby police operations (which emphasizes the need for police to know your location and function).

A lockdown is a procedure whereby students and staff lock themselves into their offices, classrooms or other designated safe areas until danger has passed. In the event a lockdown is deemed necessary, the first step is to communicate that fact to staff and students both in the classroom and throughout the campus. Students may be away from buildings, on a field, walking between classes, etc. They must be quickly informed and know to go into the nearest classroom or office. This presents a very confusing situation because (a) students who are unknown to a teacher may seek entrance into a class and (b) it may be difficult to account for students' whereabouts.

Some considerations:

- Can your rooms be locked from the inside?
- Do classrooms have windows large enough to present a danger to those inside the rooms? If so, is there a safe place to hide?
- Are there means of communication from classrooms to either the main office or the outside? If not, is there a procedure (possibly using colored cards) to inform police that all individuals in your room are safe or, conversely, that assistance is required immediately? The ability to convey such information may save lives. **WHATEVER SYSTEM YOU USE, IT MUST BE SHARED WITH, OR, BETTER YET, DEVELOPED IN CONCERT WITH LOCAL POLICE.**
- Are your rooms stocked for what might be an extended stay? Consider having water, food and perhaps some form of sanitation facilities available.

Specialists

We have recommended elsewhere in this manual that you may wish to consult with a security professional. Your local public school district may have such a professional on staff or be willing to make a recommendation.

Telling Parents About Security Plans

Parents often will ask in great detail about your security plans. The information provided to parents should be sufficient to calm concerns, but should not be so detailed so as to potentially impact the effectiveness of the security program. One way to manage this issue is to have a parents' committee that is fully briefed and able to provide assurances to other parents.

Note: Security plans and evacuation information should not be posted on Web sites or presented in other public arenas.

Summer Camps

Summertime is not normally associated with security concerns, and those who work in — as well as those who attend — summer camps anticipate an enjoyable summer experience. And with some careful planning, summertime can remain enjoyable and safe.

The elements of a security plan for summer camp deal with

- Physical security
- Information and communication
- Emergency planning

As in all institutions, one key element in security is the ability of management to establish command, control and communications in an emergency. While this is made more difficult given the nature of camps (they can be remote, or have children and adults outside playing on many fields at once, etc.), planning will make this possible and thus is an issue that camps can go a long way to meet.

Physical Security

While most of the considerations about physical security addressed elsewhere in this book are applicable, summer camps have unique security issues.

Day Camps

Day camps that are contained within the confines of a Jewish institution should be included in that institution's security plan. Even with such a plan in place there may be differences:

- Young people are outside far more often and for longer periods of time.
- Pickup and drop-off times may be more crowded.
- Other uses of the facility may be occurring simultaneously with camp.

At the very least, this translates into a need to exercise extreme caution when dealing with access to campers. Specifically, great attention needs to be paid to identifying those who are part of the camp program and challenging (in an appropriate way) those who do not belong.

Tips for all camps:

- Photo identification should be worn by staff and other adults permitted to enter the camp.
- If any identification is used by campers, it is very important that care be taken not to provide an opening for strangers to talk to the child, for instance, by broadcasting the child's first name (e.g., on a T-shirt or name tag).
- Staff should be carefully trained to report any person who attempts to make contact with campers.
- Though the majority of staff at a camp is young people, they can nevertheless play a role in challenging unknown individuals, even if it is only sending a fellow counselor to the administrative office to alert officials to the presence of an unknown individual.
- Counselors are rarely adults and yet are in a semi-supervisory role.

- Young counselors should not approach individuals but should maintain observation from a distance.
- The issue of how to alert responsible adults is one that must be worked out well in advance of the need and role-played with senior counselors.
- There should be at least one staff member within each group of campers with a cell phone available at all times, especially when campers are away from the main building (e.g., at a sporting field), to enable you to contact emergency personnel (without leaving the campers).

Sleepaway Camps

Sleepaway camps have all of the challenges of day camps, multiplied by the fact that their responsibility extends 24 hours a day, seven days a week and that they are often located in remote settings.

Given the special nature of sleepaway camps, the following ought to be addressed, perhaps with the assistance of a professional security consultant. As we have said elsewhere, this is an important time to build relationships with local law enforcement. Indeed, it may be prudent to reach out to law enforcement during the “off-season,” when these officials and the camp staff are all likely to be less busy.

The following are general considerations for camps, and we encourage that a security professional be consulted.

1. Signs

- a. Posting. Institutions should clearly delineate their property with signs that indicate that trespassers are not welcome.
- b. Directions. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of providing widely disseminated directions to the camp from public roads, especially if the camp is identifiable as Jewish by name.
- c. Internet. Information posted online should be very carefully screened. Consider not providing detailed directions to your camp.

2. Access control

- a. All visitors must be directed — both by signs and physical layout — to the main administration building.

- b. While badges or identification may be difficult for campers to wear at all times, all adults should be identified by badge, whether staff or visitor. Staff should at least be trained to direct visitors to the administration building, and depending on the age of the counselor, to take other steps as necessary.
- c. While it is unlikely that a sleepaway camp is fenced, there should be some method for keeping strangers and vehicles off the property, particularly at night. Consideration may be given to the possibility of fencing or patrolling the most sensitive parts of the camps, namely sleeping areas, and thus dramatically reducing the area that needs to be secured. Note: if a counselor is patrolling, serious consideration must be given to his/her ability to contact an adult counselor (e.g., a walkie-talkie or even an air horn).

3. Mail

- a. Consider using a mail screening program (see section on mail screening, on pages 61- 65 above). Some camps have found that the use of preprinted address labels facilitates that process.

4. Lighting

- a. Areas and paths used at night should be well lit.
- b. Cabins should be well lit inside and out, front and back (especially if the cabin backs against the woods).

5. Sleeping cabin security

- a. Cabins should have lockable doors and windows.

6. Evacuation and lockdown procedures

- a. Evacuation procedures need to be worked out well in advance, especially if the camp is remotely located. You may decide that the best place to take children is to a main building, such as mess hall, recreation hall, etc. If so, consider ensuring that these buildings have sturdier locks and doors.
- b. Consider having the ability to institute a lockdown if necessary.
- c. See section on school evacuation on pages 80-81.

7. Training

- a. Staff must be included in training, practice and critique of a security plan.
- b. Refresher training is important as stale information is quickly forgotten.

Information and Communications

There are two types of communications we will consider here: communication of personal information and emergency communications.

Personal Information

All data pertaining to campers, employees, their families and their summer schedules should be treated as very sensitive information and kept in a secure and locked location. No information should be provided to any individuals, regardless of their story, about campers, employees, their families and their summer schedules. Such information should be distributed on a verified need-to-know basis only.

Again, camps should review the amount and types of information they post on the Internet. While it is understandable that camps wish to post as much information as possible on their Web sites, they should remember that once data is on the Web site it is impossible to ever “erase” that information from the Internet. If your camp uses a Web site to communicate with parents, consider a password-protected environment for all sensitive information.

Cell Phones

Communications in remote locations can be very difficult and intermittent.

- There should always be at least two forms of communication available, typically a landline and a cell phone. Radios or satellite phones may be required, given the rural location of some camps.
- Sleepaway camps in rural areas — or if day camps are taking day trips into rural areas — may need to consider alternate means of communication, as cell phones may not work. Note: even if cell phones work on the main road

driving up to a remote area, they may not work once off that road. It is important to let authorities in the remote area know when and where you will be and when you are expected to return as well as inquiring of them about communication in the remote area (there may be nothing). If there is no form of communication available, additional resources (medical, additional counselors, etc.) may be needed. At the very least, **do not publicize your trip beyond the appropriate camp family.** This may require a review of the camp's promotional literature and Web sites.

Intra-Camp Communications

You should be able to communicate with all areas of your camp, regardless of the remoteness of the location of some facilities. Bear in mind that radios may not be useable if you are dealing with a bomb threat (radio signals may detonate a device). Consider using a public address system with a prearranged emergency signal or word, bullhorns, hardwired systems, etc.

A Note on Emergency Planning

Again, a critical issue facing camps, especially sleepaway camps in remote locations, is establishing command, control and communications in an emergency. However, as the above discussions indicate, careful planning and consideration can go a long way to reducing this particular concern.



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This guide is intended to help institutions become aware of basic security considerations. It is not intended to provide comprehensive, institution-specific advice on security matters nor is it meant to replace the advice of a security professional. For comprehensive, institution-specific security advice, a security professional should be consulted. ADL specifically disclaims any and all responsibility for, and is not responsible for, any loss or damage arising out of the use, nonuse or misuse of this information

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