

# Students Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind: Safety Checklist for IEP Teams

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has set three broad goals for education: high student performance; high-quality teaching and administration; and a safe, secure, and supportive environment for each school and every child (from Pennsylvania "All-Hazards" School Safety Planning Toolkit). In the event that school safety is compromised, it is important that schools have plans in place to convey information to all students and staff. Due to the unique nature of the communication needs of students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, it is suggested that individualized education program (IEP) teams use the following checklist to assure that students have full access to the language and implementation of those safety plans. This list is intended to guide discussions to determine needs and supports for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind during emergency situations.

- Has the local educational agency (LEA) reviewed the Sample School District/School Action Steps for Special Needs Planning in the "All Hazards" School Safety Planning Toolkit? (available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website: [www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us))
- Has the LEA notified local emergency responders of students with special needs, including the students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind?
- Can students access the current alerting system based on their individual communication needs identified on their Communication Plan?
  - Internal?  Off-site/during travel?
  - External?  Entry back into building?
- Have students been trained to understand what the alerting system signifies?
- Has the team identified specific needs that might arise in the event of an emergency?
  - Extra batteries for hearing aids, in a classroom "Go Kit"
  - Pen or pencil and paper for writing important communication that may not be accessible to students auditorally during an emergency, in a classroom "Go Kit"
  - Flashlight and batteries, specifically for students to use to access communication, in a classroom "Go Kit"
  - Charger for FM system
  - Have other needs beyond communication been addressed?
- Are students able to advocate for their communication needs in the event of an emergency?
  - Do students need to carry a preprinted copy of important messages?
  - Do students know how to compensate and advocate if messages are inaccessible during the emergency (ask for repetition, specify how the message can be clearer, use visual cues)?
- For students who use educational interpreters or interveners, does the LEA have arrangements for securing another interpreter or intevener in the event this is needed?

- Have staff members been informed of students' specific needs in the event of an emergency?
    - Teachers and administration
    - Substitutes and support staff
  - Have students reviewed the crisis response plan with someone proficient in communicating with students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind in their preferred mode and language?
  - Has the team identified individuals, who are proficient in the students' preferred language or communication mode, to meet with the students after a crisis for follow up?
  - Has the LEA made arrangements for how to communicate emergency information to parents who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind?
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