National Conference on Education

New Orleans, March 2, 2017

Are Your Schools Safe After the Dismissal Bell?

The majority of schools have security measures in place during the school day, but what are the action plans after the dismissal bell? Safe Sport Zone has trained thousands of school officials on after-school activities since 2009. The program covers team building, assessments, school-based emergency plans, evaluations, effective supervision, evacuations and command post/reunification centers. The presentation will prepare school districts for any after-school hazard.

Presenter: Jay Hammes, CMAA
National Faculty Instructor - NIAAA
President Safe Sport Zone LLC
Health and Safety

Why Your High School Needs an After-Hours Action Plan

Jay Hammes, CMAA
Safe Sport Zone

America’s high schools, already on high alert during the school day, are even more vulnerable to security concerns once the dismissal bell rings.

Doors are not only unlocked but also propped open. Any security personnel guarding the entrances typically are no longer on duty. Students and staff members are exiting the building quickly, and there is no organized plan in place to secure students, coaches and other adults who remain in the building for sports practices, theater and band rehearsals, extracurricular organization meetings and several other after school activities.

That’s why all high schools need a plan of action to prevent something tragic from happening that could send you, your school and your district to court.

“The school day does not end when the bell rings for dismissal,” says Bruce Bowen, a longtime athletic director and now executive director of the Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. “From a safety perspective, you’ve got to be on your guard all the time.”

What follows is an after-hours action plan for schools to use consistently in the late afternoon and evening, and it is already in place in some districts in Virginia and Ohio. Remember that including staff members in the decision-making process is key to achieving buy-in and successfully implementing the plan.

Repetition of the following rules eventually will become the norm over time, and your building will become more secure than ever.

After-Hours Action Plan

1. With administrators, teachers and staff, establish a “window of time” for how long it should take students to travel from their final class of the day to the practice field, performing arts center or wherever they need to be on school property. How long does it take a student to get to his/her after school activity? You must decide that as a staff, but anytime between 10 and 20 minutes should suffice.

2. Whether it’s a dress rehearsal or volleyball practice, once the dismissal bell rings, students need to know how long they have to get where they need to be. For example, if the dismissal bell rings at 3 p.m. — and the “window of time” is 15 minutes after the bell — all staff members would need to supervise the halls between 3 and 3:15 to make sure students are exiting the building or en route to
their after school activities. While explaining the critical importance of school safety and security, express the potential vulnerability that can occur after the dismissal bell rings. Staff members must understand this and realize why their supervisory presence in the halls is needed while the building’s doors are open.

3. At 3:15, designated staff members would sweep the halls, moving all students to a common area or pick-up location such as the lobby or cafeteria. That location will require supervision, but it is easier to supervise one location than an entire building. If students are loitering or roaming the halls after 3:15, they will be escorted to the common area pick-up location or to their activities. The coach or another adult in charge then will be asked to remind students in the group of the need to follow procedures for safety and security reasons.

4. Every staff member who holds an activity after the “window of time” has closed (beginning at 3:15 p.m. in the above example) will need to fill out a facility use permit and an After-Hours Emergency Card that designates such responsibilities as who will call emergency medical staff, where automated external defibrillators are located and who has keys to access shelter rooms in case of severe weather. Such knowledge is critical to taking fast action during an emergency.

5. Be sure to include in your plan the leaders of outside organizations that use your school for meetings, camps and other events. Many school officials overlook this important group. The After-Hours Emergency Card should be shared with and filled out by every group in your building after 3:15 p.m., regardless of whether it’s a school or non-school program.

We play the way we practice, and if staff and students do not practice the steps involved with the after-hours emergency action plan, it will not be effective. Everyone involved in after school activities must understand the rationale behind taking the above precautions. Once they know the reasoning, they’ll be more apt to help implement and maintain the plan.

“There’s always a tradeoff between safety and convenience,” Bowen says. “But you need to have somebody in charge at all times when anything is going on.”

Airing It Out

Does your school own an air horn?

Safe Sport Zone recommends the use of an air horn — preferably blown in three steady blasts — as an indication to stop all outdoor activities and seek shelter from severe weather. As with fire drills and other safety procedures, this should be practiced throughout each sports season, and coaches and players should be trained in where to go for protection from the elements.

Get a copy of Safe Sport Zone’s After-Hours Action Plan today!
SafeSportZone.com/ActionPlan

© 2017 All-American Sports Posters® | Visit www.WeHelpSchools.com
AFTER-HOURS SCHOOL ACTION PLAN FOR ALL EVENTS

Activity ___________________________ Pick-up location and time _______________________

Staff Member’s name (Coach/Advisor) ___________________________ School Year ____________

Cell Phone ___________________________ Event/Practice Site ___________________________

Has a Facility Use Permit been filed? Yes ____ No ____

Where should the EMS come in case of an emergency? ________________________________

Who will call the EMS? ____________________________________________________________

Who will notify the parent(s) that student is being transported? ________________________

Who opens doors/gates for the EMS? _______________________________________________

Who travels with injured student? _________________________________________________

Who does the follow-up with parent(s)? ____________________________________________

Who documents the injury? _______________________________________________________

Who will provide primary care for the injured student? _______________________________

Where is the First-Aid kit located? _________________________________________________

Where is the AED located? _________________________________________________________

Who is going to explain the tornado procedures to the students? _______________________

Where is the closest weather shelter? _______________________________________________

Who has keys/access to the weather shelter? _________________________________________

Who performs a daily site inspection of the facilities? ________________________________

Who manages the remainder of the event? __________________________________________

Who is notifying administration? _________________________________________________

Agreed upon before using the school’s facility:

Signed: _______________________________ Date: ____________________
Health and Safety

How to Make Sporting Events Safer

Jay Hammes, CMAA
Safe Sport Zone

Bombings in a New York City neighborhood and near a charity run in New Jersey. Shootings at malls in Minnesota and Washington. Killing sprees at a nightclub in Florida and a holiday party in California.

These and other tragedies are all-too-common in the United States today, and they increase the likelihood of something similar occurring at high school sporting events.

As an athletic administrator, you’ve no doubt witnessed situations in which security personnel are ill-prepared for violence or other incidents that jeopardize fan safety. After all, you don’t personally know every single spectator who enters your high school stadium and gymnasium, and you certainly aren’t aware of their situations in life, who they conversed with prior to the game and what they talked about — or even why some of them are coming to your events at all.

Which means athletic administrators must be prepared for anything that happens both inside and outside their venues.

Think I’m exaggerating?

Remember when school officials went to college to become professional educators and perhaps coach one or two sports? Today, because of local budget cuts that reduce the number of law-enforcement officials working games, athletic and academic administrators in some school districts say they also should be trained by the FBI or Department of Homeland Security.

We must remember that many educators — including coaches and athletic directors — lack knowledge of the proper security measures to take during sporting events and other after school activities. The gap between what they know and don’t know needs to narrow. School leaders must be more knowledgeable about school safety issues, and the primary way for that to happen is for school districts to include after school security training in their staff-development agendas.

This need has become more urgent since the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, which proved that open-air and open-access spaces — including those designated for after school activities — aren’t immune from danger.

Granted, the probability of an explosion happening at, say, a cross-country meet remains very low, but unfortunately we can’t rule it out, either. Even more frightening is acknowledgment that a conventional bomb combined with radioactive material (a dirty bomb) could maim or kill spectators and elicit mass panic. The injured would require immediate treatment, and physically unharmed survivors would be seeking medical care to determine if they were contaminated by radiation.

Unthinkable? I sure hope so, but we never know. That’s why after school emergency management plans must be developed in order to create a strategy for the unthinkable. Failure to do so is just plain irresponsible.
Here are five steps you can begin implementing today to help keep your school's athletic events and facilities safer.

1. Communicate:

Safe Sport Zone recommends that schools conduct afterschool event-security meetings during the academic year to make sure all involved — this includes emergency-medical, law-enforcement and fire agencies, along with school officials and paid event workers — are aware of policies and procedures and know how to communicate with each other in the event of an emergency. The action plan should cover all contingencies that may occur, including situations related to crowd control, spectator behavior and evacuations. Remember, the courts have consistently ruled that schools must provide a reasonable standard of care for players, coaches, officials and spectators. If you don’t have a plan to do exactly that, ask Safe Sport Zone, the National Federation of State High School Associations or the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association for assistance.

Communication can be unspoken, too. Consider posting teachers, staff members and law enforcement officials near the entrances to scan the crowd as they enter the venue. Their presence, an obvious effort to maintain the peace, is a strong deterrent of unwanted behavior.

2. Practice, practice, practice:

“You play the way you practice,” has been barked by coaches to their players for decades. That old phrase still works so well because repetition in athletics is the key to healthy and strong competition. Kids are exposed to fire drills from a very young age, and that kind of repetition continues for the rest of their academic lives. Why don’t administrators practice the same emergency procedures for afterschool events? For example, you have an opportunity to practice evacuations after every football and basketball game. Here’s how to run an evacuation drill:

- After the game ends, reset the clock to eight minutes as players, coaches, officials and spectators begin exiting the facility. Don’t worry about the stragglers.

- After the eight minutes expire, reset the game clock to seven minutes and begin a concentrated effort to remove all remaining spectators. Two staff members holding yellow “caution” tape the length of the bleachers or seating sections should position themselves at the top of each end of each section and move in tandem down the rows, signaling to the stragglers that it’s time to exit.

- The public-address announcer plays a significant role here, encouraging fans to clear the facility, thanking them for their patronage and cooperation, and inviting them back to the next home game. Displaying courteous behavior on behalf of the school while the drill is in motion is critical.

- Don’t even mention that you’re conducting an evacuation drill. Let spectators think this is all part of your standard operating procedure for clearing the facility. Once the spectators are outside the venue, predetermined designated waiting areas should be available for home and visiting fans. It is recommended that a police officer or school official be positioned between the two groups to help keep the peace.

3. Prohibit spectators’ bags.
Safe Sport Zone suggests prohibiting large bags at all indoor and outdoor athletic events; carry-ins that big encourage easy concealment of weapons. Patrol all entrances, and prohibit entry to spectators violating the policy until they’ve left bags behind in their vehicles. This policy also removes the discretionary decision of a staff member or volunteer to search bags they consider large enough to be in violation — a time-consuming task that slows crowd flow. Signs notifying fans of the policy are encouraged, as are announcements in local newspapers and game programs, and over the public-address system prior to events. By protecting the gate, you can prevent many problems from occurring beyond the gate. Visual searches, random metal-detector scans and identifying fans also go a long way in maintaining a proactive stance against potential violence.

Another significant deterrent is the use of a five-foot-high tripod (which sells for about $25) with a battery-operated HD video camera and a 64-gig chip (for plenty of storage). Place the camera in front of the entrance 45 minutes before and after the start of a game while fans are entering. Make sure you display a sign stating that a security camera is in use.

Ask yourself how much spectator privacy your school district is willing to forego for the sake of security.

4. Evaluate your environmental design.

Designing a physical environment that influences positive behavior acts as a crime-prevention tool via the use of barriers such as steps, plants, fencing and lighting that surround your football field or gymnasium exterior. Environmental design can help prevent, say, a vehicle from crashing onto the field or into a section of bleachers. (If a dirty bomb would ever enter your football stadium, it would have to be delivered by vehicle.) The best ways to enhance environmental design are to assess your facilities and make sure there are no open areas hidden in shadows, establish clear and well-lit access-control points at facility entrances, create barriers that restrict vehicle access, and ensure proper and timely maintenance of shrubbery, lights and fencing. Environmental design enhancements can be displayed in aesthetic ways that appeal to the public while also acting as security shields.

5. Consider a training course. Safe Sport Zone’s safety training — the NIAAA’s new Leadership Training Course 631: Emergency Management of Interscholastic Athletic Events — provides additional details about all of the above suggestions and others by providing schools with a low-cost afterschool program at their own facilities. The training includes a manual, safety posters and a completion certificate.

      After all, the best way to mitigate liability is to train your staff. If a school district fails to provide a reasonable standard of care and is sued, the cost of that lawsuit would be monumentally greater — both financially and otherwise — than the minimal cost needed to host this program. Is that a risk you’re willing to take?

* * *

For more information, contact Jay Hammes at safesportzone@gmail.com, visit safesportzone.com or call Jay at 262-989-7711. Jay is a member of the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association’s national faculty.
EduSee’s FirstVu HD Body-Worn Camera System is the premiere wearable digital video system on the market today. It is small and lightweight, easy to operate and allows teachers, administrators and SROs to record in full 720P HD with audio. The FirstVu HD brings all the advantages of a video system to the shirt pocket or lanyard of every school district employee.

**Versatile Applications**
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Athletic Department Training
- Band and Drama Performance
- Professional Development
- Safety and Security

For more information call Dr. Paul Kinder
816-365-0377