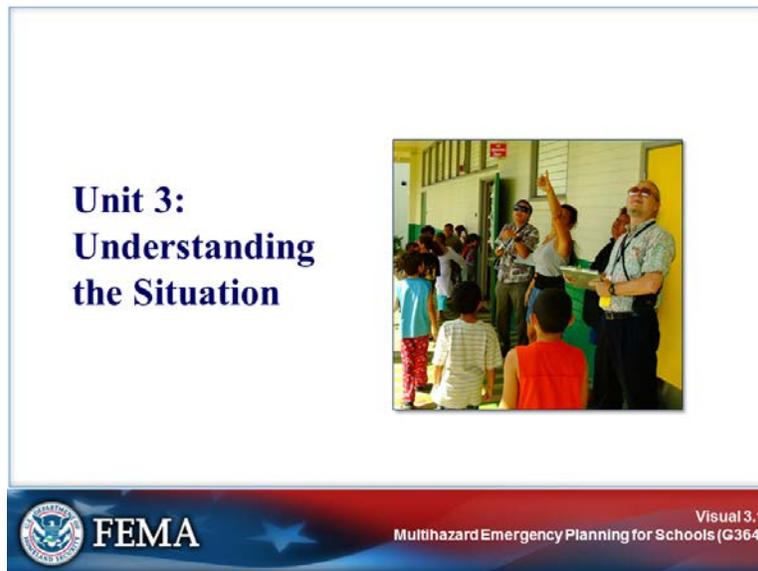

UNIT 3. UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

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UNIT INTRODUCTION

Visual 3.1



Key Points

This unit provides an introduction to understanding and identifying threats, hazards, and security vulnerabilities that may affect school communities. You will assess the risk related to these threats and hazards to determine ways to address vulnerabilities and risk.

Definitions

Hazard:

- Something that is potentially dangerous or harmful, often the root cause of an unwanted outcome. (Sources: National Infrastructure Protection Plan, National Incident Management System)
- Natural or human-caused source or cause of harm or difficult. (Source: DHS Risk Lexicon)

Risk: The potential for an unwanted outcome resulting from an incident, event, or occurrence, as determined by its likelihood and the associated consequences. (Source: DHS Risk Lexicon)

Threat: A natural or human-caused occurrence, individual, entity, or action that has or indicates the potential to harm life, information, operations, the environment, and/or property. (Source: DHS Risk Lexicon)

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Visual 3.1 (Continued)

Definitions (Continued)

Vulnerability:

- A physical feature or operational attribute that renders an entity open to exploitation or susceptible to a given hazard. (Source: DHS Risk Lexicon and National Infrastructure Protection Plan)
- Characteristics of the school that could make it more susceptible to the identified threats and hazards. (Source: Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans)

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Visual 3.2

Unit Objectives

- Identify natural, technological, and human-caused hazards likely to impact the school.
- Describe the process used to conduct assessments.
- Identify protection and mitigation measures to address security vulnerabilities.

The slide footer features the FEMA logo on the left, the text 'FEMA' in a large font, and the text 'Visual 3.2 Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)' on the right. The background of the footer is a red and blue gradient with a white star.

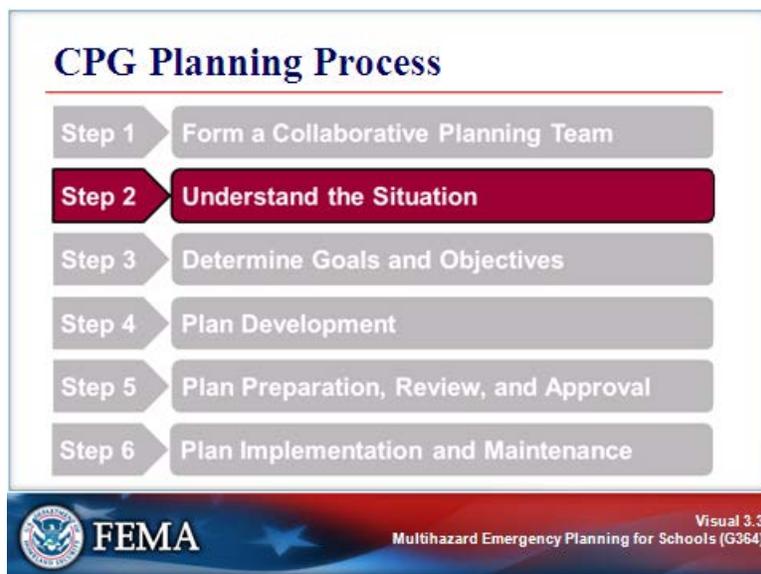
Key Points

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify natural, technological, and human-caused hazards likely to impact the school.
- Describe the process used to conduct assessments.
- Identify protection and mitigation measures to address security vulnerabilities.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

Visual 3.3



Key Points

The course follows the CPG 101 and Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans planning process. This visual provides an overview of the planning process steps. While there are many ways to produce an EOP, this planning process has enough flexibility for each school to adapt it to its unique characteristics and situation.

- Form a collaborative planning team
- **Understand the situation**
- Determine goals and objectives
- Plan development (identify courses of action)
- Plan preparation, review, and approval
- Plan implementation and maintenance (this step includes conducting training and exercises)

This unit corresponds to step 2 in both the CPG 101 and Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans documents.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION**Visual 3.3 (Continued)**

In step 2, the planning team identifies possible threats and hazards, assesses the risks and vulnerabilities posed by those threats and hazards, and prioritizes the threats and hazards.

All school communities must contend with threats and hazards in their planning process and address vulnerabilities and risks. Identification of threats and hazards can be a simple process based on historical information and information gathered from local resources, such as local emergency management. Identification of human-caused types of threats and hazards can be more difficult.

When assessing risk, there are several different types of assessments. The table below presents four common types that schools should use to develop a plan and inform updates and revisions.

Assessment Type	Description	Purpose/Results
Site Assessment	A site assessment examines the safety, accessibility, and emergency preparedness of the school's buildings and grounds. This assessment includes, but is not limited to, a review of building access and egress control measures, visibility around the exterior of the building, structural integrity of the building, compliance with applicable architectural standards for individuals with disabilities and others with functional and access needs, and emergency vehicle access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased understanding of the potential impact of threats and hazards on the school buildings and grounds.• Increased understanding of risks and vulnerabilities of the school buildings and grounds when developing the plan.• Knowledge of which facilities are physically accessible to students, staff, parents, volunteer workers, and emergency response personnel.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION**Visual 3.3 (Continued)**

Assessment Type	Description	Purpose/Results
Culture and Climate Assessment	<p>In schools with positive climates, students are more likely to feel connected to adults and their peers. This climate fosters a more nurturing environment where students are more likely to succeed, feel safe, and report threats. A school culture and climate assessment evaluates student and staff connectedness to the school and problem behavior. For example, this assessment may reveal a high number of bullying incidents, indicating a need to implement an anti-bullying program.</p> <p>The National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Web site is a resource for school surveys.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of students' and staff's perceptions of their safety.• Knowledge of problem behaviors that need to be addressed to improve school climate.
School Threat Assessment	<p>A school threat assessment analyzes communication and behaviors to determine whether or not a student, staff, or other person may pose a threat. These assessments must be based on fact, must comply with applicable privacy, civil rights, and other applicable laws, and are often conducted by multidisciplinary threat assessment teams. While a planning team may include the creation of a threat assessment team in its plan, the assessment team is a separate entity from the planning team and meets on its own regular schedule.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of students or staff that may pose a threat to themselves or others before a threat develops into an incident.

UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION**Visual 3.3 (Continued)**

Assessment Type	Description	Purpose/Results
Capacity Assessment	The planning team needs to know what resources will be at their disposal. A capacity assessment examines the capabilities of students and staff as well as the services and material resources of community partners. This assessment is used to identify people in the building with applicable skills (e.g., first aid certification, search and rescue training, counseling and mental health expertise, ability to assist individuals with access and functional needs). Equipment and supplies should also be inventoried. The inventory should include an evaluation of equipment and supplies uniquely for individuals with access and functional needs, such as evacuation chairs, the availability of sign language interpreters and technology used for effective communication, accessible transportation, and consumable medical supplies and durable medical equipment that may be necessary during a shelter-in-place or evacuation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increased understanding of the resources available.• Information about staff capabilities will help planners assign roles and responsibilities in the plan.

This unit describes the process for conducting a site assessment and the considerations for conducting a school threat assessment.

The outcome of step 2: Understand the Situation is a prioritized list of threats and hazards and plans to address risks and vulnerabilities.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.4



Key Points

Effective school planning depends on a consistent analysis and comparison of threats and hazards that the school faces. This is typically performed through a threat and hazard identification and risk assessment process that collects information about threats and hazards and assigns values to risk for the purposes of deciding which threats or hazards the team deems a priority and will subsequently address.

This section of the unit focuses on identifying natural, technological, and human-caused threats and hazards. Within these types, the threats and hazards that should be addressed in a school EOP will vary depending on the school's location, construction, and other factors.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.5

Natural Threats/Hazards

- Include severe weather, floods, earthquakes, landslides, fire, and other events of nature.
- Include biological threats such as animal disease outbreaks, pandemics, and epidemics.
- May occur repeatedly.
- Often can be predicted.

What is your school's most significant natural hazard?



FEMA

Visual 3.5
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Natural hazards are natural events that threaten lives, property, and other assets. Natural hazards tend to occur repeatedly in the same geographical locations because they are related to weather patterns or physical characteristics of an area. Often, natural hazards can be predicted.

Source: FEMA: Are You Ready?

Examples of natural threats/hazards include:

- Severe weather, including:
 - Hurricane – a tropical storm with winds over a constant speed of 74 miles per hour.
 - Tornado – a funnel-shaped storm cone with winds up to 300 miles per hour.
 - Lightning – one of nature's most dangerous weather phenomena. Every thunderstorm produces lightning.
 - Severe wind – high wind speeds.
 - Winter storm – hazardous winter weather due to various elements such as heavy snow, sleet, or ice accumulation from freezing rain.
- Flood – more precipitation falling into a drainage basin than can be readily absorbed or stored within the basin.
- Landslide/mudslide – the movement of a mass of rock, debris, or earth down a slope.
- Drought – a period of drier-than-normal conditions that results in water-related problems.
- Extreme temperatures – dangerously low or high temperatures. A heat wave is an extended period of extreme heat, and is often accompanied by high humidity. These conditions can be dangerous and even life-threatening for humans who don't take the proper precautions. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.5 (Continued)

- Earthquake – a sudden fault slip in the Earth’s crust.
- Tsunami – a giant wave produced by underwater movement due to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, or meteorites.
- Volcanic eruption – molten rock expelled through an opening or vent in the earth’s surface.
- Wildfire – a raging conflagration that rapidly spreads out of control in the outdoors.
- Avalanche – a mass of snow, ice, and other material that breaks free to move down a slope.

Natural hazards also include biological threats such as:

- Infectious disease pandemics and epidemics such as pandemic influenza, XDR tuberculosis, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), or meningitis infections.
- Animal disease outbreaks.
- Contaminated food problems including salmonella, botulism, and *E. coli*.

The process of identifying natural threats and hazards using your available resources will help you eliminate some of these from consideration.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.6

Technological Threats/Hazards

- May be accidental or associated with another event.
- Occur with little to no warning.
- Include bus accidents, power failures, explosions, computer failures, and hazardous materials releases.

What is your school's most significant technological hazard?

FEMA
Visual 3.6
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Technological hazards involve materials created by man and that pose a unique hazard to the general public and environment. Consider incidents that are caused by accident (e.g., mechanical failure, human mistake), result from an emergency caused by another hazard (e.g., flood, storm), or are caused intentionally.

Source: CPG 101

Technological hazards may be caused by accident, through another incident, or as a result of the failures of systems and structures. They may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation, and they often come with little to no warning. The effects can span many years.

When identifying technological hazards, the planning team considers neighborhood factors:

- **Commercial/industrial facilities:** Are there utilities, gas stations, power lines, and/or industrial facility hazards in the neighborhoods around the school?
- **Transportation corridors:** Is the school located near a highway or major road and/or close to a delivery route used by hazardous materials vehicles?

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.6 (Continued)

Examples of technological hazards include:

- Airplane crash.
- Communications and/or computer database failure.
- Dam or levee failure.
- Mine accident.
- Hazardous materials release.
- Power failure.
- Radiological release.
- Train derailment.
- Bus accident.
- Urban fire.

Examples of technological hazards that have affected schools include:

- Power failure. A February 2008 power outage in Florida that affected 3 million people was attributed to human error. Two nuclear reactors were also affected by the blackouts and were shut down. More than 20 schools in two counties lost power.
- Train derailment. In Painesville, OH, an October 2007 derailment of a 112-car freight train resulted in a massive fire. Several of the burning cars contained hazardous materials. A half-mile area around the derailment site was evacuated, including an elementary school with 340 students.
- Hazardous materials release. On October 2, 2003, the Washington, DC, Fire Department Hazardous Materials Unit responded to an emergency call at Ballou High School to clean up a mercury spill. One student had obtained the mercury from a science lab and had sold some of it to other students. Traces of mercury were found in the classrooms, gymnasium, and cafeteria, as well as on city streets, city and school buses, and in 11 homes. As a result of the spill, Ballou High School was closed for 35 days and total cleanup costs were about \$1,500,000.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.7

Human-Caused Threats/Hazards

- Are deliberate actions taken to threaten or harm others.
- Include school violence, bullying, armed intruder, chemical or biological attack, cyber attack, bomb threat, or other criminal actions.

What is your school's most significant human-caused hazard?



 **FEMA**

Visual 3.7
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Human-caused hazards result from intentional human actions to threaten or harm the well-being of others, such as a threatened or actual chemical or biological attack, or cyber incident.

Potential threats that you may identify include:

- An active shooter (see the information on targeted violence that follows).
- Bullying, including cyber-bullying and sexting.
- School violence, including gang violence.
- Bomb or bomb threat.
- Arson.
- Hostage situation.
- Domestic violence/abuse.
- Suicide.
- Cyber attack.
- Drug-related emergencies.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.7 (Continued)

Targeted Violence

When considering the threat of a mass casualty incident, it is important to understand that they come in many varieties and unfold in different ways. However, according to the findings of the Safe School Initiative (available at <http://www.secretservice.gov> and on the course toolkit), past incidents do share some common characteristics.

Common characteristics. Understanding common characteristics such as the following can help you understand and be ready in the unlikely event that an incident occurs at your site:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
- Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack.
- Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.
- There is no accurate or useful "profile" of students who engage in targeted school violence.
- Most attackers engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident, that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.
- Most attackers were known to have difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Many had considered or attempted suicide.
- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.
- Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.
- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.

Impact of bullying. One of the common characteristics of attackers is that they had felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack. This demonstrates the importance of addressing bullying and harassment in schools, as they can quickly escalate into school violence. Cyber-bullying and "sexting" have become popular methods for students to harass, humiliate, or intimidate one another using cell phones or computers. Students upload or send explicit messages, photos, or images via email, cell phone, or Internet-based social networking Web sites. Often, these messages or photos are disseminated over the Web well beyond their original intended recipients.

The social and legal implications of these student behaviors are far reaching. Victims of bullying, cyber-bullying, and sexting have lower self-esteem, increased thoughts of suicide, and a variety of emotional responses, which include fear, frustration, anger, and depression.

Cyber-bullying and sexting are more than unacceptable student behaviors; they are often the cause of school violence incidents.

To learn more about targeted violence and the impact of bullying, you may wish to take the FEMA course IS-360, Preparing for Mass Casualty Incidents: A Guide for Schools, Higher Education, and Houses of Worship.



See the **Developing Procedures/Protocols** section of the Course Toolkit to obtain a copy of a seminar titled Addressing Cyberbullying.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.8

Gathering Information

- Ask local experts.
- Conduct research.
- Review:
 - Existing plans.
 - Past threat and hazard assessments.
 - Past incidents.

Who can help you learn about your threats and hazards?

FEMA

Visual 3.8
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

The first step in identifying threats and hazards is to determine who has information already available (for example, local emergency management or other community planners). Next, conduct research and analysis building on the information provided by the local experts. There are many resources available to help your planning team in gathering this information. It is important to understand that you do not need to “reinvent the wheel”—most of the information is already available.

Key point: Much research has been conducted on the natural threats and hazards by local emergency management, the community, and the school district.

To aid in threat and hazard identification efforts, schools should consider:

- **Asking local experts.**
 - Planning team members can share their own knowledge of threats and hazards in the school and community.
 - Building code inspection and enforcement officers can share data on the structural integrity of buildings, codes in effect at time of construction, and the hazard effects that a code addresses.
 - Emergency managers and fire and law enforcement personnel can provide their expertise and additional insight during a systematic “walk around” of the inside and outside of the school.
 - Local planning and zoning commissions can offer extensive demographic, land use, building stock, and similar data.
 - Local realtors’ associations can often provide information on the numbers, types, and values of buildings.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.8 (Continued)

- Local public works departments and utilities can contribute information on potential damage to and restoration time for the critical infrastructures threatened by hazard effects.
- Flood insurance representatives can determine if the school is in a flood hazard area.
- Local organizations and community groups, such as the local chapter of the American Red Cross and the local Community Emergency Response Team, can provide helpful information.

- **Conducting research.**
 - Local newspaper archives and historical society records can provide insight into past incidents and threats and hazards.
 - Internet research can yield information on historical and recent incidents and threats and hazards.
 - The chamber of commerce can offer a perspective on damage to businesses and general economic loss.
 - Local organizations (e.g., the local chapter of the American Red Cross) and members of the planning team can provide records about their experiences in previous disasters.

- **Reviewing existing plans, past threat and hazard assessments, and past incidents** such as State mitigation plans and community emergency plans, community threat/hazard assessments, and information on incidents.

Your local emergency manager can help with local hazard mitigation plans and may direct you to the State or Tribal Hazard Mitigation Officer who guides the hazard mitigation planning process. These officers can provide schools with State, tribal, and local hazard mitigation plans, which identify, catalog, and assess the risk of all natural threats and hazards likely to affect the community.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.9



Key Points

As your planning team identifies threats and hazards, they need to focus beyond just the school to the neighborhood and community.

- **Community:** Weather or geological concerns, if the school is located in an area with extreme temperatures or weather patterns, near areas identified as at-risk using Hazards U.S. Multi-Hazard (HAZUS-MH) software analysis, and/or on a floodplain or earthquake fault line.
- **Neighborhood:**
 - Are there natural threats and hazards near the school or on bus routes?
 - Does landscaping present a wind or fire hazard?
- **School property and buildings** including both structural and nonstructural elements:
 - **Structural elements:** Threats and hazards may be created by damage to portions of the building whose primary function is to support the dead load. The local EOP for a community may include structural assessments for all government buildings in the community, including schools. Due to design or age, many school buildings present some kind of structural hazards. These structures include:
 - Modular classrooms: These classrooms provide additional space for learning, but are lightweight and susceptible to wind and other natural threats and hazards.
 - Unreinforced masonry: Unreinforced masonry is a construction method in which exterior walls are constructed of brick and/or block with no steel or other underlying reinforcement. Note that unsupported masonry may not meet construction codes in your area. Check your local and State building standards for further information.

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.9 (Continued)

- Improperly supported roofs: Flat roofs on many school buildings are easily susceptible to wind damage and heavy snow, especially gymnasiums, cafeterias, and other areas that have broad spans of unsupported roof.
- **Nonstructural elements**: Threats and hazards may also be caused by damage to portions of the building not connected to the main structure. In addition to hazards inherent in the structural design of many school buildings, there are other nonstructural hazards present in classrooms, offices, lunchrooms, and hallways. These nonstructural threats and hazards may present as great a risk to the health and safety of the school community as structural ones. Nonstructural elements include any item not connected to the main building. Usually, these elements are installed after the supporting structure of the school is complete. Consult your community's building safety department to assess these hazards.

The following checklists are provided as guidance for identifying structural and nonstructural threats and hazards (checklists focusing on safety and security vulnerabilities will be presented later). Your school should develop checklists specific for your school and community.

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.9 (Continued)

Identifying School-Based Threats/Hazards—Classroom Checklist

Room:	Date Surveyed:
Threat/Hazard	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Free-standing cabinets, bookcases, and wall shelves	
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy objects on high shelves	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aquariums and other potentially hazardous displays located near seating areas	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured TV monitors	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured wall-mounted objects	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hanging plants above or near seating areas	
<input type="checkbox"/> Incompatible chemicals stored in close proximity (e.g., window cleaner and ammonia)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper or other combustibles (e.g., greasy rags) stored near heat source	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other threats/hazards (list):	

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.9 (Continued)

Identifying School-Based Threats/Hazards—Building Checklist

Area:	Date Surveyed:
Threat/Hazard	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Extended, unsupported roof spans	
<input type="checkbox"/> Large windows or panes of glass, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not composed of safety glass <input type="checkbox"/> Located near exits or evacuation routes 	
<input type="checkbox"/> Suspended ceilings and light fixtures	
<input type="checkbox"/> Incompatible chemicals stored in close proximity or not stored to withstand falling and breaking	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials located in areas that do not have warning signs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper or other combustibles (e.g., greasy rags) stored near heat source	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured heavy or unstable items, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Portable room dividers <input type="checkbox"/> Appliances (e.g., water heaters, space heaters, microwave ovens) <input type="checkbox"/> Filing cabinets, bookcases, and wall shelves <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Vending machines <input type="checkbox"/> TV monitors <input type="checkbox"/> Wall-mounted objects <input type="checkbox"/> Aquariums <input type="checkbox"/> Table lamps 	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured fire extinguishers or fire extinguishers that require recharging	
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrical equipment	
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy objects on high shelves	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hanging plants above or near seating areas	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other threats/hazards (list):	

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.9 (Continued)

Identifying School-Based Threats/Hazards—School Grounds Checklist

Area:		Date Surveyed:
Threat/Hazard		Comments
School Building: <input type="checkbox"/> Long, unsupported roof spans <input type="checkbox"/> Large window panes (especially over exits) <input type="checkbox"/> Heating and air conditioning units <input type="checkbox"/> Overhangs <input type="checkbox"/> Trees or shrubs that require pruning <input type="checkbox"/> Other hazards (list):		
Other Structures: <input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured portable structures <input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured siding or roofing materials <input type="checkbox"/> Incompatible chemical storage <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate ventilation <input type="checkbox"/> Other threats/hazards (list):		
Playground: <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment in need of repair <input type="checkbox"/> Rocks or other material that could cause injury <input type="checkbox"/> Fences in need of repair <input type="checkbox"/> Exposed nails, screws, or bolts <input type="checkbox"/> Other threats/hazards (list):		

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.9 (Continued)

Identifying School-Based Hazards/Threats—School Grounds Checklist (Continued)

Area:	Date Surveyed:
Hazard/Threat	Comments
School Grounds/Neighborhood: <input type="checkbox"/> Trees or shrubs that present a fire or wind threat/hazard <input type="checkbox"/> Streams in close proximity <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical wires <input type="checkbox"/> Gasoline or propane tanks <input type="checkbox"/> Natural gas lines <input type="checkbox"/> Fences in need of repair <input type="checkbox"/> Other threats/hazards (list):	

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.10

Analyzing the Threats/Hazards

- What are the most likely threats/hazards?
- What threats/hazards are of most concern?
- What capabilities are needed to prepare for those threats/hazards?
- What are the potential consequences?



 **FEMA**  Visual 3.10
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

When analyzing your natural threats and hazards, consider:

- **What are the most likely threats and hazards?** Use your research and background information to eliminate some hazards and threats from consideration.
- **What threats and hazards are of most concern?** Give each natural hazard or threat context—time, season, location, community factors. Use these factors to focus on those threats and hazards that present the greatest risk.
- **What capabilities does your school need to prepare for those threats and hazards?** Consider resources, training and exercises, and mitigation activities to prepare your school for each threat or hazard.
- **What are the potential consequences?** For each threat or hazard, estimate and document the impact to the school. How will the threat or hazard impact your school community, including staff and students with access or functional needs? How might school community members be affected when they are outside of the school building or property at special events?

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.11

Assessing/Prioritizing Threats/Hazards

- Assess the threat or hazard by considering:
 - Probability.
 - Intensity/severity.
 - Time.
- Prioritize threats and hazards.



FEMA
Visual 3.11
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Once you have analyzed the threats and hazards, it is important to assess the associated risk in order to make risk-informed decisions about how to address the threats or hazards.

Assessing risk. Risk assessment helps a planning team decide:

- What threats and hazards merit special attention.
- What actions must be planned for.
- What resources are likely to be needed.

There are several different types of assessments to consider when addressing the school environment. Each assessment process is most effective when it includes the appropriate school, first responder, and community partners.

A threat/hazard assessment evaluates threats/hazards in relation to their probability and severity. Many different aspects can be assessed: probability, magnitude, intensity/severity, warning time, location, size of affected area, speed of onset, duration, and cascading effects. Depending on the kinds of decisions and analyses the information is meant to support, planners will determine the necessary categories for data organization.

Organizing data. After natural, technological, and human-caused threats and hazards have been identified, the information should be consolidated into a format suitable for comparison. One method for organizing information is a table with the following types of information on each threat or hazard:

IDENTIFY THREATS/HAZARDS

Visual 3.11 (Continued)

- Probability or frequency of occurrence (i.e., how often it will occur).
- Intensity/severity (i.e., the extent of expected damages).
- Time available to warn staff, students, and visitors.
- Duration (i.e., how long the hazard or threat will be occurring).
- Follow-on effects.

Prioritizing. Once the planning team has organized the information on the potential threats and hazards, they will prioritize them. One option is to use a mathematical approach, which manipulates index numbers for different categories of information used in a ranking scheme. Using this approach, the planning team will categorize threats and hazards as high, medium, or low risk.

For the purpose of the following activity, we will focus on three main factors:

- **Probability**—frequency of occurrence. This can range from a near 100 percent probability to less than 1 percent probability in the next year.
- **Intensity/severity**—the impact or damage expected. Damage may range from catastrophic (hazard resulting in deaths and/or more than 50 percent of property severely damaged) to negligible (hazard resulting in minor injuries and/or less than 10 percent of property severely damaged).
- **Time**—how fast the threat or hazard can impact the public. This time interval may be minimal, with little or no warning before the hazard occurs, or there may be more than 24 hours advance notice.

The next activity presents a worksheet based on the three factors above. Schools may want to use more factors. For more information, see the section in Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans entitled “Prioritize Threats and Hazards.”

ACTIVITY: ASSESS THE THREAT/HAZARD

Visual 3.12

Activity: Assess the Threat/Hazard

Instructions: Working in your group . . .

1. Select one hazard that may impact your school—natural, technological, or human-caused.
2. Using the provided worksheet, identify for the selected hazard:
 - Probability.
 - Consequences.
 - Timing.



 **FEMA** Visual 3.12
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Purpose: This activity will allow you to practice assessing the information you have collected about threats or hazards in and around your schools.

Instructions: Working in your group:

1. Select one threat or hazard that may impact your school. (If your group is made up of more than one school, a worksheet for each school should be completed.) Write the hazard on the worksheet on the next page.
2. Determine the probability, timing, and consequences associated with the hazard.

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

ACTIVITY: ASSESS THE THREAT/HAZARD

Visual 3.12 (Continued)

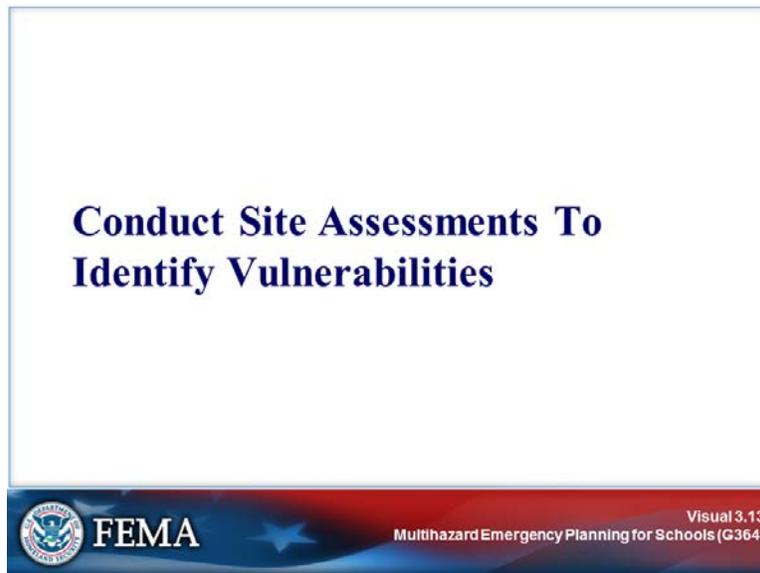
Threat and Hazard Worksheet

Threat/Hazard Type	_____
Probability	<p>Circle one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly likely (near 100% in the next year) • Likely (10–100% probability in next year) • Possible (1–10% probability in next year) • Unlikely (less than 1% probability in next year) <p>Is there a seasonal pattern?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Yes (specify when threat/hazard occurs): _____
Intensity/Severity	<p>Circle one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catastrophic (deaths; more than 50% of property severely damaged) • Critical (injuries or illness resulting in permanent disability; 25–50% of property severely damaged) • Limited (temporary injuries; 10–25% of property severely damaged) • Negligible (minor injuries; less than 10% of property severely damaged) <p>Are any areas of the school or facilities more likely to be affected? If so, which?</p>
Time	<p>Circle one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal or no warning • 6 to 12 hours warning • 12 to 24 hours warning • More than 24 hours warning
Notes	

Your Notes:

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.13



Key Points

Assessing vulnerabilities. The previous section of this unit presented a process for identifying and assessing all types of threats and hazards—natural, technological, and human-caused. This section presents an assessment process focusing on safety and security vulnerabilities, especially to human-caused threats and hazards.

This type of assessment looks at how the safety and security of the school community may be affected by features of the school buildings, surrounding structures on the property (e.g., maintenance sheds), the immediate neighborhood around the school, and the community as a whole.

It is advantageous to conduct this assessment as a separate process because it requires you look at your facility and procedures from the point of view of someone who intends to do harm.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.13 (Continued)

Areas of focus. Making your school a safer place requires bringing together your school's internal resources and those of the community to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities. Efforts to reduce your vulnerability to all threats and hazards will be more effective if they are based on comprehensive assessments. This portion of the assessment addresses three main areas:

- Identifying any physical or situational aspects of the facility that increase your vulnerability.
- Engaging people as active participants in a safe and secure environment.
- Initiating measures for addressing vulnerabilities that have been identified.

Who should participate. For this type of assessment, your team should include many of the same planning team members as for the previous assessment. However, it is important to include security, law enforcement, fire, and other emergency responders from your school and community when considering the security vulnerabilities of your school site. Also, make sure to include those who know the building and grounds, such as maintenance personnel. Students and parents should be included to the maximum extent possible.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.14

Why Conduct Site Assessments?

- Schools are dynamic environments with inherent vulnerabilities.
- Site assessments:
 - Identify potential safety and security vulnerabilities.
 - Provide a basis for planning and implementing protective and mitigation measures.
 - Look at more than just the physical environment.
 - Should be ongoing.

Visual 3.14
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Schools are dynamic environments with varying populations and activities, and this brings an inherent vulnerability.

Site assessments:

- Identify potential safety and security vulnerabilities.
- Provide a basis for planning and implementing protective and mitigation measures.
- Look at more than the physical environment. An effective assessment reviews the overall safe and secure environment including policies, procedures, resources, training, and exercises.
- Should be completed in each facility every year and should include surveys of staff and students as one of the most reliable ways to identify risk before someone gets hurt.

Your Notes:

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.15

Site Assessment Overview

- Review past incidents and threat assessments.
- Assess existing policies and procedures.
- Consider the surrounding community.
- Conduct a detailed walk-through of the facility.
- Interview key personnel.
- Identify existing resources.
- Report on findings.



FEMA
Visual 3.15
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

A thorough site assessment involves:

- Reviewing past incidents and threat assessments.
- Assessing existing policies and procedures.
- Considering how risk factors within the school, district, and the surrounding community impact security.
- Conducting a well-planned, detailed walk-through. (Consider including different days of the week and times—including evenings—for your walk-throughs.)
- Interviewing key personnel to assess effectiveness of procedures.
- Identifying existing resources that are available to address vulnerabilities.
- Reporting the findings, including:
 - Vulnerabilities.
 - Recommended corrective actions.

When conducting assessments and using the results as the basis for planning, it is important for the planning team to consider:

- **Breadth of impact**—How a threat will affect the many different school occupants, including staff, students, or visitors.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.15 (Continued)

- **Specific populations**—Individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs, such as students or staff with:
 - Restricted mobility (may have difficulty during a building evacuation).
 - Requirements for daily or refrigerated medication.
 - Short-term disability (e.g., broken leg).
 - Equipment that requires electricity.

- **School activities**—The different types of activities and functions that take place at the school, including after-school activities, athletic events, recess, off-campus events (field trips, open lunch), graduations, school dances, bus transportation, and more. Planned events are an opportunity to exercise and evaluate the procedures in the school EOP.

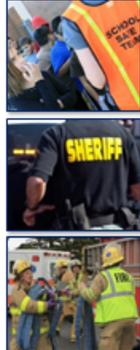
An example of considering the vulnerability of the situation is examining how students are supervised. Effective student supervision can reduce the risk of serious injury and death from almost any threat. Improving supervision can reduce the impact of bullying, gang activity, dangerous medical emergencies, and natural threats/hazards, as well as incidents like weapons assaults that are often linked to poor student supervision. Many school weapons assaults occur during fights, which can often be averted with good student supervision.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.16

Assessing Policy and Procedures

- **Examine your response procedures:**
 - Do they include lockdown? Evacuation? Crowd control?
 - Are they adequate for the identified threats/hazards?
 - Are they easy to implement?
- **Consider other preparedness measures:**
 - Emergency kits with site and floor plans.
 - Conducting drills with law enforcement and emergency responders.



FEMA
Visual 3.16
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

As part of your assessments, you should review the policy and procedures the school has in place for responding to emergencies.

- **Are they adequate** for the threats and hazards identified in your threat/hazard analysis? Do they include lockdown, evacuation, and other response protocols appropriate for the threats and hazards of concern? (For example, if you identified earthquakes as a potential hazard for your school, do you have response procedures for earthquakes?)
- **Are they effective and easy to implement?** Drills with law enforcement, fire, and other emergency responders are a good way to test response procedures. Consider conducting drills at different times, such as:
 - Lunch period when cafeterias are occupied.
 - During class changes.
 - Recess or gym classes.
 - Arrival and dismissal times.
 - After school hours (i.e., dances, theater, athletic events).
- **Are they thorough?** For example:
 - Do they take into account the needs of all individuals who may be present in the school, including those with specific needs?
 - Do they address different situations, times of day, and venues, including special activities?
 - Are there procedures for crowd control and other related issues?

Consider other preparedness measures the school can take to reduce vulnerability, such as preparing emergency kits that include site plans, or establishing standard messages for crowd control.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.17

Getting Ready for a Site Walk-Through

- Make a plan and schedule.
- Develop a systematic assessment approach.
- Prepare a sketch or graphic of the facility.
- Gather supplies.



 **FEMA** Visual 3.17
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

When planning the assessment, make sure your assessment plan considers those situational factors that result from a school being a dynamic environment. Do this at the beginning to help focus your attention on vulnerabilities during the walk-through. When planning the assessment:

- Make a plan and a schedule.
- Develop a systematic approach to conducting the assessment.
- Prepare a sketch or graphic of your school. If a prior site survey is not available, create your own maps to organize the inspection:
 - **Map outside areas.** Walk off the dimensions and include boundaries, streets, walkways, parking areas, playgrounds, landscaping areas, and other features.
 - **Diagram the building, with a separate graph for each floor.** Mark doors and windows, and include rooms, open spaces, passageways, and other security-related features.
- Gather all the supplies you will need for the assessment. A list is provided on the next page.

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.17 (Continued)

Walk-Through Supply Checklist	
Supplies	Description
Flashlight	One for each team member.
Screwdriver	A tool with a tip or point.
Paper and pen	A three-ring binder with paper or survey forms is better than a clipboard or a legal pad because it allows you to flip back and forth through pages as needed.
Digital camera	A camera for taking basic close-up photos. Have a fully charged battery with a spare. A camera with an optical viewfinder (not only an LCD screen) allows easier viewing in a variety of light conditions.
Keys and codes	You will need to be able to open up every door and space, unless it is a private office space. Have all the keys or codes, or a master key or code, or have a maintenance person available to unlock doors. Key control is a process that needs to be assessed as well.
School EOP or procedures	Any directions, advice, or suggestions provided to users of the space should be checked during the assessment to see if they appear to be valid and appropriate.
Cell phone and a list of contact numbers	Have a way to contact facility staff in case there is need for notification or questions during the assessment.
Binoculars	Binoculars can be very helpful in inspecting things from a distance, such as checking a security camera that is mounted high on a rooftop.
Laser rangefinder	Laser rangefinders can be used to quickly measure distance, such as an evacuation site for an explosives-related incident.
Moist hand wipes	Doing a thorough assessment can be dusty or dirty work.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.18

Conducting a Walk-Through

- Consider each area from the viewpoint of:
 - People who will be using the space.
 - Potential perpetrators intending harm.
- Stand or sit and thoroughly observe the area.
- Make notes about each space.
- Do not rush, even in familiar areas.



 **FEMA**  Visual 3.18
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Identifying a standard approach for assessing each area is important and necessary to ensure you cover all areas.

- Consider the area from the viewpoints of people who will be using the space and a person who intends harm.
- In each space, stand or sit and thoroughly observe the area.
- Make notes about potentially problematic conditions you observe. Consider:
 - How is the space typically used, and by whom? Are there other uses to consider?
 - Does some aspect of the space increase the risk or worsen the consequences?
 - Are there protective aspects of the space that should be noted?
 - What actions could correct or reduce a problem?
 - What emergency procedures are needed?
- Before leaving an area, do one more walk-through. Do not rush, even in familiar areas.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.19

Assessment Areas

- Neighborhood
- Vehicle and parking areas
- Outdoor recreation areas
- Building exterior and interior
- Entry and access control
- Information and cyber security
- Communications systems
- Emergency procedures



FEMA
Visual 3.19
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Be comprehensive. When conducting your assessments, make sure you address all areas. One way to do this is by working from the outside in.

- Consider the surrounding neighborhood, street, walkways, and property perimeter.
- Assess parking and drop-off areas, playgrounds, and other areas adjacent to the building.
- Check the building exterior (including all doors and windows) and roof.
- Check the building interior:
 - Start at front door and work inward.
 - Check hallways, classrooms, offices, open areas (auditoriums, gyms), food service areas, maintenance areas, and meeting room areas.
 - If the building has more than one level, have a plan to check all floors.

Use CPTED principles. As you conduct your walk-through, use the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to develop questions for each area. CPTED involves:

- **Natural surveillance:** Ability to see what is occurring in a particular setting.
- **Natural access control:** Ability to restrict who enters or exits an environment.
- **Territorial reinforcement:** Ability to demonstrate ownership of and respect for property.
- **Management and maintenance:** Ensuring building services function properly and safely, and exterior is properly maintained and organized with landscaping and plantings maintained and trimmed.

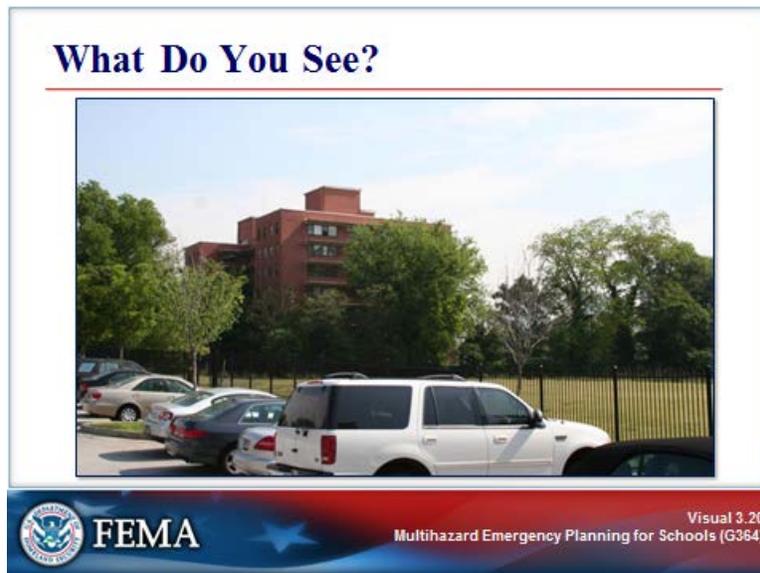
Using CPTED principles helps the team focus on how a physical environment can positively influence human behavior.

Unit 3. Understanding the Situation

Your Notes:

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.20



Key Points

Your site assessment should include outdoor spaces that may affect security, such as:

- Parking and traffic areas.
- Outdoor activity areas such as playgrounds, athletic areas, courtyards, walkways, and other areas where students or staff could be at risk.
- Landscaping and lighting.
- Building surroundings.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.21

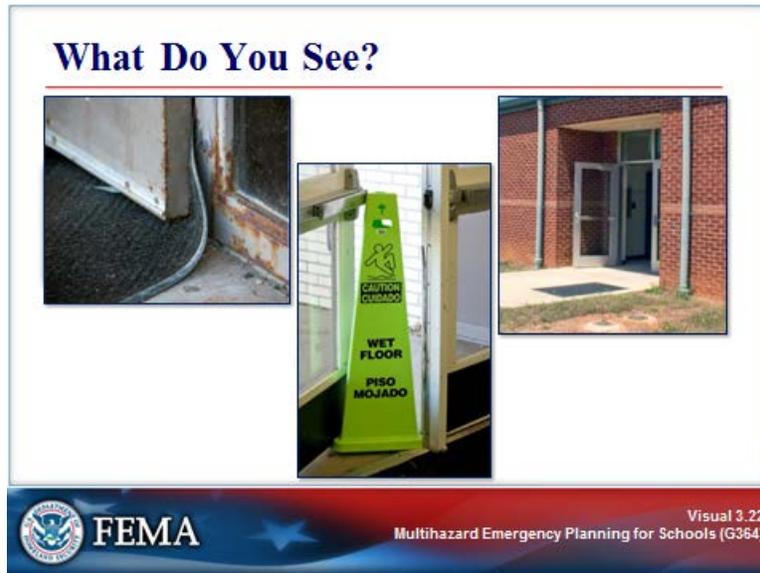


Key Points

Consider the photograph. What do you see that is positive? What are areas of concern?

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.22



Key Points

Consider the photographs. Are there any areas of concern?

The following checklist will give you an idea of the types of details to look for as you conduct your assessment.

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.22 (Continued)

Assessment Checklist	
Vehicle and Parking Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are loading, drop-off, and fire zones clearly marked? <input type="checkbox"/> Do parking lots have physical barriers and adequate lighting? <input type="checkbox"/> Can they be viewed from the building or monitored by security?
Building Exterior	<p>Look carefully at the exterior of each building at your facility. Walk around the buildings checking for any means of access, including doors, windows, garage bays, and rooftop access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can the building be accessed from multiple entrances or only one main entrance? <input type="checkbox"/> When are doors kept open, and when are they locked? Are they monitored? <input type="checkbox"/> Are windows accessible from the outside? Can they be used to gain access to the building? Are they protected? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there access to the roof?
Outdoor Areas	<p>Students spend a lot of time outside (breaks or recess, pick-up and drop-off, physical education classes, sporting events, etc.), so your school outdoor areas need to be assessed based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Surveillance or supervision. Can the activity areas be observed and monitored from the building? <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorized access restricted. Are the areas clearly defined? Are there protective barriers? Are there emergency escape gates? <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicular access restricted. Are the nearby/adjacent vehicle areas restricted to only certain vehicles? <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency vehicle access. Is there a way for emergency vehicles to access the areas? <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious activity. Individuals who want to cause harm often engage in hostile surveillance on their potential targets. School staff members need to pay serious attention to anyone attempting to photograph your school. Someone examining your school (or looking closely at the people arriving at or leaving from your building) should be cause for concern. If you spot someone you believe may be doing surveillance on your facility, contact law enforcement immediately.
Access Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the number of access points limited, while still maintaining compliance with fire codes? <input type="checkbox"/> Have entry points been established where a staff member has the ability to visually identify the person entering. <input type="checkbox"/> Are there physical safeguards such as locks on all doors (interior and exterior), windows with quick-release capability, and safe areas for assembly and refuge?

CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.22 (Continued)

Assessment Checklist (Continued)	
Entry and Access Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Signage to preferred entrances—Do signs spell out access and check-in requirements? <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled number of unlocked entrances—Are the unlocked areas limited to only those required? Can internal doors be secured until visitors confer with a staff member to gain entry? <input type="checkbox"/> Alarms or other notification systems—Can outdoor areas receive notifications? Are alarms functioning? <input type="checkbox"/> Access control systems—Have high-tech and/or low-tech access solutions been implemented? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> High-tech: badging technology for staff, students, volunteers, and contractors; and visitor management systems, electronic access control, CCTV systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Low-tech: limiting access to certain doors, making sure the entrance is visible to staff, having a person at the front door with access to 911, assigning hall duty. <input type="checkbox"/> Locked, secured, and reinforced windows. Do windows allow observation of courtyards, grounds, and parking lots, especially from administration areas and classrooms? Do windows lock securely? Can windows be locked half-open?
Information and Cyber Security	<p>Controlling information and protecting from cyber-attacks includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive information such as building plans, response procedures, and personally identifiable information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are there measures to control who has access? <input type="checkbox"/> Is disclosure of sensitive information done on a "need to know" basis? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there controls on what gets posted to a Web site or through social media? <input type="checkbox"/> Protective cyber security measures to address potential cyber threats, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Firewalls and virus protection systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Password procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Information encryption software. <input type="checkbox"/> Computer access control systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Intrusion detection systems.
Communications Systems	<p>Being able to respond promptly, accurately, and confidently during an emergency and in the hours and days that follow is critical. When assessing communication systems, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mass notification systems and procedures. PA announcements, two-way radios, and mass communications technologies ensure timely, accurate information can be conveyed to both staff and parents during emergencies or crisis situations.

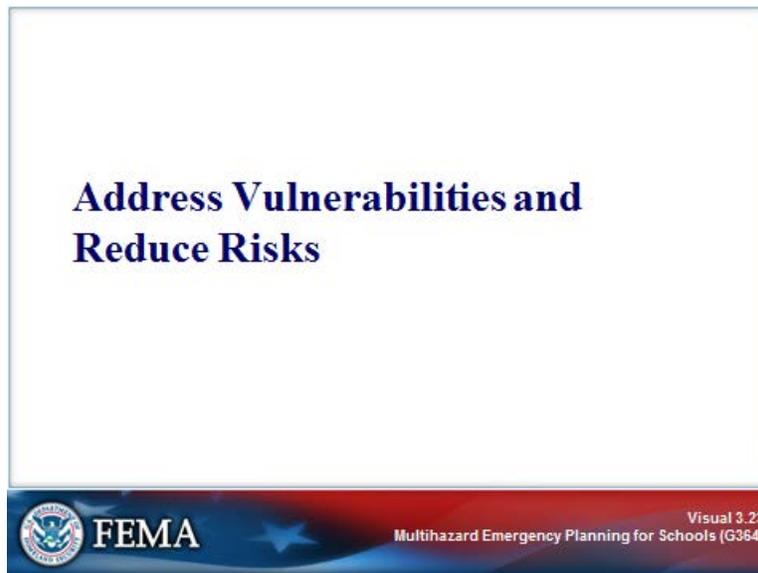
CONDUCT SITE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES

Visual 3.22 (Continued)

Assessment Checklist (Continued)	
Communications Systems (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communications system for staff. Alerts should be targeted, provide informative and detailed content, and include specific and extensive instructions on how to behave given the threat situation at hand. <input type="checkbox"/> Communication system testing. Procedures and policies should include how and when the communication system will be tested. <input type="checkbox"/> Backup, redundant systems. Procedures and policies should include backup systems and redundancy. The backup system may be very low tech: megaphones, whistles, sandwich boards, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Communications plan and rumor control. Crisis communications plans need to incorporate external media messaging and an organizational spokesperson trained in dealing with crisis situations.
Emergency Procedures	<p>Review the emergency procedures. Have procedures been developed for the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lockdown procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Full lockdown procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Preventive lockdown procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Policy for announcing an immediate lockdown to staff and teachers. <input type="checkbox"/> Ease of implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Standard messages or commands for crowd control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does your school have standard messages established? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a plan to manage crowds including students, staff, and families? <input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do evacuation systems include: escape routes? an evacuation team? procedures to account for staff, students, clients, and visitors? communication devices and alternatives? <input type="checkbox"/> Are emergency exits and evacuation routes clearly marked? <input type="checkbox"/> Are individuals designated to coordinate evacuation? <input type="checkbox"/> Do emergency kits include site and floor plans? <input type="checkbox"/> Drills with law enforcement and first responders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are there protocols for security drills? <input type="checkbox"/> Do drill procedures include protocols for the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lunch period when cafeterias are occupied. ▪ During class changes. ▪ Recess or gym classes. ▪ Arrival and dismissal times. ▪ After school hours (i.e., dances, theater, athletic events).

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.23



Key Points

After identifying potential threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities, it is important to develop practical strategies for enhancing protective measures. If your situation is like most, the existing building structure and budgetary restrictions may limit how elaborate your solutions can be. However, thinking creatively may reveal a wide array of security alternatives that are very cost effective to address your vulnerabilities and reduce risk. Examples include:

- Using environmental solutions to improve access control.
- Developing procedures to improve security, and consistently enforcing existing protocols.
- Taking advantage of in-house capabilities to correct physical vulnerabilities.
- Combining technology solutions with simple, low-tech alternatives.
- Partnering with the community to develop shared strategies.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.24



Key Points

People are the key. Your strategies to address vulnerabilities begin and end with people—your greatest security asset. They are what make your security and safety measures work. For example, an alarm is useful only if it is turned on and people respond to it. Effective programs:

- Foster a broad sense of responsibility and security awareness among everyone involved.
- Help students, staff, and families recognize that they have a personal stake in and responsibility for maintaining a safe environment.
- Empower students, staff, and families to make a difference through observation, action, and reporting.
- Foster a climate of mutual respect.

Multi-tiered approach. School climate can be enhanced by a multi-tiered framework that provides a continuum of behavioral supports and interventions to improve student behavior and achievement. A multi-tiered approach includes:

1. **Schoolwide** interventions that focus both on developing expected behaviors and social-emotional competence, and on preventing problem behavior.
2. Interventions that target **groups of students** who are at elevated levels of risk or exhibiting problem behavior (such as bullying).
3. Interventions that target **individual students**, including traumatized youths, who are at higher levels of academic and social-emotional behavioral need and risk.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.25

Creating a Climate of School Safety

- Cultivate a climate of trust, listening, and mutual respect.
- Involve the whole school community.
- Establish clear policies on behavior, including bullying.
- Use interdisciplinary teams of trained professionals to evaluate potential behavioral threats and determine effective responses.
- Provide supportive interventions to potential offenders.

FEMA
Visual 3.25
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Remember that emergency preparedness entails efforts in five key areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Creating a climate of school safety serves as a **preventive measure**.

There is an important human element in the school safety and security environment. Schools need to maintain awareness of current behaviors and analyze past incidents as potential indicators of issues that should be addressed before they become more serious. Creating a climate of school safety involves:

- Cultivating a climate of trust, listening, and mutual respect among the entire school community.
- Establishing clear policies on behavior, including bullying, cyber-bullying, sexting, and other actions that create a negative climate.
- Setting up a threat assessment process to evaluate potential behavioral threats, determine effective responses, and provide supportive interventions to potential offenders.

A **school threat assessment** analyzes student communication and behaviors to determine whether or not a student poses a risk to themselves or others. These assessments are often conducted by multidisciplinary threat assessment teams.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.25 (Continued)

The school threat assessment process:

- Should be conducted by an interdisciplinary team of trained professionals.
- Should be supported by clear policy and protocols for exploring allegations of actual or potential violence.
- Depends on a climate of trust between youth and adults.
- Consists of evaluating a threat, reaching a conclusion regarding threat level, and determining an effective response.
- Should be ongoing so as to address potential behavior issues before they lead to unsafe situations.

Source: Vossekuil, B., Fein, R.A., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002, May). The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States. U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.26

Promoting a Safe, Secure Environment

- Educate on detecting potential threats.
- Establish procedures for reporting and investigating potential threats.
- Encourage reporting security concerns.
- Enlist parents and students.



 **FEMA** Visual 3.26
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

In promoting an environment of safety and security, it is important to balance security and safety with the mission of learning. In promoting a safe and secure environment, you will need to:

- Educate students and staff on how to detect potential threats.
- Establish mechanisms for reporting and investigating potential threats.
- Encourage reporting of safety and security concerns.
- Enlist parents and students to help implement protective measures.

For example, evaluating student supervision is an important safety and security consideration. Effective student supervision can reduce the negative impact of almost any threat or hazard, including:

- Natural threats/hazards.
- Bullying.
- Gang activity.
- Dangerous medical emergencies.
- Weapons assaults. Many school weapons assaults occur during fights, which can often be prevented with good student supervision.

In addition, people who are being properly supervised can be more quickly secured or evacuated from danger.

ACTIVITY: SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT

Visual 3.27

Activity: Safe and Secure Environment

Instructions: Working in your school teams . . .

1. Describe a practice in your school that promotes a safe and secure environment for your staff and students.
2. Be prepared to share your practice in 10 minutes.



 **FEMA** Visual 3.27
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Purpose: This activity allows you to describe a practice in your school or district that helps promote a safe and secure environment.

Instructions:

1. Describe a practice in your school or district that promotes a safe and secure environment for your staff and students.
2. Be prepared to share your practice in 10 minutes.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.28

Protection



- Use in-house capabilities and environmental solutions to correct physical vulnerabilities.
- Combine technology solutions with simple, low-tech alternatives.
- Develop procedures to improve security.
- Consistently enforce existing protocols.
- Partner with the community to develop shared strategies.

 **FEMA** Visual 3.28
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Protection involves taking actions to avoid an incident, stop an incident from occurring, or protect people from the impact of an incident. Protection should begin before an incident occurs at the school and continue during and after the incident.

For key vulnerabilities at your school or in the community, determine measures that you can take to protect against the hazard happening. Examples include:

- Using in-house capabilities and environmental solutions to correct physical vulnerabilities.
- Combining technology solutions (such as closed-circuit TV) with simple, low-tech alternatives (such as setting up a visitor screening process).
- Developing procedures to improve security.
- Consistently enforcing existing protocols (e.g., do not allow staff to prop open doors that should be locked).
- Partnering with the community to develop shared strategies.

Lessons learned after an incident can help identify additional strategies that may benefit your school.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.29

Mitigation

Structural Measures

- Use fire-retardant materials in new construction
- Elevate structures above the floodplain
- Remove unnecessary overhanging features that allow access to roof
- Strengthen parapet walls on old masonry buildings
- Construct safe rooms or shelters

Nonstructural Measures

- Anchor bookcases
- Secure overhead fixtures
- Elevate utilities above the floodplain
- Separate chemicals that are dangerous if mixed
- Install systems to allow for easy lockdown
- Place shatter-resistant film on existing windows
- Cut vegetation to reduce fire risks and improve security

FEMA
Visual 3.29
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

If protection is not possible, consider whether the effects of the hazard can be mitigated. As described in Unit 2, **mitigation** is an action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from threats/hazards.

Mitigation measures for school buildings can help address threats, hazards, and security vulnerabilities. Mitigation measures may be structural or nonstructural.

Structural Mitigation Measures: Measures taken to protect primary building structures.

Structural Mitigation in Action #1: After Hurricane Wilma, the Glades (Florida) School District was able to return students to classes while those in a neighboring district waited another 2 weeks despite having had less hurricane damage. The Glades district had switched from the traditional, manufactured-home-type model to a concrete, portable, stand-alone classroom with poured concrete walls tied to a secured foundation. The unit sustained minor damage to only one corner of the metal roof. The rest of the building was untouched.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.29 (Continued)

Structural Mitigation in Action #2: Jefferson Elementary School in Kansas established an emergency shelter/safe room from a multipurpose room that was constructed with precast concrete wall panels and precast concrete double-T beams. A unique feature of the Jefferson Elementary shelter is the protective alcove at the shelter entrance, which minimizes the potential for wind and debris damage to the exterior door and latching system. A sign at the entrance identifies the shelter as “Tornado Safe Area.” Adequate signage is critical for users to readily find and enter the shelter.

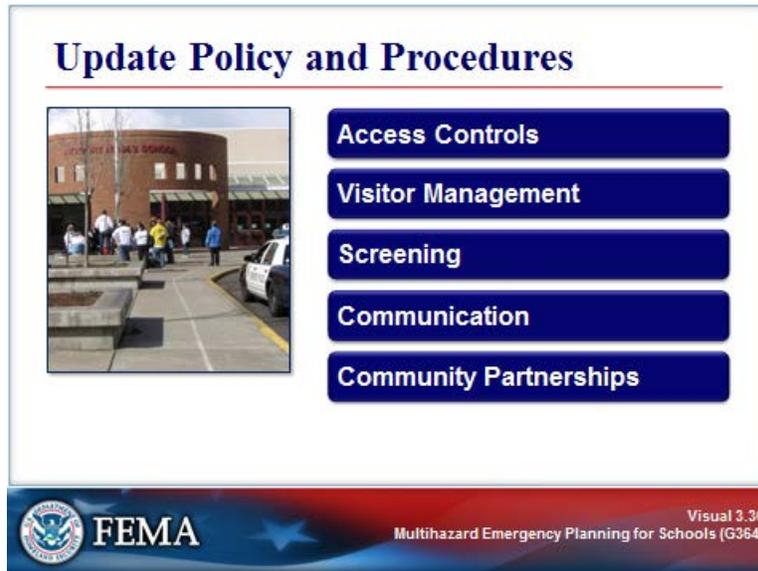
Nonstructural Mitigation Measures: Measures taken to protect any portion of the building not connected to the superstructure.

Nonstructural Mitigation in Action #1: The Redlands (California) School District has numerous portable rolling cabinets. The portable cabinets are used for supplies that are moved between classrooms. Although these cabinets have foot locks, a potential tipping hazard remains. Hence, a custom-designed strapping and floor attachment system was developed to stabilize cabinets during use but still allow for portability. Life safety is the primary benefit of securing rolling cabinets because injuries, and even deaths, may be averted through this type of mitigation.

Nonstructural Mitigation in Action #2: Natural gas leaks may present a significant hazard in some schools. Puget Sound Energy is working with the Seattle (Washington) School District to review the merits of automatic vs. manual shutoff valves in an effort to minimize the risk of these leaks. The district has installed three shutoff valves in two schools.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.30



Key Points

Based on the site assessment, it may be necessary to update your school's policy and procedures. The following are selected examples of strategies in five key areas:

Access controls:

- Install mechanisms that lock doors automatically and alarms that alert when doors are inadvertently left open.
- Educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about access control procedures.
- Use environmental control measures, such as landscaping, signs, posters, and diagrams, to channel people into the check-in area.

Visitor management:

- Set up visitor screening protocols that include sign-in, sign-out, visitor passes, and escort procedures. Require service people and vendors to abide by the protocols.
- Implement photo identifications for staff.
- Provide training in how to engage unrecognized individuals and guide them toward visitor check-in.

Screening:

- Train staff in visual weapons screening techniques to spot suspicious activity and persons carrying a weapon.
- Screen all persons who enter the school after hours.

Communication:

- Enable the main office to notify all areas of the facility in the event of an emergency.
- Be sure outdoor areas such as playgrounds can receive notifications.
- Provide for two-way communication between the main office and other areas.

ADDRESS VULNERABILITIES AND REDUCE RISKS

Visual 3.30 (Continued)

Community partnerships:

- Cultivate cooperative strategies with law enforcement, such as:
 - Joint monitoring of activities.
 - Surveillance patrols.
 - School resource officer (SRO) programs.
- Cultivate relationships with community partners for expertise and resources.

ACTIVITY: PLAN REVIEW SESSION

Visual 3.31

School EOP Review Session

1. Consider the following questions about your school EOP:
 - Does it identify natural, technological, and human-caused threats/hazards?
 - How well does it address identified threats/hazards and security vulnerabilities?
2. How do you stay informed of security vulnerabilities in your school and community?
3. Add action items to the worksheet, as needed.



Remember to use your instructors as resources!

 **FEMA** 

Visual 3.31
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

Purpose: This plan development session will enable you to work on revising and enhancing the school EOP.

Instructions: Review your current EOP and answer the following questions:

1. Review your school EOP to address the following questions:
 - Does your plan identify natural, technological, and human-caused threats/hazards of concern to the school?
 - How well does your school EOP address identified threats/hazards and security vulnerabilities?
2. How do you stay informed of security vulnerabilities in your school and community?
3. Add any new tasks to the Action Item Worksheet.

Your Notes:

UNIT SUMMARY

Visual 3.32

Unit Summary

Key Learning Points

- Identifying and assessing threats and hazards helps schools develop protection and mitigation measures.
- Conducting assessments provides schools with an understanding of areas of weakness that could have adverse consequences.
- Identifying solutions to your threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities involves determining how critical the need is and what you can do.

Related Toolkit Resources 

 **FEMA** 

Visual 3.32
Multihazard Emergency Planning for Schools (G364)

Key Points

In this unit, the following key points were presented:

- Identifying and assessing threats and hazards helps schools develop protection and mitigation measures.
- Conducting assessments provides schools with an understanding of areas of weakness that could have adverse consequences.

Identifying solutions to threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities involves determining how critical the need is and what you can do.



Useful resources related to this unit are provided in the **Assessing Threats and Hazards** and **Addressing Vulnerabilities and Risks** sections of the toolkit.

Unit 4 focuses on school EOP basic plan components.