



## Terminal Learning Objective (TLO)

Learners will identify factors involved in school bomb incidents

### Introduction

To be effective, schools must be safe and secure. In order to create a safe and secure environment, schools must enlist their community's resources and expertise.

In the wake of recent significant bombing incidents, schools face additional safety and security issues. Some school staff are concerned that their standard safety practices prior to these events no longer provide the tools they need to maintain a safe environment.

A copy of Module 2: Understanding the Threat may be downloaded here (Resources section).



### Module objectives

At the end of this module, you will understand the factors involved in the threat of a school bomb incident. Specifically, you will be able to:

- Understand the purpose of a school response plan
- Recognize the basic steps in threat assessment
- Identify warning signs of aggressive student behavior



## Enabling Learning Objective (ELO)

Learners will understand the purpose and function of a school response plan

### School response plans

Most schools are required to document their preparation and response plans for an emergency or crisis. These plans are referred to by several names—emergency preparedness plans, crisis plans, and school response plans. In this course, the term school response plan will be used.

School response plans describe protocols for many types of incidents such as a bomb threat, a missing student, a weapon on campus, a natural disaster, or a utility issue—a power failure or gas leak. An incident may affect one student or the entire school.



### Details of a school response plan

A school response plan is tailored for the particular safety concerns of a school.

Some schools may include earthquake plans while others might have plans to deal with gang crossfire outside the school grounds. In addition, a school response plan reflects the policies of the school district and the community’s emergency response agencies.

School response plans are best created with input from school staff, first responders, and mental health professionals.

### Components of a response plan

A school response plan is not a single document. Ideally, it is a series of documents customized for the different audiences that may be involved in an incident.

Some schools have a crisis response box for teachers, a detailed response guide for administrators, and master keys and floor plans for custodians and first responders.





### ELO

Learners will understand the purpose and function of a school response plan

#### Bomb incident response plan

A bomb incident response plan is one component of a school response plan. This component describes the protocols a school will use in the event of a bomb incident—the threat assessment process, intervention strategies, and response protocols.

The purpose of a bomb incident response plan is to define the roles of the school staff and the emergency response agencies that respond to school bomb incidents.

Frequently, memos of understanding (MOUs) are included in a bomb incident response plan. An MOU describes the roles of the school and the agencies that may be involved in an incident, with representatives from each entity signing the agreement.



#### ⚠ Module 2 Practice 1

#### Components of a bomb incident response plan



A bomb incident response plan is comprised of the following sections:

- Threat assessment protocols
- Intervention strategies
- Response strategies
- Response protocols
- Key roles and responsibilities of school staff
- Memorandums of understanding



### ELO

Learners will identify the basic steps in a threat assessment

#### Threat assessment

Most school bomb incidents begin with a threat. A threat is an alarming statement or behavior that raises concern about subsequent violence. Threat assessment in schools refers to the process of determining if a student poses a danger and providing appropriate intervention.

Threat assessment is centered on an analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation rather than characteristics or traits.



#### Steps in threat assessment

The threat assessment process is comprised of the following steps:

- Classifying the danger level of a threat
- Determining the threat’s credibility and seriousness, or the likelihood that it will be carried out
- Designating an appropriate response

#### Dimensions of a threat

A multi-disciplinary threat assessment team evaluates a threat in social, mental, and physical dimensions. Ideally, the team is made up of school staff, first responders including a school resource officer with a law enforcement background, and a mental health professional.

It is impossible to create a comprehensive threat assessment checklist that indicates the most appropriate response. Effective threat assessment considers the students, school staff, and community.

For a detailed plan on forming a school threat assessment team, see Bomb Threat Response (Resources section).



 **Module 2 Practice 2**



## ELO

Learners will recognize warning signs of aggressive student behavior

### Warning signs

One goal of a threat assessment team is to provide intervention before any harm occurs. Research indicates that school communities can do much to prevent violence.

In fact, most acts of school violence, including school bomb incidents, are not impulsive. Student offenders frequently share their plans with a peer and they display behavioral or emotional warning signs before the incident occurs.



### Early Warning, Timely Response

Behavioral or emotional warning signs of aggressive student behavior are described in the US Department of Education brochure, *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*.

When viewed in context, they may indicate a student needs help. They may or may not indicate a serious problem. Rather, the signs serve to frame concern about a student and may be a cry for help. The adults who interact with the student should contact the family and refer the student to professionals before problems escalate.

It is important that the school, family, and professionals work together.

For a complete description of the early warning signs and the types of support effective in preventing violence in schools, download the 40-page PDF brochure (Resources section).





## ELO

Learners will recognize warning signs of aggressive student behavior

### Categories of warning signs

*Early Warning, Timely Response* classifies student behavior that may be a cause for concern into three categories:

- Early warning signs
- Imminent warning signs
- Immediate intervention



### Early warning signs

Early warning signs may indicate that a student needs help. School staff frequently mention these signs and behaviors when referring students to qualified professionals.

These signs, or behaviors, may be prompted by situations where the student is a victim or perpetrator of violence, including bullying and social rejection. Research indicates that students who become violent often feel rejected and psychologically victimized.

When a student has a positive, meaningful connection to an adult—whether at home, in school, or in the community—the potential for violence is reduced significantly.

### Examples of early warning signs

Examples of early warning signs that may be a signal for help from a student include:

- Excessive feelings of isolation, being alone, and/or social rejection
- A victim of violence, including being picked on and persecuted
- A bully who inflicts violence on others
- Low school interest and poor academic performance
- A history of discipline problems
- Uncontrolled anger



See the *Early Warning, Timely Response* brochure for a complete description of behavior classified as warning signs (Resources section).



## ELO

Learners will recognize warning signs of aggressive student behavior

### Imminent warning signs

The behavior of students who are exhibiting early warning signs and not receiving appropriate intervention strategies may escalate into another level of behavior referred to as imminent warning signs.

These warning signs require an immediate response. They are usually exhibited as overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, staff, or other individuals.



### Imminent warning signs and school behavior

Imminent warning signs are usually evident to more than one adult, including school staff, and the student's family.

When a school resource officer is asked to escort a student to the office, typically it is because of behavior that is considered an imminent warning sign.

### Examples of imminent warning signs

Student behavior that may be classified as an imminent warning sign include:

- Fighting with peers or family members
- Destroying property
- Displaying rage over seemingly minor reasons
- Expressing detailed threats of lethal violence
- Possessing or using firearms and other weapons
- Threatening suicide or other self-injurious behaviors





## ELO

Learners will recognize warning signs of aggressive student behavior

### Immediate intervention

Student behavior requiring immediate intervention is the most serious type because the safety of others is the greatest concern.

Immediate intervention describes intervention by school staff and law enforcement that results in the immediate removal of a student from the school environment.



### Examples of immediate intervention

Immediate intervention is needed when a student:

- Presents a detailed plan—time, place, method—to harm or kill others, particularly if the student has a history of aggression or has attempted to carry out threats in the past
- Is carrying a weapon, particularly a firearm, and has threatened to use it
- Has initiated the act

 **Module 2 Practice 3**





## TLO

**Learners will identify factors involved in school bomb incidents**

### Module 2 Summary

- **School response plans**

A school response plan describes the protocols for a variety of possible incidents. Reflecting the policies of the school district and community emergency response agencies, a school response plan is unique to a school. A bomb incident response plan is one component of a school response plan and describes the protocols a school will use in the event of a bomb incident.

- **Steps in the threat assessment process**

A threat is an alarming statement or behavior that gives rise to concern about subsequent violence. Threat assessment is the process of classifying the danger level of a threat, determining the likelihood that it will be carried out, and designating an appropriate response. A multi-disciplinary team approach to threat assessment assesses a threat in social, mental, and physical dimensions.

- **Three levels of warning signs of aggressive student behavior**

Aggressive student behavior is classified into three levels: early warning signs, imminent signs, and immediate intervention.

- Early warning signs may indicate that a student needs help.
- Imminent warning signs are usually exhibited as overt hostile behaviors and require an immediate response.
- Immediate intervention is required when the safety of others is at risk and intervention by school officials, and possibly law enforcement, is necessary.

 **Module 2 Knowledge Check**