THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES (NCEF)

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities is a free public service that provides information on planning, designing, funding, building, improving and maintaining safe, healthy, high-performance schools. To visit, go to www.edfacilities.org. NCEF is managed by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS).

NCEF's Web site receives approximately 80,000 hits a month from visitors all over the world. The Web site's primary audience includes school administrators, architects, facilities staff, teachers, parents, school board members and members of the media.

NCEF provides resources on anything related to a school campus and its buildings. According to Judy Marks, associate director of NCEF, "When you build a school, you have one shot at getting it right. Our Web site provides an effective way for people to get information on best practices to ensure that school buildings are efficient, healthy and secure."

The Safe School Facilities Web Page

NCEF offers a wealth of information related to safe schools and disaster preparedness. NCEF's disaster preparedness efforts began shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Its "Safe Schools" section (www.edfacilities. org/safeschools/) addresses all components of school campuses (e.g., buildings and grounds) that help to ensure the physical security of school occupants not only during terrorist attacks, but also during natural disasters, inclement weather, fires, criminal acts and other incidents. This information is coordinated with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS). The Web page also includes news, events, resource lists, articles and publications.

The Resource Lists Web Page

NCEF's "Resource Lists" Web page (www.edfacilities.org/rl) is composed of subject-specific lists that can be "huge time savers," says Marks. Each subject area includes links to online publications and related Web sites, as well as descriptions of pertinent books, studies, reports and articles. Following is a list of ERCM-related topics:

- **Disaster Preparedness** offers recent articles related to school preparedness, including information on developing emergency preparedness plans and the use of schools as shelters in emergency situations.

- **Hazardous Materials in Schools** covers anything related to hazardous materials (e.g., securing and storing hazardous materials and environmental hazards).

- **Access Control Systems** contains a number of books and articles on access control, such as the use of cameras, student identification (ID) systems and locking mechanisms.

- **Fire Safety** identifies a number of books and articles related to fire safety.

- **Safety and Security Design for Schools** provides resources on design elements that contribute to school safety, such as landscaping, access control and construction methods.

- **State Emergency Planning Guides** consists of policies and sample emergency plans from a number of states and localities. The plans offer examples of useful policies and practices that districts can incorporate and modify to fit their own crises plans.

New! The Safe School Facilities Checklist

NCEF has added a new feature to its Web site: the Safe School Facilities Checklist, available at www.edfacilities.org/checklist/checklist. cfm. The checklist is designed for assessing and improving the safety and security of school buildings and school grounds. Created by NCEF and funded by the OSDFS, the checklist combines best practices in school facility assessment measures into one comprehensive online tool. Nationally recognized school facilities experts participated in the checklist's creation and oversee its periodic updating.

The checklist applies the basic principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), such as:

- **Natural Surveillance:** Unobtrusively observing a particular setting;

- **Natural Access Control:** Restricting who may enter or exit an environment; and

- **Territoriality and Maintenance:** Demonstrating ownership and respect for property.

Facility assessments are best performed by experienced building and safety professionals working closely with school officials. The assessment team is best led by a school CPTED specialist, and the team should include the school or district facility manager, the principal, and other personnel as appropriate, including the head custodian, a teacher, the school resource officer, the local fire inspector, and any architectural, engineering or security professionals needed. The assessment team for a new school or renovation should also include the project's planner and architect. The team conducts reviews during the schematic phase and at the 30 and 95 percent completion stages, their goal being to get things right as early in the process as possible.

Not all of the assessment measures in the checklist apply to every school; therefore, the checklist was constructed to allow online users to tailor it to their school facility by selecting only those categories and subcategories that are appropriate. The information selected can then be downloaded into an Adobe file.

More on NCEF

Whenever possible, NCEF includes full-text versions of documents rather than simply linking to outside sites that might change their content. When outside links are chosen and posted, efforts are made to ensure that these links are not broken (i.e., Web links will bring you directly to the site promised, not to an error page).

A number of useful categories for the ERCM community are maintained on the Web site:

- **News** presents summaries and links to news stories about educational facilities. They are listed in reverse chronological order, from the present to approximately three months past. To submit a relevant news story, go to http://www.edfacilities.org/ne/news_submit.cfm.

- **Calendar** lists information on conferences, courses, workshops, competitions, trade shows and press conferences, all related to educational facilities, their safety and their security. NCEF would like to include more events for people interested in safety and security issues. To submit a relevant event item, go to http://www.edfacilities.org/cal/CalendarAdd.cfm.

- **Publications** provides a list of publications developed by the NCEF. Publications are available in print and online in HTML and PDF formats. Hard copies of these publications can be requested by submitting a request with the online NCEF order form, available at http://nibs.org/pubsncef.html. Publications are sorted alphabetically or by topic (Financing; History and Research; Maintenance and Operations; Planning; Design and Construction; Safe and Healthy Schools; School Spaces and Grounds; and Technology). A search engine is also available, which provides direct access to NCEF's extensive database.

- **Construction Data** contains a number of resources related to school construction, such as the McGraw-Hill Historical and Forecast Data, and the *American School and University Education Construction Report, 2005*. It also addresses issues such as cost estimating data and tips on professional cost-estimating services.

- **Links** connects to professional organizations; federal, state and municipal resources; academic research centers; media; and products and services.

Sign Up for the NCEF Newsletter

NCEF provides a free monthly newsletter (EdFacilities Updates) to all subscribers. This newsletter contains the latest information about publications, conferences, meetings and important news about school safety and school emergency management. To subscribe, complete the online form, available at: www.edfacilities.org/newsletter.com.

For More Information

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Additional Resources

- **American School and University**
  Presents nationwide school construction data regarding construction, types of construction and spending, by types of institutions and regions. Data can be used to make construction projections for local education agencies.

  http://www.asumag.com/

- **Safe School Design: A Handbook for Educational Leaders Applying the Principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**
  This Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) publication (ED449541) offers an in-depth synthesis of current, effective practices for integrating the tenets of CPTED into school facilities planning and violence prevention programs. It further explains the causes of common campus vulnerabilities and methods for addressing them to create safer schools.

  http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/24/9d/9f.pdf

- **School Vandalism and Break-Ins**
  The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services offers a series of Problem-Oriented Guides for Police that also benefit the school community. This guide on school vandalism and break-ins provides cost-effective strategies for designing, operating and maintaining school facilities and promoting security. It also addresses how schools and local law enforcement agencies can work together to apply CPTED principles to assist in violence and crime prevention. Chapter 6 details how to establish and maintain a "safe room" within each school to mitigate some hazards.

  http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1560

- **Safe School Projects in Case of Terrorist Attacks**
  The Federal Emergency Management Agency designed this primer to strengthen schools' capacities to deal with potential terrorism through campus and facility design and construction using CPTED principles. The document also provides school districts with resources, information and strategies for guarding school campuses and their buildings against terrorist attacks.

  http://www.fema.gov/fima/rmsp428.shtm