

Virginia School Safety Inspection Checklist: Comprehensive Walkthrough

Organized by CPTED Zones and Physical Security Layers



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
Updated 2025 Edition

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Section 1: Foundation and Legal Framework

PURPOSE

The Virginia School Safety Inspection Checklist provides a systematic, zone-based process for evaluating school safety through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and modern security technologies. This assessment tool fulfills requirements under The *Code of Virginia* **§ 22.1-279.8** and supports school divisions in enhancing the safety, accessibility, and well-being of their learning environments.

LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

The *Code of Virginia* **§ 22.1-279.8** requires all public schools in Virginia to conduct safety audits annually. Those audits include the requirement for schools to conduct site-based safety inspections using a standardized checklist incorporating CPTED Principles and to certify its completion to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) – Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS).

Annual inspections remain a recommended best practice. Annual inspections may include a full inspection walk-through, a reassessment of recommended areas, progress updates on improvements, or a general identification of new areas of concern. Therefore, as of August 2026, certifications are collected annually.

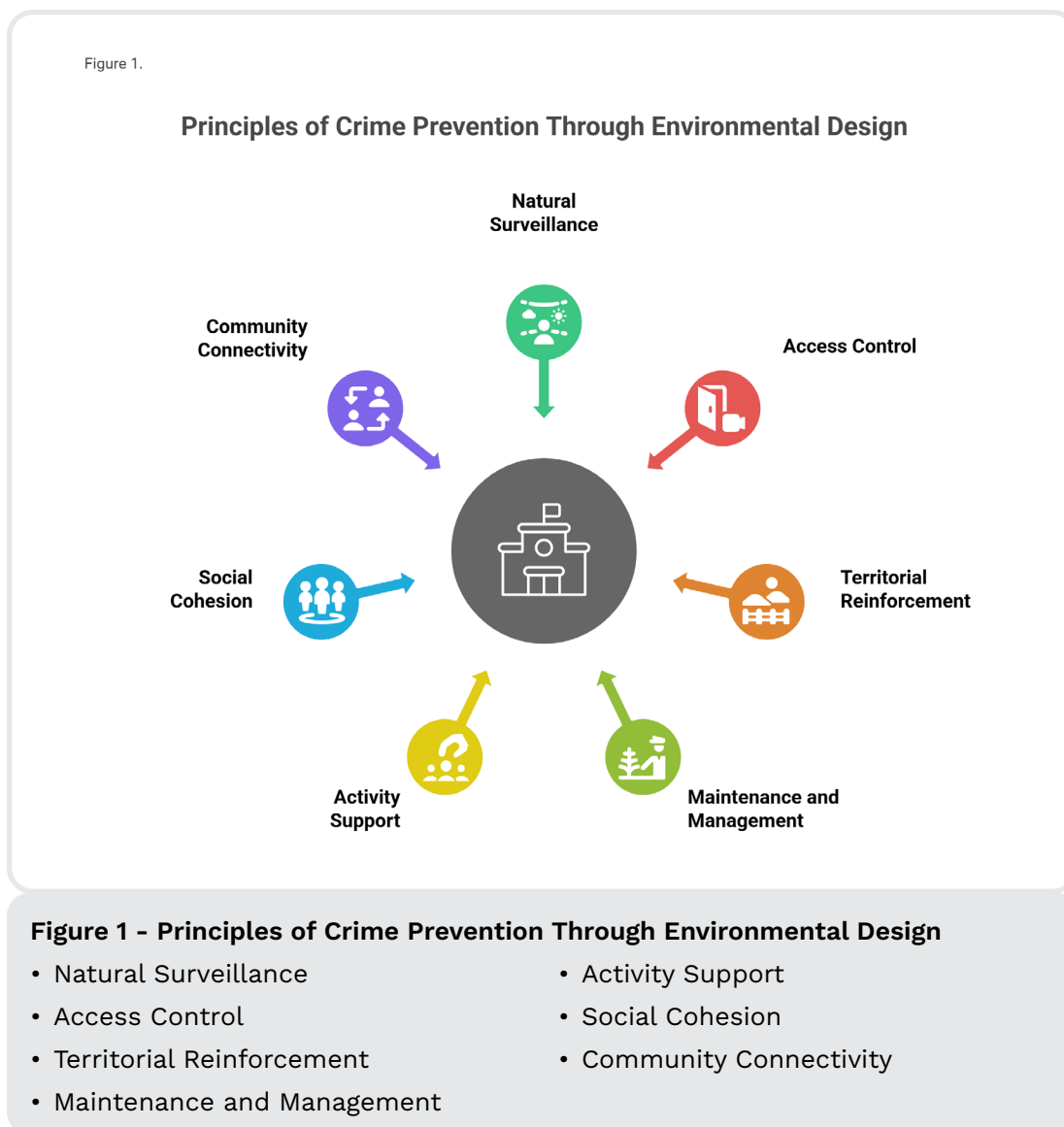
INTEGRATION OF CPTED PRINCIPLES

The checklist is grounded in seven CPTED Principles that combine both physical design and social strategies to foster safe, vibrant school environments:

- Natural Surveillance
- Access Control
- Territorial Reinforcement
- Maintenance and Management
- Activity Support
- Social Cohesion
- Community Connectivity

These principles provide both the foundation and the lens through which all checklist items are assessed.

Figure 1.



BENEFITS

- **Reduction of Violence and Victimization:** Schools implementing CPTED Principles experience fewer safety incidents and lower absenteeism.
- **Enhanced Learning Environment:** Security measures are integrated to maintain positive, welcoming spaces.
- **Cost-Effective Risk Reduction:** Emphasizing design strategies minimizes reliance on technology-only solutions.
- **Community Engagement:** Inclusion of broad stakeholder perspectives ensures comprehensive safety planning.
- **Compliance:** Satisfies legal mandates under the *Code of Virginia* and aligns with best practices.

INSPECTION TEAM COMPOSITION

Inspections should involve:

- School administrators and safety officers
- Local law enforcement (required)
- Emergency services (fire, EMS)
- Facilities and maintenance staff
- CPTED-trained professionals (recommended)
- Community representatives as appropriate

Figure 2.



Figure 2 - Comprehensive Inspection Team

- Community Stakeholders
- School Administration
- Safety Personnel
- Local Law Enforcement
- Emergency Services
- Facilities and Maintenance
- CPTED Professionals

ACCESSIBILITY

The process and documentation must consider the needs of English Learners, individuals with disabilities, and users with varying levels of technological expertise. All materials and practices should reflect principles of universal access and communication.

Section 2: Methodology

GUIDING PROCESS

The school safety inspection process is designed to be collaborative, holistic, and responsive to the unique context of each school. The following methodology ensures consistency, accuracy, and continuous improvement:

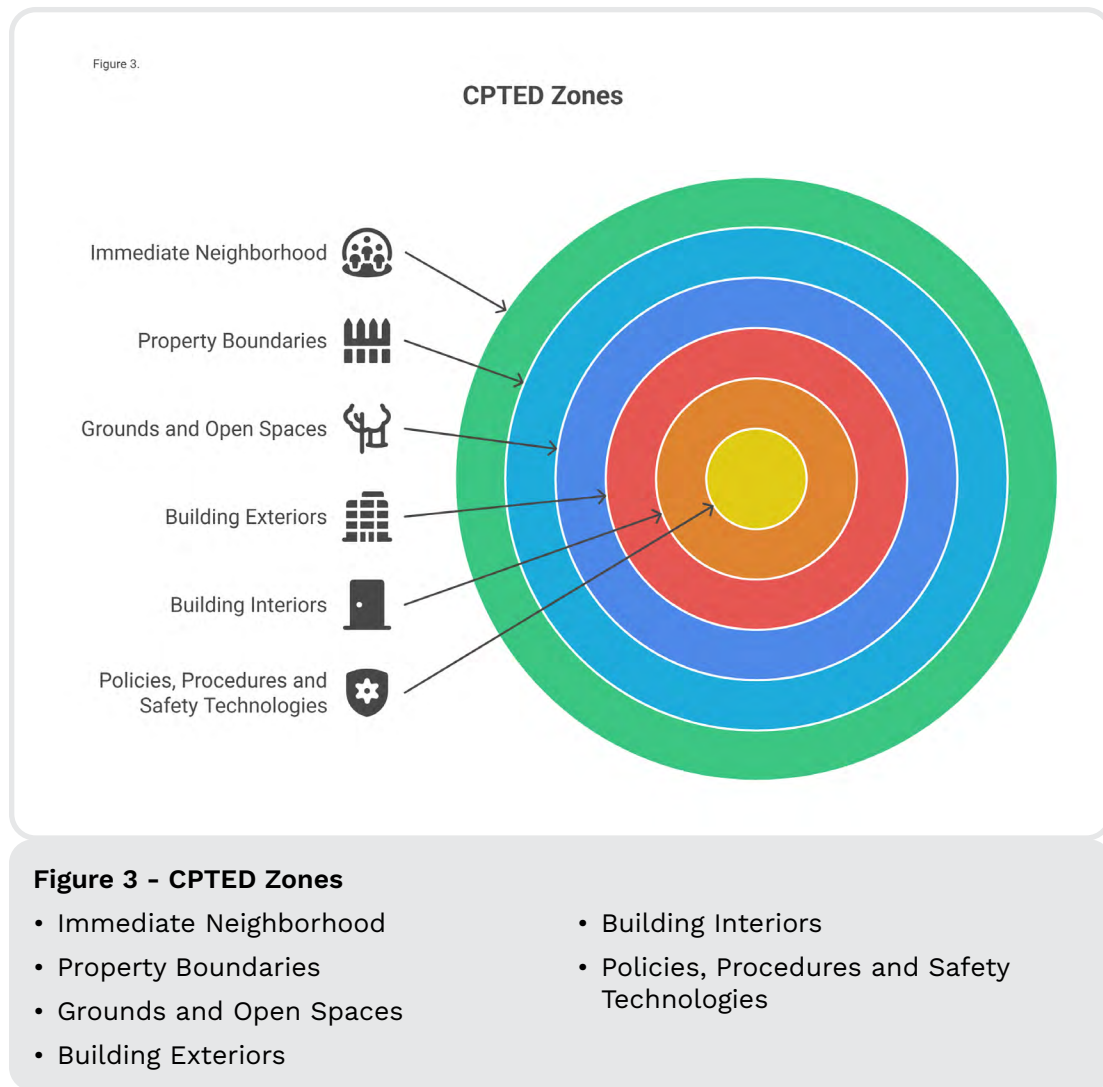
PRE-ASSESSMENT PREPARATION

- Review recent safety audits, incident reports, and hazard analyses.
- Assemble a diverse inspection team, ensuring at least one CPTED-trained member.
- Collect building plans, previous checklist results, and relevant policy documents.
- Train all personnel in the use of standardized processes and CPTED fundamentals.
- Identify any accessibility or language needs in advance.

INSPECTION EXECUTION

- **Follow the Zone System:** Begin at the periphery (Zone 1: Immediate Neighborhood) and proceed inward through each zone (to Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies).
- **Item-by-Item Assessment:** For each checklist item, apply CPTED Principles as both assessment criteria and interpretation framework.
- **Consider Inspection Variety:** Consider how the timing of the inspection could lead to varying results, given the differences in school environments depending on the time of year (e.g., weather, lighting, school on break) and time of day (e.g., variety of lighting conditions and after school activities).
- **Documentation:**
 - Use mobile or print formats as needed for team access.
 - Record findings with detailed notes and photographs.
 - Assign priority levels (Critical, High, Medium, Low) to each finding.
 - Capture status for items not meeting standards (Identified, Recommended, In-Progress).
- **Accessibility Check:** Throughout the process, assess for ADA compliance and universal design, ensuring all spaces are accessible and communications are clear for diverse users.

Figure 3.



POST-INSPECTION ACTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND CENTRAL OFFICE LEADERS

- Synthesize findings and ratings using the summary and implementation tables.
- Certify completion as mandated, following established data retention and confidentiality guidelines.
- Share results with leadership, law enforcement, and relevant stakeholders.
- Develop an implementation plan, including timelines and accountability for prioritized actions.
- Provide feedback and schedule follow-up assessments to measure progress.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

- Cross-reference checklist items with the seven CPTED Principles.
- Update procedures as legal, technological, or community conditions evolve.
- Pursue ongoing CPTED and safety training for all core team members.

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Integrate security measures in ways that support—rather than restrict—educational mission and school climate.
- Balance technology solutions with design and behavioral strategies.
- Promote equity by addressing barriers faced by vulnerable populations.
- Document all recommendations, adjustments, and rationales for future audits and assessments.

PRIORITY SYSTEM

The priority system outlined in this checklist—identifying items as Critical, High, Medium, or Low—is provided as a baseline framework to assist in organizing and addressing safety findings. **Local school divisions are encouraged to develop and adopt their own priority schedules and response timelines based on local needs, resources, and risk assessments.**

This priority rating system is intended as a guide and does **not represent a mandatory or prescriptive standard**. Each division should adjust and customize the schedule and definitions to best fit their organizational practices, operational realities, and stakeholder input.

Ultimately, the responsibility for setting corrective action timelines and intervention priorities rests with the school division's leadership and safety audit committee. Regular review of local conditions and professional judgment should inform all final decisions regarding the urgency and implementation of corrective actions.

- Critical – Address Immediately
- High – Address Within One Week
- Medium – Address Within a Few Months
- Low – Future Consideration as Resources are available

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY PRIORITY LEVELS

1 Critical – Immediate (hours to 1 day)

- **Unsecured Main Entrance:** Main entry access control system is malfunctioning and cannot lock during a lockdown. *Immediate risk of unauthorized access; students and staff are vulnerable during emergencies.*
- **Blocked Fire Exit:** Emergency exit door is obstructed by stacked furniture, preventing rapid evacuation.
- **Inoperable Fire Alarm:** The building's primary fire alarm fails to activate during a scheduled test.

2 High – Promptly (1 to 7 days)

- **Broken Exterior Lighting:** Multiple security lights along school walkways and parking areas are out, creating dark zones, but there is no immediate history of incidents.
- **Damaged Perimeter Fencing:** A section of chain-link fence is bent and can be easily bypassed, though gates remain secure and regular patrols occur.
- **Obstructed Security Camera:** A tree has grown to block the view of a critical surveillance camera spot, but footage remains available from adjacent cameras.

3 Medium – Routine maintenance (weeks to a few months)

- **Outdated Emergency Maps:** Evacuation maps in some classrooms do not reflect recent renovations, though staff are aware of current routes.
- **Worn “Drug-Free School Zone” Signs:** Required signage at the property edge is faded but faintly legible; local law enforcement confirms ongoing awareness.
- **Accessibility Improvements Needed:** Interior hallways are only minimally compliant with ADA standards, e.g., signage lacks Braille, but alternate accessible routes are present.

4 Low – As resources become available

- **Cosmetic Landscaping Gaps:** Shrubs near the front entrance exceed the recommended height, but do not block sight lines or entrances and pose no crime opportunity.

- **Single-Classroom Minor Repairs:** One classroom door closer is noisy but fully functional and secure.
- **Optional Technology Upgrade:** Considering the addition of digital visitor management kiosks for convenience, while manual systems are compliant and functioning well.

QUICK REFERENCE TABLE: SAMPLE PRIORITY SCENARIOS

PRIORITY	EXAMPLE SCENARIO	REQUIRED ACTION
Critical	Fire exit blocked by furniture; main entry cannot be locked	Immediate (hours to 1 day)
High	Perimeter fence section is down; walkway lighting out	Promptly (1 to 7 days)
Medium	Old evacuation maps; faded zone signage	Routine maintenance (weeks to a few months)
Low	Tall shrubs, non-urgent minor repairs, optional kiosk	As resources become available

***Tip:** Teams should always use professional judgment and consult with school leadership or local law enforcement when in doubt about the severity or urgency of an issue. Regular review of these examples during team training promotes consistent and defensible prioritization.*

INSPECTION CHECKLIST STATUTORY SIGNAGE ITEMS

During safety inspections, verify that:

- **Drug-Free School Zone signs** are posted and clearly visible
- **Gang-Free School Zone signs** are posted and clearly visible
- **Signage placement** meets legal requirements for enhanced penalty zones
- **Sign condition** is maintained and readable
- **Coverage area** includes all required locations (1,000-foot radius considerations)

LEGAL COMPLIANCE NOTES

Enhanced Penalties: Both statutes provide for enhanced criminal penalties when violations occur within the designated zones around school property.

Geographic Scope: The 1,000-foot radius requirement extends protection beyond immediate school property to surrounding public areas.

Multiple Violations: Activities may be prosecuted under both the enhanced penalty statutes and other applicable laws, with penalties served consecutively.

Documentation: Proper signage and zone documentation support law enforcement efforts and legal proceedings.

Legal Disclaimer: *This information is provided for reference purposes. Schools should consult with legal counsel for specific compliance requirements and implementation guidance. The complete text of these statutes can be found in the Code of Virginia.*

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Site-Specific Considerations: Recommendations for best practices included in this document are general in nature. The unique environment and construction of each school being examined must be considered to ensure compliance with all applicable fire codes and other building codes.

Team Preparation: Personnel should be trained in their specific responsibilities, what they are looking for, and the process to be used to complete the checklist. It is essential that all personnel use the same standardized process to complete the assessment.

Inspection Methodology: The recommended approach for conducting the walk-through is an outward-in process that begins at the periphery of the property and works systematically inward through each security zone.

Safety Audit Committee: The *Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.8* mandates that schools establish a school safety audit committee that includes representatives from various emergency services disciplines to ensure comprehensive evaluation and coordinated response planning.

DOCUMENT USE AND RETENTION

Confidentiality: This completed checklist is for division use only and should be retained per local procedures and in accordance with the *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-3705.2.

Certification: The division designee will certify completion to DCJS as part of the Division Safety Audit.

Training Resources: The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services offers comprehensive CPTED training courses.

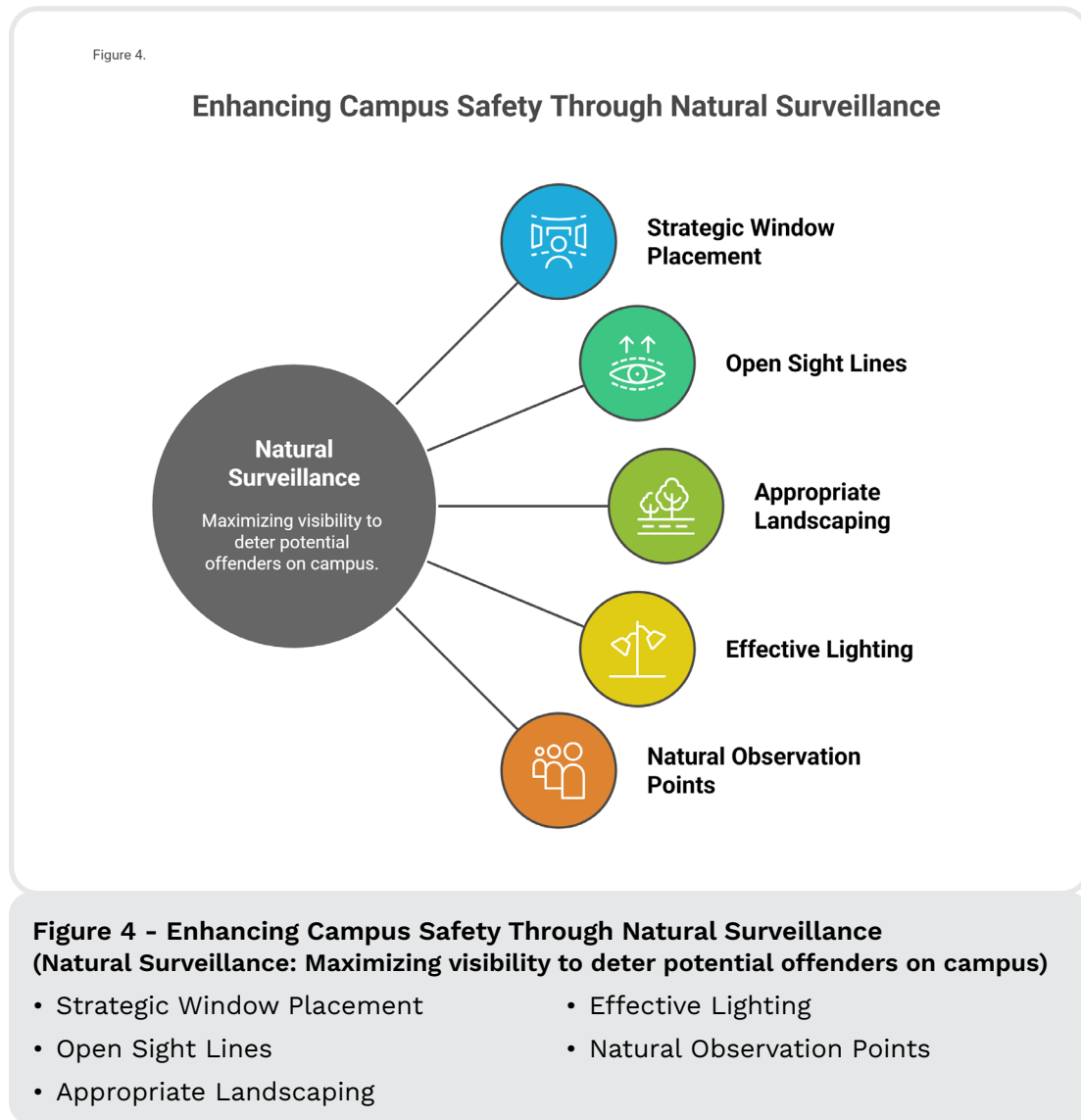
For information: www.dcjs.virginia.gov or safetyaudit@dcjs.virginia.gov.

This assessment tool aligns with current best practices in school safety while fulfilling Virginia's statutory requirements for evidence-based, systematic evaluation of school physical environments.

Section 3: CPTED Principles Assessment Criteria

PRINCIPLE 1 – NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

Principle: Designing and placing features to maximize visibility throughout campus areas. Potential offenders are deterred when they perceive an increased risk of being observed.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Strategic Window Placement** – Windows provide clear views of surrounding spaces.
- **Open Sight Lines** – Hallways, stairwells, and outdoor spaces eliminate blind spots.
- **Appropriate Landscaping** – Vegetation enhances, rather than obstructs, visibility.
 - Shrubs trimmed below window height (three feet maximum)
 - Tree canopies pruned above eye level (eight feet minimum)
- **Effective Lighting** – Adequate, consistent illumination is present throughout campus.
- **Natural Observation Points** – Gathering spaces increase legitimate user presence.
- **Outdoor Spaces** – Ensure recreational area access points are highly visible and observable by staff and students during daily activities, maximizing natural surveillance and clearly defining boundaries.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Can staff easily observe outdoor areas from interior locations?
- Are there hidden areas where inappropriate activity could occur undetected?
- Does landscaping support or hinder visibility of key areas?
- Is lighting sufficient for facial recognition at 30 feet?

PRINCIPLE 2 – ACCESS CONTROL

Principle: Guiding how people enter and move through the school environment while preventing unauthorized access. Creates a balanced approach that welcomes legitimate users while clearly restricting inappropriate access.

Figure 5.

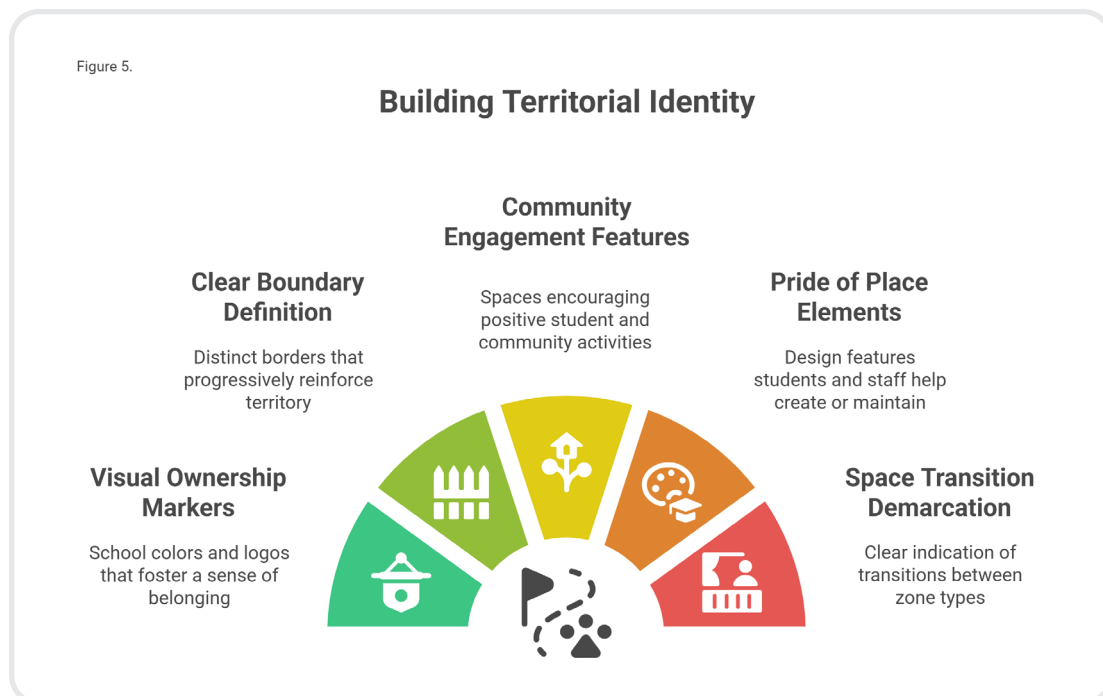


Figure 5 - Building Territorial Identity

- Visual Ownership Markers - School colors and logos that foster a sense of belonging
- Clear Boundary Definition - Distinct borders that progressively reinforce territory
- Community Engagement Features - Spaces encouraging positive student and community activities
- Pride of Place Elements - Design features students and staff help to create or maintain
- Space Transition Demarcation - Clear indication of transitions between zone types

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Single Entry Point Design** – Primary entrance for all visitors with proper screening
- **Perimeter Security** – Secure boundaries using appropriate fencing, gates, and anti-climbable surfaces
- **Zone Delineation** – Clear demarcation of public, semi-private, and private zones
- **Wayfinding Elements** – Signage and design guide visitors along appropriate routes
- **Electronic/Physical Controls** – Strategic deployment of access control technologies

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Does the access control system secure all perimeter doors in the event of a lockdown?
- Can visitors easily identify and access the main entrance?
- Do decorative barriers, planters, trees, or other hard mounted structures provide climbable surfaces to school property (minimum six feet from building)?
- Are restricted areas clearly marked and effectively secured?
- Do physical barriers appropriately channel movement without creating a fortress-like atmosphere?
- Are access control systems appropriate for the threat level and user needs?
- Does the entry road provide a straight-line approach to the main building?

PRINCIPLE 3 – TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT

Principle: Using physical attributes to create a sense of ownership and community connection to spaces. People instinctively protect territories to which they feel connected.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Visual Ownership Markers** – School colors, logos, mascots, and student artwork
- **Clear Boundary Definition** – Distinct borders that progressively reinforce territory
- **Community Engagement Features** – Spaces encouraging positive student and community activities
- **Pride of Place Elements** – Design features that students and staff help create or maintain
- **Space Transition Demarcation** – Clear indication of transitions between zone types

Figure 6.

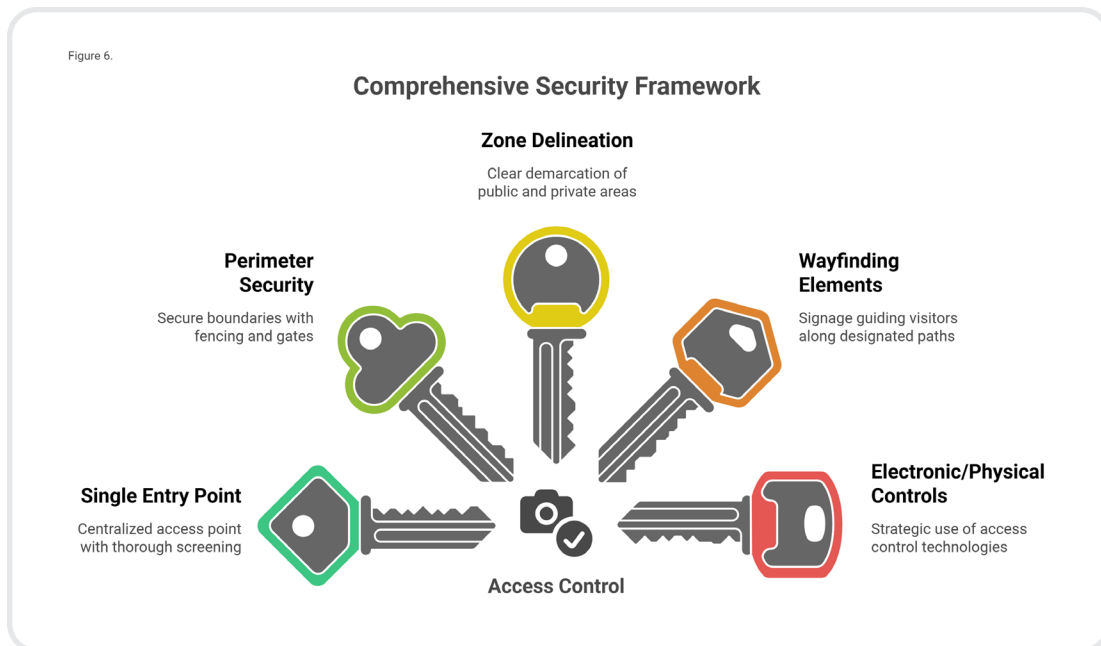


Figure 6 - Comprehensive Security Framework

- Single Entry Point - Centralized access point with thorough screening
- Perimeter Security - Secure boundaries with fencing and gates
- Zone Delineation - Clear demarcation of public and private areas
- Wayfinding Elements - Signage guiding visitors along designated paths
- Electronic/Physical Controls - Strategic use of access control technologies

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Do spaces clearly belong to and reflect the school community?
- Are property boundaries obvious to both users and potential intruders?
- Do design elements encourage positive use and community investment?
- Are there opportunities for students and staff to personalize and care for spaces?

PRINCIPLE 4 – MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Principle: Well-maintained facilities signal active management and care, while neglected environments can invite disorder and criminal activity. This is often overlooked, but it is critical for CPTED effectiveness.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Regular Upkeep Protocols** – Systems for prompt repair of infrastructure and security features

- **Rapid Response to Disorder** – Immediate addressing of graffiti, vandalism, and damage
- **Landscape Management** – Vegetation maintained to support surveillance and access control
- **Community Stewardship** – Student and community engagement in beautification activities
- **Maintenance-Conscious Design** – Materials and features facilitate easy upkeep

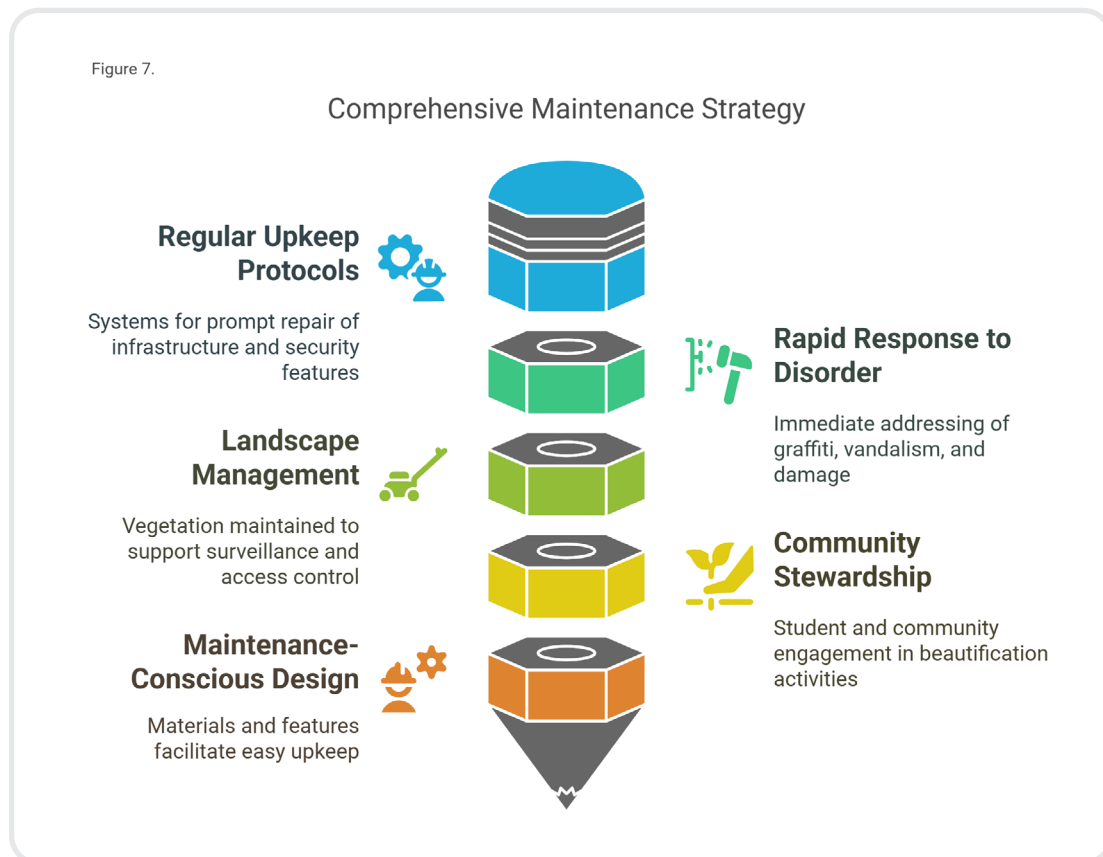


Figure 7 - Comprehensive Maintenance Strategy

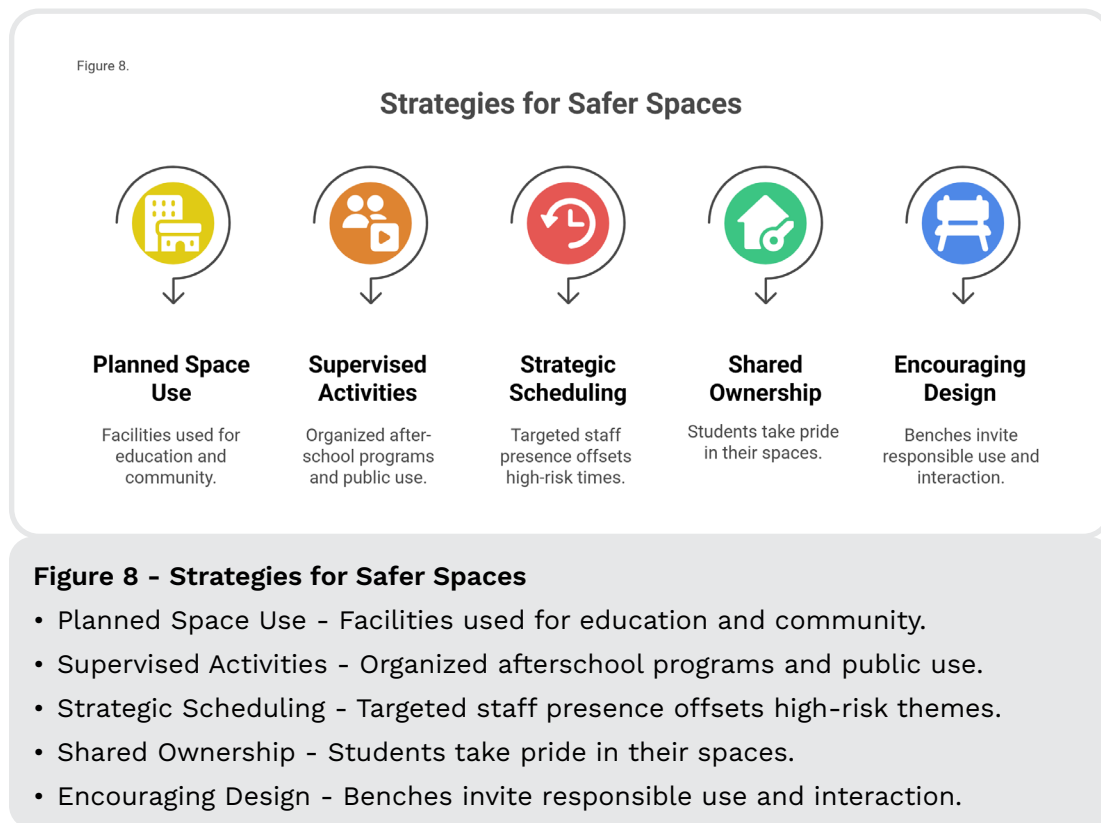
- Regular Upkeep Protocols - Systems for prompt repair of infrastructure and security features
- Landscape Management - Vegetation maintained to support surveillance and access control
- Maintenance-Conscious Design - Materials and features facilitate easy upkeep
- Rapid Response to Disorder - Immediate addressing of graffiti, vandalism, and damage
- Community Stewardship - Student and community engagement in beautification activities

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Are broken or damaged items repaired promptly?
- Is there evidence of deferred maintenance that could signal neglect?
- Do maintenance practices support or undermine other CPTED Principles?
- Are there systems in place for ongoing care and improvement?

PRINCIPLE 5 – ACTIVITY SUPPORT

Principle: Legitimate activity in and around school grounds increases natural surveillance and deters criminal behavior. Spaces that are used frequently and visibly for positive purposes are less likely to attract misbehavior. Activity Support strengthens territoriality and informal guardianship, reinforcing other CPTED Principles.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

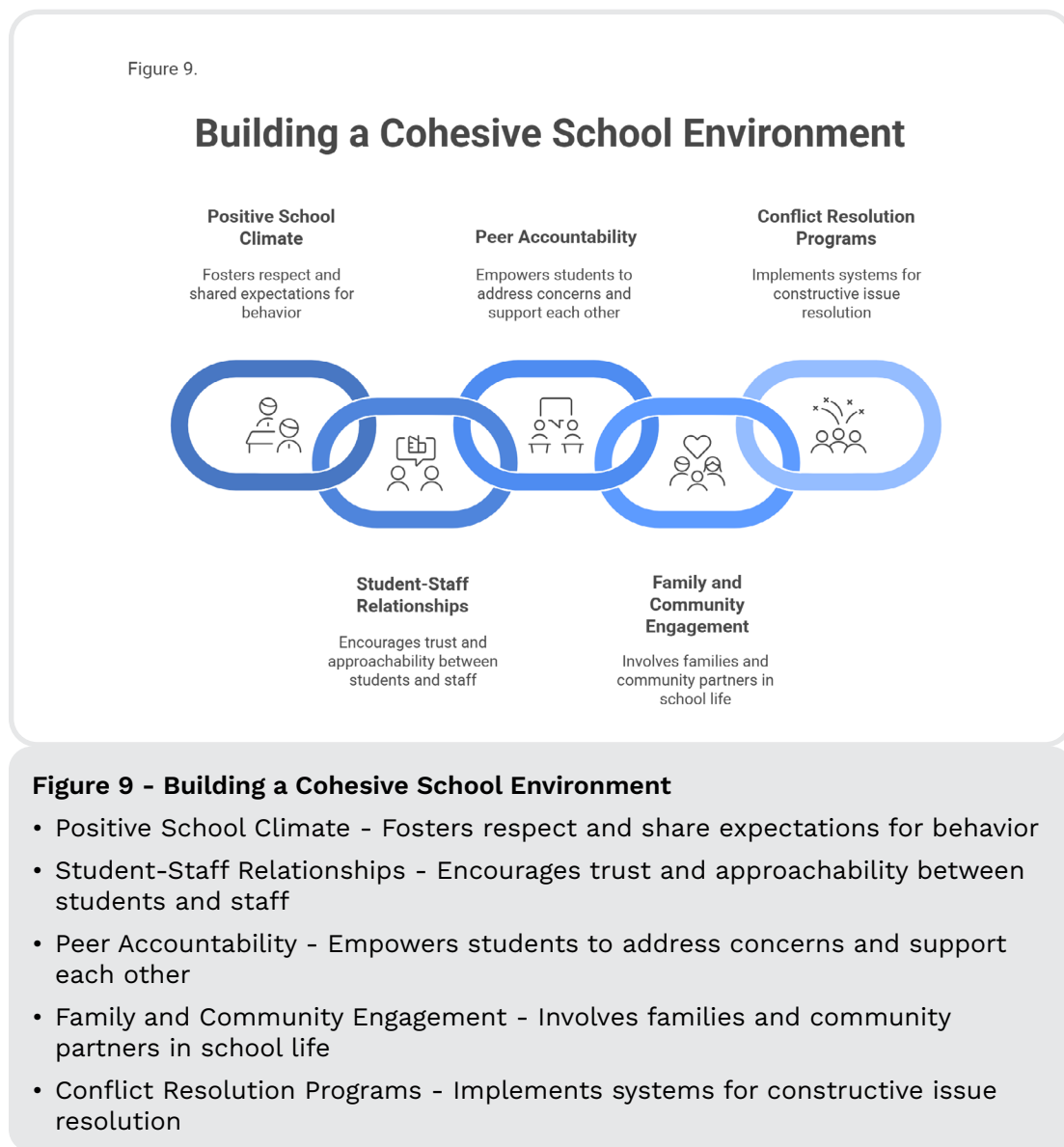
- **Planned Use of Space** – Facilities and grounds are used regularly for educational, recreational, or community engagement purposes.
- **Supervised and Programmed Activities** – After-school programs, athletic events, and public use are organized and monitored.
- **Strategic Scheduling** – High-risk times and locations are offset by targeted staff presence and scheduled activity.
- **Shared Ownership** – Students and staff visibly use and take pride in spaces (e.g., student art, garden clubs, team spaces).
- **Design That Encourages Presence** – Benches, gathering spaces, and features that invite responsible use and social interaction.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Are spaces actively used for their intended purpose throughout the day?
- Are there after-school or weekend activities that contribute to positive use of facilities?
- Are staff or volunteers present during high-traffic or transitional times (e.g., arrival, dismissal, lunch)?
- Are there areas that appear consistently unused or underutilized, which may invite undesirable activity?
- Do environmental features encourage safe and visible student or community interaction?

PRINCIPLE 6 – SOCIAL COHESION

Principle: A strong sense of connection, trust, and mutual responsibility among students, staff, and community members creates a culture of safety and respect. Social Cohesion reduces fear, increases guardianship, and supports early intervention when concerns arise, making it a foundational element of CPTED in school environments.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Positive School Climate** – Culture promotes respect, inclusion, and shared expectations for behavior.
- **Student-Staff Relationships** – Staff are visible, approachable, and trusted by students
- **Peer Accountability** – Students are encouraged and empowered to speak up about concerns.
- **Family and Community Engagement** – Families and community partners are actively involved in the life of the school.
- **Conflict Resolution Programs** – Systems such as peer mediation or restorative practices are in place to address issues constructively.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Do students and staff report feeling safe and supported in the school environment?
- Are there systems for students to report concerns anonymously and without fear of retaliation?
- Are families engaged in school activities, planning, or safety initiatives?
- Are discipline and conflict addressed in ways that reinforce relationships and accountability?
- Does the school foster a sense of belonging and shared responsibility among its members?

PRINCIPLE 7 – COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Principle: Strong ties between a school and its surrounding community enhance situational awareness, increase guardianship, and foster a shared investment in safety. Community Connectivity leverages relationships with neighbors, local businesses, and public services to create a safer, more responsive environment.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

- **Interagency Collaboration** – Formal partnerships with law enforcement, fire, EMS, and emergency management
- **Community Access Planning** – Clear protocols for community use of facilities without compromising security

- **Neighborhood Watch Involvement** – School coordination with local neighborhood watch or community patrols
- **Local Crime Awareness** – Regular review of crime trends in the surrounding area and integration into safety planning
- **Business and Civic Engagement** – Partnerships with local businesses and civic groups supporting safety initiatives



Figure 10 - Enhancing School Safety Through Community Engagement

- Business and Civic Engagement - Partnerships with local businesses and civic groups
- Local Crime Awareness - Regular review of crime trends
- Neighborhood Watch Involvement - Coordination with local community patrols
- Community Access Planning - Clear protocols for community use of facilities
- Intragency Collaboration - Formal partnerships with emergency services

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Are there active relationships with local law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies?
- Does the school engage in joint safety planning or exercises with community stakeholders?
- Are community members or local organizations involved in activities that enhance school safety or awareness?
- Are there shared-use agreements or clear expectations for public access to school facilities?
- Is school safety planning informed by crime trends or incidents in the surrounding neighborhood?

ACCESSIBILITY IN SCHOOL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Overview

Ensuring accessibility—both physical and communicative—is fundamental for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and language access regulations in school safety planning. The following section is dedicated for your instructional guide/checklist, integrating actionable best practices and practical reminders for accessible school safety audits.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS AND LEGAL MANDATE

- **ADA Compliance:** All public K-12 schools are required by law to provide equal access to facilities and emergency protocols for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities.
- **Language Access:** Federal civil rights laws require schools to offer language services to English Learner (EL) students and Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents, ensuring all families can fully participate and respond during safety events.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY: KEY FEATURES AND BEST PRACTICES

FACILITY ELEMENT	ADA REQUIREMENT	PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OR REMINDER
Entrances and Exits	At least one accessible entry connected to all approach routes	Ensure primary entry is ramped and doors open automatically or with lever handles. Clear signage (including Braille) must be present.
Interior and Exterior Routes	Walkways and hallways must be 36+ wide, free of obstructions; curb cuts/ramped transitions for any level change over 1/2 inch	Inspect for blocked paths, trip hazards, non-compliant slopes, and missing handrails.
Doorways	Minimum clear opening of 32 inches; hardware operable with one hand; threshold ≤1/2 inch	Replace knob handles with levers; remove heavy doors; add visual and tactile cues.
Signage	Large print, tactile (Braille), and international accessibility symbols on all accessible paths, rooms, and exits	Enhance all emergency and directional signage with tactile/Braille features and contrasting color.
Restrooms	Wheelchair accessible with grab bars, clear floor space, and accessible hardware	Confirm at least one accessible restroom per floor/building and test alarms/aids.
Classrooms	Desks/tables adjustable for height and wheelchair access; clear paths between furniture	Arrange classroom layouts to provide open access to exits and resources for all students.
Emergency Systems	Visual and auditory alarms, accessible evacuation routes, and adaptive communication devices	Ensure alarms have flashing lights and are at an accessible height; have backup plans for communication devices.
Playgrounds and Outdoor Areas	Accessible surface (not gravel), adaptive equipment, ramped entry points	Select equipment with ground-level activities and ramps; maintain an accessible path from building.

Reminder: Test access points using a wheelchair or mobility device and involve users with disabilities in regular accessibility walk-throughs.

COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY: LANGUAGE AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Checklist Features:

- Primary safety documents, signage, and emergency instructions available in multiple languages relevant to your school community.
- Interpretation services available for families with LEP at all safety and parent meetings.
- Communication systems (including digital alerts and PA systems) support text, visual, and multiple-language output.

BEST PRACTICES AND PRACTICAL REMINDERS

- Translate all critical safety materials (evacuation maps, contacts, lockdown protocols) into the top three to five languages spoken in your school division community.
- Post emergency and wayfinding signs in plain language and in accessible reading levels.
- Involve bilingual staff or certified interpreters for drills and training, not students or family members.
- Include visual symbols/icons on signage for “exit,” “first aid,” “assembly,” and “fire extinguisher” everywhere in the building.
- Confirm that audible alarms are paired with visual/strobe signals for deaf or hard-of-hearing students, staff, and visitors.
- For drills: Provide written and pre-recorded instructions in accessible formats before, during, and after exercises.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: ACCESSIBILITY-LINKED ITEMS

These items are highlighted in the checklist within each zone:

- **Zone 1 (Immediate Neighborhood):** Accessible sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks with tactile markers
- **Zone 2 (Perimeter/Boundaries):** Clearly marked and accessible entry gates; signage at accessible height and in multiple languages
- **Zone 3 (Grounds/Open Spaces):** Accessible routes to all playgrounds and fields; inclusive playground surfaces and equipment

- **Zone 4 (Building Exteriors):** Accessible door hardware, compliant ramps/railings, clear sight lines for visually impaired
- **Zone 5 (Interiors):** ADA-compliant classrooms, alarms with both sound and visual cues, restrooms with grab bars and accessible fixtures
- **Zone 6 (Policies and Technology):** Language access in notification systems; comprehensive staff training on ADA and language inclusion; all policies reviewed for accessibility impact

TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Train inspection and emergency teams annually on ADA requirements and language access rights.
- Include accessibility and communication checks in every inspection cycle and record barriers for prompt resolution.
- Invite feedback from disability advocates, students, families, and multilingual community members to refine accessibility efforts.

SUMMARY TABLE: ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE REMINDERS

AREA	ACTION ITEM	FREQUENCY
ADA Physical Audit	Check doors, routes, signage, alarms, and restrooms for compliance	Every inspection
Language Access Audit	Translate all vital docs, engage interpreters, evaluate PA/sirens	Every inspection
Training	Staff and volunteer training on ADA/language access	Annual
User Feedback	Solicit user feedback (students, parents, staff) on accessibility	Semiannual

Remember: Integrating these accessibility features throughout your school safety inspection will foster a genuinely inclusive and secure environment for all users, ensuring both legal compliance and operational best practice.

Section 4: Safety Inspection Checklist

DISCLAIMER: INTENDED USE OF CPTED-BASED SECURITY CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed as a flexible tool to help school divisions explore and implement practices that enhance safety through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. It is not intended as a prescriptive set of standards, except where specific items are mandated by law, ordinance, or school board policy.

School divisions vary in size, resources, and operational needs. The strategies presented should be viewed as a menu of options that can be tailored to support local priorities and capacities. Implementation should reflect each division's unique context. Absence of certain practices does *not* imply inadequacy or inferiority.

The goal is continuous improvement by encouraging thoughtful, achievable steps toward safer learning environments for all.

FORM INSTRUCTIONS

- **Zone:** Column is prefilled and organized from an outward-to-inward order of inspection.
- **Category:** Column is prefilled and is further organized to group like items together under specific subheadings.
- **Checklist Item:** Column is prefilled and provides specific information on a single item for inspection.
- **Meets Standard:** Column offers three options – YES, NO, and N/A for any item that is not applicable to the specific location being inspected. NOTE: The standard would be either as required by law or policy, mandated by the school board, or identified as a CPTED best practice.
- **Priority Level:** Dropdown menu based on the priority system outlined in this document (low, medium, high, and critical).
- **Status:** Dropdown menu based on a “NO” response to “Meets Standard” showing process for improvement or corrective actions:
 - **Identified** – The deficiency has been identified, but no action has been taken.
 - **Recommended** – The deficiency has been identified, and recommendations have been made for corrective actions.

- **In-Progress** – The deficiency has been identified, recommendations have been made, and work has begun to complete corrective actions.
- **Comments/Notes:** For any additional details or information the user finds beneficial. Option to link to photos or other external resources.

Remember: *Effective school safety results from the thoughtful integration of environmental design, community engagement, and appropriate security technologies working together to create environments where students and staff can thrive.*

Date of Inspection: _____

School Division Name: _____

School or Building: _____

Inspection Team Members (Name and Title):

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

PRIORITY	REQUIRED ACTION
Critical	Immediate (hours to 1 day)
High	Promptly (1 to 7 days)
Medium	Routine maintenance (weeks to a few months)
Low	As resources become available

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
See Appendix E for case examples of non-obvious items in each zone.						
Zone 1: Immediate Neighborhood	Visibility and Access	Visibility of school from public roadways is unobstructed				
		Public sidewalks are maintained, well-lit, and free of debris				
		Student pedestrian routes are safe and clearly defined				
		Fire lanes/emergency access routes are clear and well-marked				
		Traffic patterns during school hours minimize congestion and safety risks				
		Speed calming features prevent vehicles from having a straight-line approach to main building				
		School is easily identifiable with clear signage from major roadways				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 1: Immediate Neighborhood	Accessibility	Accessible sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks with tactile markers.				
	Community Integration	Nearby crime statistics reviewed; high-crime or vacant areas noted				
		Community and police partnerships in place (e.g., watch groups, SRO MOUs)				
		Interagency coordination protocols established with local emergency services				
		Neighborhood watch programs coordinate with school security				
		Local business partnerships support extended security awareness				
Zone 2: Property Boundaries	Premier Security	Perimeter fencing is see-through, five to eight feet tall, and in good condition				
		All gates lockable with tamper-resistant hardware				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 2: Property Boundaries	Premier Security	Vehicle barriers/bollards at key entry points (if applicable)				
		Perimeter intrusion detection systems (if applicable)				
		Climbable surfaces are a minimum of six feet distance from school building (e.g., picnic tables, dumpsters, window overhangs, trees, etc.)				
		Clear sight lines maintained along property boundaries				
	Accessibility	Clearly marked and accessible entry gates; signage at accessible height and in multiple languages				
	Signage and Wayfinding	Clear signage directs visitors to main entrance				
		"Drug-Free School Zone" signs posted (The Code of Virginia § 18.2-255.2)				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 2: Property Boundaries	Signage and Wayfinding	"Gang-Free School Zone" signs posted (The Code of Virginia § 18.2-46.3:3)				
		Speed limit signs clearly posted				
		Emergency contact information displayed at main entrance				
	Landscaping and Visibility	Landscaping allows for visibility (shrubs <three feet, trees trimmed >eight feet)				
		CPTED principles applied for natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement				
		Prickly or thorn shrubs used to discourage pedestrian traffic in unsafe locations				
		"Desire paths" redirected or formalized through design				
	Lighting Systems	Smart lighting systems with motion sensors installed				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 2: Property Boundaries	Lighting Systems	Integration with security cameras for enhanced coverage				
		Lighting provides 30-foot facial recognition capability				
		Backup power systems for critical lighting areas				
		Regular maintenance schedule for lighting systems documented				
Zone 3: Grounds and Open Spaces	Athletic and Recreational Areas	Athletic fields fenced appropriately				
		Surveillance coverage includes athletic areas and bus loops				
		Equipment storage, outdoor restrooms, and concession stands secured and monitored				
		Playground and other recreational equipment maintained in working and safe condition				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 3: Grounds and Open Spaces	Athletic and Recreational Areas	Spectator areas designed with natural surveillance principles				
	General Grounds	Exterior lighting covers playgrounds, fields, and walkways (twelve to fourteen feet mount)				
		Trash containers are tamper-proof, anchored, and frequently emptied				
		Shrubs and trees do not create hiding places or roof access; visibility prioritized				
		Maintenance areas secured and access controlled				
	Accessibility	Accessible routes to all playgrounds and fields; inclusive playground surfaces and equipment				
	Parking and Transportation	Parking lots clearly observable from school buildings				
		Faculty, staff, and students share parking areas for natural surveillance				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 3: Grounds and Open Spaces	Parking and Transportation	Visitor parking located near main entrance within office view				
		Surveillance cameras monitor all parking areas with recording capability				
		Student access to parking restricted to arrival/dismissal times only				
		License plate recognition systems (if applicable)				
		Fire lane/emergency vehicle access lanes clearly marked and unobstructed				
Zone 4: Building Exteriors	Access Control Systems	All exterior doors are solid-core, self-closing, and lock automatically				
		Key inventory system				
		Smart card/fob access control with role-based permissions				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 4: Building Exteriors	Access Control Systems	Time-based access scheduling (doors unlock/lock automatically)				
		Exterior doors are equipped with hardware capable of implementing a full perimeter lockdown by manual or electronic means				
	Accessibility	Accessible door hardware, compliant ramps/railings, clear sight lines for visually impaired				
	Identification and Emergency Response	Doors/windows numbered, visible, and reflective for emergency response				
		Digital mapping updated and accessible to emergency responders				
		Knox boxes or secure master key or digital access card storage for first responders				
		Building plans accessible to law enforcement through secure channels				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 4: Building Exteriors	Video Surveillance and Detection	Surveillance cameras monitor all access points with secure storage				
		Video surveillance cameras are mounted at a minimum of nine feet from a climbable surface				
		HD IP camera systems with night vision capabilities				
		Video analytics software for motion detection and tracking				
		Weapon detection systems (if applicable)				
		Camera coverage maps available to law enforcement				
	Security Systems	Intrusion Detection System and alarm control panel with zone-based alerts and battery backup				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 4: Building Exteriors	Security Systems	Mass notification (public address or digital alert) system with multiple delivery methods				
		Integration with local law enforcement CAD systems (if available)				
		Environmental sensors (vaping, sound level, air quality)				
	Modular and Temporary Structures	Modular classrooms secured and visually connected to main campus				
		Two-way communication systems in all modular buildings				
		Emergency procedures adapted for modular classroom locations				
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Entry Control and Visitor Management	Controlled entry vestibules with double-door security				
		Automated visitor management system with: Photo ID scanning and verification				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Entry Control and Visitor Management	Automated visitor management system with: Background check integration (sex offender registry minimum)				
		Automated visitor management system with: Temporary badge printing with visitor photo				
		Automated visitor management system with: Host notification system				
		Physical barriers (counters) with panic alarm systems				
		Volunteer stations properly equipped and trained				
	Communication Systems	Two-way communication available in all classrooms and common areas				
		Public Address (PA) System (if applicable)				
		Mobile panic buttons or apps available to designated staff				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Communication Systems	Classroom communication devices (phones, intercoms, emergency buttons)				
		Backup communication systems (satellite phones, cellular boosters)				
		Multi-language capability for emergency notifications				
		Integration with parent/guardian notification systems				
	Accessibility	ADA-compliant classrooms, alarms with both sound and visual cues, restrooms with grab bars and accessible fixtures				
	Interior Layout and Visibility	Hallways free of blind spots; mirrors or supervision at key points				
		Convex mirrors installed at strategic locations				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Interior Layout and Visibility	All lockers (assigned and unassigned) secured when not in use				
		Clear sight lines maintained throughout common areas				
	Classroom Security	Classrooms can lockdown internally with immediate response capability				
		Door vision panels made of tempered glass, clear and unobstructed (when recommended by law enforcement partner)				
		Vision panels capable of being covered during lockdown (when recommended by law enforcement partner)				
		Emergency evacuation routes clearly posted with primary and secondary options				
		Classroom emergency supply kits appropriately stocked and location is consistent so even substitutes or other personnel can locate				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Specialized Areas	High-risk areas (labs, nurse, AV) secured with enhanced locks and monitoring				
		Safety equipment in working order and location identified (e.g., eye wash, chemical shower, and fire blanket)				
		Custodial and mechanical rooms secured and properly signed				
		Chemical storage areas properly secured and ventilated				
		Server rooms and network equipment secured and climate controlled				
	Food Service Areas	Cafeteria monitored during service periods				
		Fire extinguishers of all required classes, with current inspection certification				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Food Service Areas	Cash control policies implemented and documented				
		Vendor access controlled with supervision protocols				
		Walk-in refrigerators equipped with interior safety releases				
		Emergency lockdown procedures adapted for food service areas				
	Restroom Security	Restrooms designed for surveillance deterrence (open entry, privacy walls)				
		Fixed ceiling panels to prevent concealment				
		Regular monitoring schedules documented and followed				
		Graffiti removal protocols (photograph, report, remove within 24 hours)				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Emergency Systems	Emergency signage, lighting, and evacuation routes clearly marked				
		Crisis/emergency kits located as specified in Crisis Management Plan*				
		Emergency power backup for critical security systems				
		Fire suppression systems integrated with security protocols				
		AED locations clearly marked and accessible				
	Information Security	Records and data storage are FERPA-compliant and access-controlled				
		Computer systems password-protected when not in use				
		Hard files stored in locked cabinets secured from view				

* For suggested list of items, see the DCJS “Division Guide for Crisis Management Planning”

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 5: Building Interiors	Identification Systems	Identification badges worn by all students, staff, and substitutes				
		Photo identification system with unique numbering				
		Substitute teacher badges tracked and accounted for daily				
		Visitor badge tracking system with checkout procedures				
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Integrated Security Platform	Centralized security management system consolidating all technologies				
		Real-time security dashboard accessible to key personnel				
		Mobile access capability for administrators and security staff				
		Automated alert systems with predetermined escalation protocols				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Integrated Security Platform	24-hour operation capability with backup power systems				
	Mobile Safety Applications	Staff safety app with silent panic alerts and location-based reporting				
		Anonymous reporting system for students/staff to report safety concerns				
		Parent communication app for emergency notifications				
		Real-time communication capabilities during incidents				
		Integration with existing school communication systems				
	Advanced Detection and Analytics	Facial recognition systems (if legally permitted and appropriate)				
		License plate recognition for parking area monitoring				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Advanced Detection and Analytics	Crowd analysis software for gathering monitoring				
	Cybersecurity and Digital Safety	Network segmentation separating safety systems from general IT				
		Endpoint security for all safety system devices				
		Regular security updates and patch management protocols				
		Data encryption for safety-related communications and storage				
		Access logging and monitoring for all safety system interactions				
		Cybersecurity incident response plan specific to safety systems				
		Regular penetration testing of safety system networks				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)	CPTED principles integrated throughout emergency planning				
		Zone-based response protocols aligned with physical security layers				
		Multi-hazard approach addressing: Violent intruders and weapons threats (ex. Standard Response Protocol)				
		Multi-hazard approach addressing: Natural disasters and severe weather				
		Multi-hazard approach addressing: Medical emergencies and mass casualty events				
		Multi-hazard approach addressing: Utility failures and infrastructure disruptions				
		Multi-hazard approach addressing: Cybersecurity incidents affecting safety systems				
		Multi-hazard approach addressing: Chemical spills and environmental hazards				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)	Coordination protocols with local emergency services documented				
		Communication trees and notification procedures tested				
		Reunification planning and procedures established (ex., Standard Reunification Method)				
	Accessibility	Language access in notification systems; comprehensive staff training on ADA and language inclusion; all policies reviewed for accessibility impact				
	Digital Mapping and Emergency Information	Current digital floor plans accessible to emergency responders				
		Room numbering system clearly marked and consistent with emergency plans				
		Utility shutoff locations clearly mapped and accessible				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Digital Mapping and Emergency Information	Emergency equipment locations mapped and regularly updated				
		Camera coverage maps available to law enforcement				
		Access control zones clearly defined and documented				
	Training and Professional Development	Annual school safety and security training** completed by all staff and students				
		Annual school safety and security training completed by: Food service workers				
		Annual school safety and security training completed by: Transportation staff				
		Annual school safety and security training completed by: Substitute teachers and temporary staff				
		Annual school safety and security training completed by: Volunteers and regular contractors				

**** This should include training for all required drills identified in the Code of Virginia § 22.1-137**

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Training and Professional Development	Technology system training for designated users documented				
		Emergency response drills conducted and evaluated: Lockdown procedures with law enforcement coordination				
		Emergency response drills conducted and evaluated: Evacuation procedures with multiple scenarios				
		Emergency response drills conducted and evaluated: Shelter-in-place procedures for various threats				
		Emergency response drills conducted and evaluated: Communication system testing under emergency conditions				
		Accessibility considerations for ESL students and individuals with disabilities				
		Visitor management training for front office and security staff				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Training and Professional Development	Incident reporting training aligned with the <i>Code of Virginia</i> § 22.1-279.3:1				
	Data Management and Compliance	FERPA compliance for all safety-related student data				
		Data retention policies for surveillance footage and access logs				
		Privacy policies for surveillance and monitoring systems				
		Information sharing protocols with law enforcement established				
		Regular data backup and recovery testing completed				
		Asset inventory management updated regularly				
	Incident Response and Analysis	Incident reporting procedures aligned with the <i>Code of Virginia</i> § 22.1-279.3:1				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Incident Response and Analysis	Crime/discipline trend analysis conducted and documented regularly				
		Pattern recognition protocols for identifying emerging threats				
		Post-incident review procedures for continuous improvement				
		Information sharing protocols with other schools and law enforcement				
		Media and communication protocols during incidents				
	Maintenance and Testing Schedules	Regular inspection schedule for locks, alarms, cameras, and safety equipment				
		Preventive maintenance programs for all security technologies				
		System testing protocols documented and followed				

ZONE	CATEGORY	CHECKLIST ITEM	MEETS STANDARD?	PRIORITY LEVEL	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies	Maintenance and Testing Schedules	Equipment replacement planning and budget allocation				
		Vendor management and service level agreements				

Appendix A:

Overview of Common School Safety Technologies and Systems

This overview provides school administrators and safety professionals with a comprehensive reference for understanding modern safety technologies, their applications, and their value in creating secure learning environments.

SECURITY TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

Purpose: Monitor entrances, hallways, common areas, and exterior spaces

Safety Value:

- Deter incidents through visible monitoring presence
- Aid investigations with recorded evidence
- Improve situational awareness for staff and security
- Support real-time threat assessment

Implementation Considerations: HD cameras, night vision capability, cloud storage, mobile access for administrators

ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS

Purpose: Restrict unauthorized entry to buildings, rooms, or specific areas

Safety Value:

- Control area and building access during different times
- Enable rapid lockdowns during emergencies
- Provide audit trail of all entries and exits
- Integration with visitor management systems

Implementation Considerations: Card readers, biometric options, time-based scheduling, emergency override capabilities

VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Purpose: Monitor, document, and control all school visitors

Safety Value:

- Verify visitor identification and credentials
- Check visitors against sex offender and watchlist databases
- Log all visitor activities with timestamp records
- Issue temporary badges with visitor photos

Implementation Considerations: ID scanning, background check integration, host notification, automated checkout procedures

INTRUSION DETECTION SYSTEMS

Purpose: Detect unauthorized entry during after-hours periods

Safety Value:

- Alert to break-ins and unauthorized access attempts
- Reduce vandalism, theft, and property damage
- Monitor secure areas like server rooms and administrative offices
- Integration with local law enforcement monitoring

Implementation Considerations: Motion sensors, door/window contacts, glass break detectors, cellular backup communication

METAL/WEAPON DETECTION SYSTEMS

Purpose: Screen individuals for weapons at entry points

Safety Value:

- Deter weapons from entering school premises
- Ensure safer entry screening for high-risk events
- Provide additional security layer for threat mitigation
- Support law enforcement security protocols

Implementation Considerations: Walk-through metal detectors, handheld scanners, AI-powered weapon detection cameras, “open gate” detectors

EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN SYSTEMS

Purpose: Enable rapid, coordinated lockdowns during security emergencies

Safety Value:

- Enhance emergency response time and effectiveness
- Limit threat movement throughout the facility
- Coordinate with access control and communication systems
- Provide remote activation capabilities for administrators

Implementation Considerations: Automated door locks, manual override options, integration with PA systems, silent activation modes

EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

INTERCOM AND PA SYSTEMS

Purpose: Broadcast emergency instructions and information schoolwide

Safety Value:

- Provide instant emergency communication across entire campus
- Deliver clear, audible instructions during crises
- Coordinate evacuation and lockdown procedures
- Zone-specific messaging for targeted areas

Implementation Considerations: Digital systems, backup power, outdoor speakers, integration with phone systems

TWO-WAY RADIO SYSTEMS

Purpose: Enable real-time communication among staff during emergencies

Safety Value:

- Reliable, secure, and immediate communication in crisis situations
- Function independently of network infrastructure
- Allow coordination between multiple staff members
- Integration with emergency services frequencies

Implementation Considerations: Digital radios, repeater systems, emergency channels, battery life management

MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Purpose: Send alerts to students, staff, parents, and community

Safety Value:

- Broad, multi-channel communication during all types of emergencies
- Simultaneous messaging via text, email, voice calls, and apps
- Geolocation-based messaging for targeted communications
- Integration with social media and local emergency services

Implementation Considerations: Multi-modal delivery, language translation, priority messaging, delivery confirmation, cellular dead spots

E911 INTEGRATION SYSTEMS

Purpose: Automatically notify emergency dispatch during critical incident

Safety Value:

- Improve emergency response time through automatic alerts
- Provide critical facility and incident information to responders
- Reduce human error in emergency communications
- Enable silent activation during active threats

Implementation Considerations: Direct dispatch connection, facility mapping integration, incident type classification

ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

SCHOOL SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

Purpose: Centralize safety tools including drills, alerts, and documentation

Safety Value:

- Streamline emergency and safety management processes
- Coordinate drill scheduling and documentation
- Integrate multiple safety technologies into unified interface
- Provide analytics and reporting capabilities

Implementation Considerations: Cloud-based platforms, mobile accessibility, integration APIs, user permission levels

BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Purpose: Document, evaluate, and track threatening behaviors

Safety Value:

- Facilitate early intervention before incidents escalate
- Provide structured documentation for threat assessment teams
- Track behavioral patterns and intervention effectiveness
- Support coordination between schools, families, and mental health services

Implementation Considerations: Standardized assessment protocols, secure data storage, multi-disciplinary team access

BUILDING INFORMATION MODELING (BIM) AND DIGITAL MAPPING

Purpose: Provide detailed facility maps for emergency planning and response

Safety Value:

- Support emergency responder navigation and tactical planning
- Enhance drill planning and evacuation route optimization
- Provide real-time facility information during incidents
- Integration with security systems for enhanced situational awareness

Implementation Considerations: 3D mapping, real-time updates, mobile accessibility for first responders, utility information

SMART SENSORS AND ANALYTICS

Purpose: Detect specific incidents like gunshots, vaping, or unusual behavior

Safety Value:

- Provide real-time alerts for immediate response
- Improve detection of prohibited activities in restrooms and private areas
- Enable automated threat recognition and response
- Support data-driven safety improvements

Implementation Considerations: Vaping sensors, gunshot detection, air quality monitoring, behavioral analytics integration

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION BEST PRACTICES

SYSTEM INTEGRATION

- **Unified Platforms:** Choose technologies that can integrate into comprehensive safety management systems
- **Interoperability:** Ensure different technologies can communicate and share data effectively
- **Redundancy:** Implement backup systems and communication methods for critical safety functions

TRAINING AND ADOPTION

- **Staff Training:** Provide comprehensive training on all safety technologies for relevant personnel
- **Regular Drills:** Include technology components in emergency response drills and exercises
- **User Support:** Establish ongoing technical support and troubleshooting procedures

DATA AND PRIVACY

- **Data Security:** Implement robust cybersecurity measures for all safety technology systems
- **Privacy Compliance:** Ensure all systems comply with FERPA and other privacy regulations
- **Data Retention:** Establish clear policies for data storage, access, and disposal

COST AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Phased Implementation:** Consider staged deployment based on priority and budget constraints
- **Total Cost of Ownership:** Factor in ongoing maintenance, training, and upgrade costs
- **Grant Opportunities:** Research federal, state, and private funding sources for safety technology

SELECTION CRITERIA

When evaluating safety technologies, consider:

- **Effectiveness** – Does the technology address identified safety needs and vulnerabilities?
- **Integration** – Can it work with existing systems and future technology plans?
- **Usability** – Is it user-friendly for staff with varying technical expertise?
- **Reliability** – Does it function consistently under various conditions?
- **Scalability** – Can it grow and adapt with changing school needs?
- **Support** – Is adequate technical support and training available?
- **Compliance** – Does it meet all legal and regulatory requirements?
- **Cost-Effectiveness** – Does the safety benefit justify the investment and ongoing costs?

This technology overview should be used in conjunction with CPTED principles and comprehensive safety planning to create layered security approaches that enhance rather than detract from the educational environment.

Appendix B: Drug-Free Zone Statute

Code of Virginia **§ 18.2-255.2. Prohibiting the sale or manufacture of drugs on or near certain properties; penalty.**

A. It shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, sell or distribute or possess with intent to sell, give or distribute any controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana while:

1. Upon the property, including buildings and grounds, of any public or private elementary or secondary school, any institution of higher education, or any clearly marked licensed child day center as defined in **§ 63.2-100**;
2. Upon public property or any property open to public use within 1,000 feet of the property described in subdivision 1;
3. On any school bus as defined in **§ 46.2-100**;
4. Upon a designated school bus stop, or upon either public property or any property open to public use which is within 1,000 feet of such school bus stop, during the time when school children are waiting to be picked up and transported to or are being dropped off from school or a school-sponsored activity;
5. Upon the property, including buildings and grounds, of any publicly owned or publicly operated recreation or community center facility or any public library; or
6. Upon the property of any state facility as defined in **§ 37.2-100** or upon public property or property open to public use within 1,000 feet of such an institution.

It is a violation of the provisions of this section if the person possessed the controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana on the property described in subdivisions 1 through 6, regardless of where the person intended to sell, give or distribute the controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the authorized distribution of controlled substances.

B. Violation of this section shall constitute a separate and distinct felony. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall, upon conviction, be imprisoned for a term of not less than one year nor more than five years and fined not more than \$100,000. A second or subsequent conviction hereunder for an offense involving a

controlled substance classified in Schedule I, II, or III of the Drug Control Act (§ 54.1-3400 et seq.) or more than one-half ounce of marijuana shall be punished by a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of one year to be served consecutively with any other sentence. However, if such person proves that he sold such controlled substance or marijuana only as an accommodation to another individual and not with intent to profit thereby from any consideration received or expected nor to induce the recipient or intended recipient of the controlled substance or marijuana to use or become addicted to or dependent upon such controlled substance or marijuana, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

C. If a person commits an act violating the provisions of this section, and the same act also violates another provision of law that provides for penalties greater than those provided for by this section, then nothing in this section shall prohibit or bar any prosecution or proceeding under that other provision of law or the imposition of any penalties provided for thereby.

Appendix C: Gang-Free Zone Statute

Code of Virginia **§ 18.2-46.3:3. Enhanced punishment for gang activity taking place in a gang-free zone; penalties.**

Any person who violates **§ 18.2-46.2** (i) upon the property, including buildings and grounds, of any public or private elementary, secondary, or postsecondary school or institution of higher education; (ii) upon public property or any property open to public use within 1,000 feet of such school property; (iii) on any school bus as defined in **§ 46.2-100**; or (iv) upon the property, including buildings and grounds, of any publicly owned or operated community center or any publicly owned or operated recreation center is guilty of a felony punishable as specified in **§ 18.2-46.2**, and shall be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of two years to be served consecutively with any other sentence.

A person who violates subsection A of **§ 18.2-46.3** upon any property listed in this section is guilty of a Class 6 felony, except that any person 18 years of age or older who violates subsection A of **§ 18.2-46.3** upon any property listed in this section, when such offense is committed against a juvenile, is guilty of a Class 5 felony.

Any person who violates subsection B of **§ 18.2-46.3** upon any property listed in this section is guilty of a Class 5 felony.

It is a violation of this section if the person violated **§ 18.2-46.2** or **§ 18.2-46.3** on the property described in clauses (i) through (iv) regardless of where the person intended to commit such violation.

SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

DRUG-FREE SCHOOL ZONE SIGNAGE

Schools are required to post “Drug-Free School Zone” signs as specified in **§ 18.2-255.2**. The enhanced punishment associated with this designation requires that the area be properly posted. Signage may serve as a deterrent to such activity and ensures legal compliance with enhanced penalty provisions.

GANG-FREE SCHOOL ZONE SIGNAGE

Schools should post “Gang-Free School Zone” signs as specified in **§ 18.2-46.3:3**. Proper signage helps establish the enhanced penalty zone and may deter gang-related activities on or near school property.

Appendix D: Case Examples of Non-Obvious Items in Each Zone

The following real-world case examples are designed to clarify non-obvious checklist items in each zone of the Virginia School Safety Inspection Checklist.

Zone 1: Immediate Neighborhood

CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
Visibility of school from public roadways is unobstructed	A newly planted tree line at the school entrance has grown to block the view of the building's main doors from the street. While this was intended as a privacy buffer, it now reduces visibility for law enforcement patrols. Solution: Thin or selectively trim plantings to restore sight lines without sacrificing all greenery.
Nearby crime statistics reviewed; high-crime or vacant areas noted	A school backs up to a shopping center undergoing redevelopment, but annual inspection never considers crime spikes in that zone, missing the elevated after-school risks. The correct approach is to review and document local police data annually and integrate those findings into inspection planning.

Zone 2: Property Boundaries

CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
Climbable surfaces are a minimum of six feet from school building (e.g., picnic tables, dumpsters, window overhangs, trees, etc.)	During inspection, picnic tables are discovered directly under classroom windows, providing an easy boost for someone to access the roof or upper windows. The standard is not met until these are moved a safe distance away.
Perimeter intrusion detection systems (if applicable)	The system is installed but the integration map is not shared with local law enforcement, so responders are unaware of coverage zones during an incident. Best practice: All digital coverage zones are mapped and accessible to authorized responders for effective deployment.
"Desire paths" redirected or formalized through design	Students have created a shortcut across the grass to an unofficial side entrance, repeatedly bypassing main access control. A formal solution is to redesign the path with signage and a paved walkway, guiding students past monitored entry locations.

Zone 3: Grounds and Open Spaces

CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
Prickly or thorn shrubs used to discourage pedestrian traffic in unsafe locations	School installs roses under first-floor windows but not under a ground-level science lab with frequent thefts. Non-obvious application: Identify all windows likely to be targeted and select deterrent plantings based on site-specific risk analysis.
Trash containers are tamper-proof, anchored, and frequently emptied	Trash bins are present but not anchored; after one is used to break an adjacent window, custodial staff realize the anchoring standard was overlooked. Proper assessment includes checking stability and anchoring.
Playground and other recreational equipment maintained in working and safe condition	Non-obvious item: Equipment was checked visually but not tested for hidden loose bolts; an annual professional safety audit identifies and documents any issues, fulfilling the standard and reducing risk.

Zone 4: Building Exteriors

CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
Video surveillance cameras are mounted at a minimum of nine feet from a climbable surface	Several cameras were mounted at 10 feet but are directly over a bike rack (4 feet high) and accessible by climbing. Non-obvious standard: Height must be measured relative to objects below, not just the building wall.
Exterior doors equipped to implement a full perimeter lockdown by manual or electronic means	The school has electrified locks for main entrances, but side doors require a physical key and manual lock, potentially delaying full lockdown. The standard is not met without remote or immediate manual control for all perimeter openings.
Building plans accessible to law enforcement through secure channels	Plans are available but stored only as hard copies in the principal's locked office. Best practice: Secure digital versions are shared in advance with law enforcement, not just stored onsite.

Zone 5: Building Interiors

CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
Automated visitor management system with host notification system	The system scans IDs and prints badges but does not notify teachers/staff when their visitor arrives. A compliant setup uses integrated alerts, so staff can greet and escort visitors immediately, reducing unsupervised access.
Hallways free of blind spots; mirrors or supervision at key points	The main corridor is straight, but a stairwell landing is hidden from view. Installation of a convex mirror improves supervision; annual inspection specifically checks for such hidden locations, not just open hallways.
Regular monitoring schedules documented and followed for restrooms	Staff log restroom checks every two hours, but logs sometimes show gaps or missing entries during the busiest periods. Non-obvious compliance: Supervision schedules must be consistent during all operating hours with real documentation, occasional supervisor review, and gaps addressed.

Zone 6: Policies, Procedures, and Safety Technologies

CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
Cybersecurity incident response plan specific to safety systems	The division's IT plan covers general cyber incidents but does not address scenarios where a hack disables access control systems or cameras. The correct approach adds procedures for safety technology outages and designates roles for physical security back-up.
Accessibility considerations for ESL students and individuals with disabilities	Emergency evacuation procedures are posted only in English, and not at eye level for those using wheelchairs. Fully meeting the requirement includes translated materials in the top school languages and accessible mounting and formats.
Annual school safety and security training completed by: Volunteers and regular contractors	Training is documented for teaching staff but not for custodial contractors or substitutes, who may not receive the same workshops. The actual standard requires tracking and confirmation for all personnel with any recurring building access.

Summary Table: Highlighted Case Examples by Zone

ZONE	CHECKLIST ITEM	CASE EXAMPLE
1	Visibility from Road	Tree line blocks entrance—trim for patrol sight lines
2	Climbable Surfaces	Picnic tables under windows—move six feet or more away
3	Tamper-Proof Trash	Bin not anchored—tipped to break window
4	Camera Placement	Camera over bike rack = accessible—not compliant
5	Visitor Notification	System prints badges but no host alert—not compliant
6	Cybersecurity Plan	IT plan lacks safety tech procedures—add to plan

Use these examples as practical references for inspection teams evaluating items that may be misinterpreted or overlooked in field audits. Adjust and develop additional examples as needed for unique local contexts and evolving best practices.

Appendix E: Citation List

LEGAL AND REGULATORY SOURCES

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HISTORICAL REFERENCE

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. (2013). *School Safety Inspection Checklist for Virginia Public Schools*. Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety. www.dcjs.virginia.gov/sites/dcjs.virginia.gov/files/publications/law-enforcement/school-safety-inspection-checklist_1.pdf

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES FOR REFERENCE

Professional Organizations:

- International Association of Professional Security Consultants (IAPSC)
- International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)
- National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO)
- School Safety Advocacy Council
- International CPTED Association

Key Professional Journals:

- Journal of School Violence
 - Campus Safety Magazine
 - Security Management
 - Journal of Emergency Management
 - School Administrator
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Note: This citation list includes current sources as of May 2025. Given the rapidly evolving nature of school security technology and practices, additional sources should be consulted for the most current information.

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