



GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

In 2013, the then Governor of Virginia convened the School and Campus Safety Taskforce, which focused on improving safety in public schools, and on college and university campuses throughout the Commonwealth. As a result of this taskforce, the 2013 Virginia General Assembly passed **HB 2346** (<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+ful+CHAP0609>) which amended § 22.1-279.8 of the *Code of Virginia* dealing with school safety audits and school crisis, emergency management, and medical response plans.

Effective July 1, 2013, this new legislation requires all public schools in the Commonwealth to conduct school building safety inspections using a standardized walk-through checklist. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Virginia Center for School Safety, in consultation with the Virginia Department of Education, will provide a standardized walk-through inspection checklist to be used as part of the overall school safety audit.

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance pertaining to the School Safety Inspection Checklist.

Code of Virginia Requirements

The following are excerpts from §22.1-279.8. School safety audits and school crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plans required by the *Code of Virginia* that pertain specifically to the use of the standardized walk-through checklist.

Section B. The Virginia Center for School Safety, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by this section. Such items shall include those incidents reported to school authorities pursuant to § 22.1-279.3:1 and shall include a school inspection walkthrough using a standardized checklist provided by the Virginia Center for School Safety, which shall incorporate crime prevention through environmental design principles...

...The results of such school safety audits shall be made public within 90 days of completion. The local school board shall retain authority to withhold or limit the release of any security plans, walk-through checklists, and specific vulnerability assessment components as provided in subdivision 7 of § 2.2-3705.2. The completed walk-through checklist shall be made available upon request to the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality or his designee. Each school shall maintain a copy of the school safety audit, which may exclude such security plans, walk-through checklists, and vulnerability assessment components, within the office of the school principal and shall make a copy of such report available for review upon written request.

Each school shall submit a copy of its school safety audit to the relevant school division superintendent. The division superintendent shall collate and submit all such school safety audits, in the prescribed format and manner of submission, to the Virginia Center for School Safety and shall make available upon request to the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality the results of such audits.

Additional Details for Implementation

The standardized walk-through checklist will be an important element of a comprehensive school safety audit. Additional details include:

- 1) The School Safety Inspection Checklist will be due for the first time in August 2014, and every three years thereafter. All public schools in the Commonwealth will conduct school building safety inspections using a standardized walk-through checklist.

- 2) If school divisions are using a proprietary tool to conduct these inspections that is similar in scope and detail to the School Safety Inspection Checklist, they may submit it to the Virginia Center of School Safety for approval.
- 3) Completed School Safety Inspection Checklists will be exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.
- 4) The completed walk-through checklist shall be made available upon request to the chief law enforcement officer of the locality or his designee.
- 5) The Virginia Center for School Safety will include questions about the School Safety Inspection Checklist on the annual School Safety Survey to coincide with the years that a school building safety inspection is required.
- 6) The School Safety Inspection Checklist will be available on the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services' Virginia Center for School Safety website.

CONTACTS

For more information on school safety audits or on the School Safety Inspection Checklist, please contact any of the following staff:

Donna Michaelis, *Manager, Virginia Center for School Safety*
donna.michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov
(804) 371-6506

Shellie MacKenzie, *School and Campus Safety Coordinator*
shellie.mackenzie@dcjs.virginia.gov
(804) 225-1863

Jessica Smith, *School and Campus Safety Specialist*
jessica.smith@dcjs.virginia.gov
(804) 786-5367