

Tournament Safety

Proposed by Cindi Timmons, Texas

Are you prepared for an Active Shooter Lock Down and/or – A “Run, Hide, Fight” situation during a weekend tournament?

In the words of Cindi Timmons, “I don’t know what the opposite of an ostrich is - but we cannot have our heads buried in the sand and just assume we will never be in such a situation as we travel with our students and host other schools on our campuses. Reflection and planning is good.”

FOR PLANNING AND CONSIDERATION

If hosting/running an event:

1. Consider the need to set up communication protocols with campus security and maintenance staff before the event begins. Do you have the necessary phone numbers/contact info?
2. Are you familiar enough with the campus to know where all your rooms are located?
3. At what point, and by whom, is an announcement made over the intercom and what is the messaging.
4. What if there is not an intercom?
5. If you are between rounds - what do you do when your students are moving to rooms and the adult judges may still be in the cafeteria/lounge, so they are separated from each other?
6. How do you respond to the parents showing up - alerted by nervous students via text. Parents could be in more danger in the parking lot than the students inside the building.
7. How do you secure classrooms when those in the classrooms don’t have keys?
8. How do you take care of student needs afterwards?
9. How do you take care of your staff needs?
10. If this is a MS event and you have HS students judging – the HS students are now in charge. How do you respond to those challenges?
11. Tabroom offers a vehicle for communicating with participants. What would your messaging be? Remember: All students may not have accounts or even mobile devices.
12. If you have to create hallway “rooms” - where do those students go?
13. What do you do when the lockdown is lifted?

4NG Fanatics

If attending with your own students:

1. Do you have a plan for communicating emergencies with your own team?
2. Do you have parent contact info on hand with you at all times?
3. Have you discussed emergency procedures when you are separated from your students on an unfamiliar campus?
4. Have you talked about a plan with your own administration prior to taking students to other locations?
5. If you are judging in a room with students from other schools - how do you care for them? How do you secure a space when you don't have a key?
6. Have you discussed evacuation procedures with your own students before going to another campus?
 - Do you know how to evacuate/where to go when you have other students with you?
 - Have you established a meeting space?
7. What about fire evacuation? What if the fire alarm is pulled and you haven't been given any directions?
8. Is there someone on the host campus who is charge of the emergency procedures? Who is that person? Does the host have a plan in place?
9. Do you have a checkout procedure for your students at events in case parents come and get them early? Do you know where your students are at all times (or at least have a general idea)?

Cynthia Timmons has been involved in debate for more than 40 years and currently serves as Executive Director of the Dallas Area Debate Alliance. During her 30-year career in public schools, Timmons coached numerous national and state champions and earning several coaching awards along the way. Timmons has served as the Speech & Debate community in both national and state leadership positions where she has led professional development training courses. Timmons is the Team Manager and coach for the USA Debate Team. Timmons is a member of the National Speech & Debate Association Hall of Fame as well as the Texas Forensic Association Hall of Fame. She is actively engaged in promoting the cause of women in debate and teacher professional development. Internationally, Timmons has served an elected board member of WSDC, Ltd. and a two-term member of the WSDC Tournament Executive Committee.

**Posted on FB in the Speech & Debate Coach Forum and various other locations (Oct 2022)*