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SAFETY ALERT

No. 03-09: PREPARATIONS FOR SHELTERING-IN-PLACE — July 2003

When a hazardous substance is released in outdoor air, "Shelter-in-Place" is a common method of protecting personnel from potential exposure. To be effective, this method depends on the rapid movement of personnel indoors, and the prompt shutdown of building ventilation systems to prevent outside air from entering the building. "Shelter-in-Place" should not be confused with "Lock-Down", which isolates students from an act of violence or other physical hazard, and does not include shutdown of air handling systems.

In order to quickly implement the Shelter-in-Place procedure, it is necessary that facility personnel be familiar with the location and operation of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. In order to prepare for effective Sheltering-in-Place, the Plant Manager and other members of the Security/Utilities Team should:

1. Review HVAC system diagrams and plans, and identify and document the location of all air intake vents for each building. Intake vents are typically located on exterior building walls or rooftops.
2. Identify and document the location of all HVAC shutdown switches and access keys. Some buildings may have multiple air handling units and shutdown switches.
3. Identify and document the location of all other points where outside air can enter the building (e.g. ventilation grills, gaps under doors).
4. Identify a method for determining wind direction during emergencies (e.g., flag, wind sock). This information may be useful in assessing whether an airborne contaminant is moving toward or away from the school.
5. Ensure members of the Security/Utilities Team are familiar with their assigned responsibilities as specified in the school's emergency plan.

The Shelter-in-Place procedure is described in the OEHS *Model Safe School Plan, Volume 2 – Emergency Procedures*. Copies of the *Model Plan* may be downloaded at www.laschools.org/oehs. Inquiries may be directed to OEHS at 888-455-4665.

DISTRIBUTION: All Schools and Offices