

Act 55 of 2022 Employee School Safety Training Standards

Q&A Guidance

Updated as of July 23, 2024

1. What are the new school safety and security training requirements for school employees?

Act 44 of 2018 established that all school employees in the Commonwealth receive three hours of training on school safety and security topics delineated in School Code every five years. Act 55 of 2022 amended section 1310-B of the Public School Code of 1949 and now requires all school employees to complete two hours of training annually on any **one or more** of the following school safety and security topics: situational awareness, trauma-informed approaches, behavioral health awareness, suicide and bullying awareness, and substance use awareness. In addition, one hour of annual training is required for all school employees on the topics of emergency training drills (including fire, natural disaster, active shooter, hostage situation and bomb threat), and the identification or recognition of student behavior that may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, other individuals, school facilities, or the community. Please note that training on the topic of emergency training drills **must** take place in-person; all other trainings could be conducted in-person or online. The training shall comply with the standards adopted by the School Safety and Security Committee on September 28, 2022. You may locate the standards by [clicking here](#).

2. Which employees are required to be trained under this section?

As with prior school safety training requirements, all school employees must be trained under this section. To determine who is a school employee, school entities should review training protocols for who they currently train, review board policies, examine contractual agreements with service providers, and consult with their school solicitors to meet the training requirements under this section.

3. When do the new requirements for school employees take effect?

These new requirements took effect on July 8, 2022 and are in effect for the 2022-23 school year and beyond.

4. Where can I find trainings that meet the standards?

Asynchronous online trainings that meet the employee training standards can be found on our [K12 School Safety & Security Training page](https://pak12ssstp.org) (<https://pak12ssstp.org>). In addition, a training calendar for in-person trainings is located on this page.

Note that school entities are not required to use PCCD developed training to meet the Act 55 training requirements. The most important thing to consider when determining how to meet the Act 55

requirements is whether or not the training offered by a school entity meets the approved standards. This training could be conducted internally or in partnership with an external trainer/provider, but in any delivery scenario, the content must align with these approved standards. Your administration or your solicitor should determine whether training currently being offered meets the standards approved by the committee.

In addition, PCCD has developed a process for existing training providers to certify that their training curriculum meets the Act 55 standards. Beginning in October 2023, a list of providers who have made this certification will be available on our [K-12 School Safety and Security Training](#) page.

5. How do we get credit under section 1205.2 (Act 48) for the trainings we take this year?

School entities should continue to follow the same processes they would normally utilize in accordance with their professional development plans. The Pennsylvania Department of Education can provide guidance if school entities have questions or need assistance regarding continuing education credits under section 1205.2 of the Public School Code of 1949.

6. How does this impact other trainings on similar topics for school employees or school administrators?

Your solicitors should determine, pursuant to law, which employees are mandated to take a particular training.

7. My school entity already has a training scheduled that covers a topic similar to one required under Act 55. Can a training 'count' toward multiple training/professional development requirements?

There is nothing in School Code that prohibits school entities from utilizing existing training programs and/or professional development programs that were designed to fulfill other statutory requirements or purposes so long as those programs meet the Act 55 criteria/standards adopted by the School Safety and Security Committee.

8. When will PCCD expect to provide training opportunities for school employees to meet Act 55 requirements?

On March 29, 2023, the SSSC approved a new School Safety and Security Training Program vendor (Risk and Strategic Management Corporation) to design and launch training programs aligned with these adopted standards for school employees and School Safety and Security Coordinators.

PCCD anticipates that online modules that meet the Act 55 requirements for school employees will begin to become available beginning in mid-October of 2023. Of the seven available learning topics addressed by Act 55, six of them (Situational Awareness, Trauma-Informed Approaches, Behavioral Health Awareness, Suicide and Bullying Awareness, Substance Use Awareness and Behaviors of Concern) may be accomplished via virtual/distance/online learning and all six of these modules are anticipated to be available online no later than December 2023. The first module, behavioral health

awareness has been posted. When available, each additional online module may be accessed on our [K-12 School Safety and Security Training](#) and school employees may take the training at any time.

Per Act 55, the topic of 'Emergency training drills' for school employees **must be** provided in person. As an option for school entities to consider as they take steps to meet this requirement, PCCD will host regional 'train-the-trainer' sessions in collaboration with Intermediate Units, where School Safety and Security Coordinators and other school administrators can learn how to deliver the in-person emergency training drills that meet the Act 55 standards for school employees. A schedule for in-person 'train-the-trainer' sessions will become available during the fall of 2023 on our [K-12 School Safety and Security Training](#) page.

(See question #4 for additional information on how school entities may satisfy the Act 55 requirements while awaiting PCCD's training)

9. Are there any exceptions to the in-person requirement for the topic of emergency training drills for school employees?

As of July 11, 2024, there is one exception to the in-person requirement for the topic of emergency training drills for school employees. Per section 1310-B (a.1) of the Public School Code of 1949, cyber charter schools may waive or provide an alternative training opportunity to address the "in-person" training requirement for emergency training drills for a cyber charter school employee **who is not physically located in the Commonwealth and exclusively provides instruction remotely**.

All other school entities and cyber charter schools with employees that do not meet the requirements of the exception above are required to utilize in-person instruction/training of school personnel for the topic of emergency training drills. PCCD and PDE recognize that the structure of some school entities may make in-person delivery of training on this topic challenging (e.g., cyber charter schools, Intermediate Units). School entities are encouraged to consult with their solicitors on this matter.

10. Act 55 states that employees are required to have a minimum of one hour of training annually on emergency training drills (including fire, natural disaster, active shooter, hostage situation and bomb threat) and the identification or recognition of student behavior that may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, other individuals, school facilities or the community. Does that mean one hour total including both topics, or one hour each?

Act 55 requires that a minimum of one hour of instruction be provided annually, in total, on these two topics. In other words, the emergency training drills module is not required to be an hour long, and the threat assessment training does not need to be an hour long, but, between the two topics combined, training must be at least one full hour or longer. Training on these two topics can be done at separate times, and using different modalities, but the emergency training drills training must always be delivered in person.