



## **Heart Safe School (HSS) Program Toolkit**

This toolkit will help you fulfill each checkpoint on the Heart Safe School Checklist. It may take anywhere from six to 12 months (or longer) to get your program up and running. As an example, you can choose to set a goal to complete one/two requirements each month.

Project ADAM resources mentioned in this toolkit are located here and can be customized:  
[projectadam.com/Heartsafeschools](http://projectadam.com/Heartsafeschools)

## **Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**

**HSS Checkpoint:** AED equipment location(s) on a school campus are clearly marked and make it possible to retrieve an AED, apply pads and deliver a shock (if needed) to an unresponsive victim in under three minutes.

The AED should be accessible and the AED pads applied to a victim within a three-minute brisk walk from any point in the school. Local Fire and/or EMS organizations are often willing to help conduct the assessment. If your school does not have an AED, you will need to acquire rough estimates for the unit(s) and related equipment. If you need assistance with this process, please contact your local Project ADAM affiliate for support.

In addition to the proper placement of the AED(s), adequate signage is critical to improving the chance of survival for victims who experience SCA. When you're posting the signs, think as if you were a visitor who has never been to your school. Could you follow the signage down the hallways to locate the AED(s) in your school in the event of an emergency? Signage that directs a person to the location of an AED is something that should be planned and consistent from floor to floor or building to building. For example, if your school is in a three-story building and there is only one AED, signage should be placed on every floor to direct people easily to the AED's location. Preferably, the signs should be located by an elevator and/or staircase stating which floor and/or room the AED is located. Signs with directional arrows, three-dimensional wall signs, as well as location specific signs are available. These can be purchased from AED vendors. We also have posters that you can print from the template section of the website. If you do print signage, we recommend that you laminate them.

### **Relevant HSS program templates:**

#### **Automated External Defibrillators**

- ✓ AED Placement Assessment
- ✓ Choosing an AED
- ✓ AED Comparison Chart

#### **Cardiac Emergency Response Plan**

- ✓ CERP Poster

Project ADAM National, Updated October 2, 2025

For an up-to-date version and all program templates, visit [www.projectadam.com/heartsafeschools](http://www.projectadam.com/heartsafeschools)

✓ **AED Arrow Signs**

**HSS Checkpoint:** The AED(s) is checked for performance readiness at least monthly, or per manufacturer's directions and documented each time.

Develop a plan/utilize the AED Maintenance document below if you don't already have a system in place to track and document maintenance checks. Complete the below School Incident Form and turn it into your local Project ADAM Coordinator anytime the AED is used in an emergency.

**Relevant HSS program templates:**

Automated External Defibrillators

✓ **AED Maintenance Log**

If you use your AED

✓ **Project ADAM AED Report Form**

**HSS Checkpoint:** We keep a first responder kit near or attached to the AED which includes: CPR barrier device, scissors, gloves, razor and towel.

Check your AED(s) to make sure they have all the above materials in them and replace any articles that you don't have to ensure you're properly equipped for emergencies.

## **Cardiac Emergency Response Team**

**HSS Checkpoint:** A CPR-AED Site Coordinator is identified who oversees the CPR-AED program activities and training.

Selecting a dedicated point person to lead organizational efforts is an instrumental step in creating and maintaining a functional and sustainable program. Typically, the school nurse is the coordinator, but when there's not a full time nurse available on campus, appoint someone who is there full time that can organize and lead the annual AED drill and CPR/AED all staff training. Some examples of other appointed coordinators are principals, athletic trainers, health teachers, etc.

**Relevant HSS program template:**

Cardiac Emergency Response Team section

✓ **Site Coordinator Annual Cycle**

**HSS Checkpoint:** There is a designated Cardiac Emergency Response Team comprised of at least 10% of staff or five to 10 people.

This team is comprised of at least 10% of school staff and is expected to keep up-to-date CPR-AED training. Members will also participate in at least one cardiac emergency response drill per year. Project ADAM strongly recommends conducting two drills annually.

If you already have a Medical Response/Emergency Response Team in place at your school, start by asking these staff members. You can also ask your principal if he/she has

suggestions/ideas for who to ask to be on the team. Project ADAM recommends that your team members are scattered throughout the school, so you have full coverage and are prepared wherever the emergency occurs.

**Relevant HSS program template:**

**Cardiac Emergency Response Team**

- ✓ **Creating a Team**

## **Cardiac Emergency Response Plan**

**HSS Checkpoint:** We have a written Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) that is reviewed annually.

A Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) is a written document that establishes specific steps to take action in a cardiac emergency in a school setting. In 2015, Project ADAM partnered with the American Heart Association and other invested organizations to create a response plan template based on best practices.

You can modify the below pre-existing CERPs and adapt for your school or create your own, based on others criteria. There is no right or wrong CERP, as long as the necessary steps are covered. See below for some examples and/or contact your local Project ADAM Program Coordinator for additional examples.

**Relevant HSS program templates:**

**Cardiac Emergency Response Plan**

- ✓ **Cardiac Emergency Response Plan**
- ✓ **Cardiac Emergency Repone Protocol**

**HSS Checkpoint:** We have notified local emergency medical services of our CERP as well the creation of a cardiac emergency communication code to notify responders and others in the area that an incident is occurring. Staff located outside always carry a communication device.

Talk with your principal and your Cardiac Emergency Response Team to decide what code makes the most sense for your school. Some examples of codes are Code Blue, Code AED, etc. To satisfy the second half of this requirement, “staff outside always carry a communication device,” ensure that all staff members carry their cell phone or a walkie talkie when they go outside.

Many schools have questions regarding notifying local EMS. There are several ways to accomplish this requirement. Some ideas and guiding questions are:

- Request EMS to participate in your AED drill.
- Notify EMS to let them know you have a trained team and plan in the event of a cardiac emergency.
- Can they help with your staff CPR/AED training?

- Do they register AEDs so when a 911 call is placed, the dispatcher will be able to provide the location of the nearest registered AED?

**Relevant HSS program template:**

*Sharing your School CERP with additional groups*

- ✓ **Sample letter to EMS**

**HSS Checkpoint:** Our school's written Cardiac Emergency Response Plan, including location of school AED(s), has been shared with any outside groups and organizations who utilize our facilities.

**Relevant HSS program templates:**

*Sharing your School CERP with additional groups*

- ✓ **Sample letter to facility users**
- ✓ **Sample letter to parents** – if you'd like to share information about your Heart Safe efforts with families.

## **Training/Education**

**HSS Checkpoint:** CPR-AED training for the Cardiac Emergency Response Team is updated at least every two years and there is a system in place to track retraining.

All team members should have current CPR/AED training in accordance with standards set by the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, or another nationally recognized certifying organization.

CPR/AED certifications need to be updated every two years, and CPR/AED training needs to be updated annually. For teams choosing to conduct annual Hands-Only CPR-AED training this should include compression practice for all members. Project ADAM advises that you check your state laws or requirements pertaining to school staff training or certification if applicable, to ensure your school is in line with the guidelines.

**Training & Education**

- ✓ **For CPR-AED training videos, visit our Project ADAM [You Tube Channel](#)**
- ✓ **Staff CPR/AED Training Log**
- ✓ **CPR/AED Training Tips**

**HSS Checkpoint:** All faculty and staff know where the AED(s) are located and how to access them.

This can be covered at a staff meeting or as part of the annual education on sudden cardiac arrest discussed in the next checkpoint.

**HSS Checkpoint:** All faculty and staff have annual education on sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) awareness, signs and how to recognize SCA. Communication procedures and the school's Cardiac Emergency Response Plan are also shared during this education.

You can use the Project ADAM Staff Presentation to meet this checkpoint. Be sure to include the following information on recognizing SCA. Sudden cardiac arrest events can vary greatly. Immediate action is crucial in order to successfully respond to a cardiac emergency. Common signs may include sudden collapse, loss of consciousness, unresponsiveness to voice, abnormal or gasping breaths or seizure-like movements. If you come upon a victim with these symptoms, activate the cardiac emergency response plan.

**Relevant HSS program templates:**

**Training & Education**

- ✓ **Project ADAM Staff Presentation** – Power Point format
- ✓ **Project ADAM Staff Presentation Script** – Word doc format

## **Cardiac Emergency Response Drills**

**HSS Checkpoint:** We conduct at least one annual cardiac emergency response drill (AED drill) to test our emergency plan and communication. A drill summary checklist is utilized for planning purposes and post-drill review.

It's normal to feel nervous about conducting your first drill. Project ADAM has step by step instructions to guide you through the process. You will need to secure or borrow a CPR training manikin and an AED training unit to conduct your AED drill. If you have questions or concerns about your drill, please reach out to your local Project ADAM Coordinator.

**Relevant HSS program templates:**

**Cardiac Emergency Response Drills**

- ✓ **How to Conduct a Drill**
- ✓ **Drill Checklist**