

School AED Placement Assessment

Having an AED in the right location can help save a life during a cardiac emergency. The Project ADAM School Site Coordinator, school administrator, and the school’s medical director—whose title, if the position exists, varies by state law (e.g., school physician or school nurse leader)—should work together to determine AED placement. If additional guidance is needed, your local EMS agency, Fire Department, or Project ADAM team can also help.

Project ADAM recommends that an AED be brought to the person and used within three minutes of a suspected cardiac arrest. Because every second counts, AEDs must be placed in locations that are easy for anyone to reach quickly and reliably during an emergency.

CRITERIA (all should be marked “Yes” to effectively place the AED)	YES	NO
Is the AED accessible and not behind locked doors during all hours the building is open?		
Is the AED fully accessible with no barriers blocking access? <i>i.e. doors, gates, locks, and/or physical items (tables or trash cans).</i>		
Are after school programs, outside groups, and athletics able to access the AED?		
Is the AED in a highly visible location?		
Is there clear signage identifying the AED location?		
Is the AED retrievable anywhere onsite within three minutes (brisk walking)? <i>If your school begins with one AED, it is best to place it where the most traffic occurs (for example: gymnasium, auditorium, etc.) From there, additional AEDs may be placed as needed in other areas of the building.</i>		
Is the AED placed at an unobstructed height no more than 48 inches from the floor? <i>In compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.</i>		
Does the AED cabinet protrude no more than 4 inches into the corridor, passageway, or aisle? <i>In compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.</i>		
Is the alarm in your AED cabinet activated?		

School AED Placement: Best Practices & Key Considerations

1. LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY

- › Place AEDs in central, high-traffic areas where they can be retrieved and applied within 3 minutes of a collapse.
- › AEDs must be accessible to everyone at all times and never stored in locked rooms, cabinets, or drawers.

2. VISIBILITY & SIGNAGE

- › Clearly mark AED locations with visible signage.
- › Add directional signs throughout hallways, gyms, fields, and common areas to guide people quickly to the device.

3. SECURITY & MISCONCEPTIONS

- › Public AEDs are rarely vandalized or stolen (less than 2% of the time). The lifesaving benefit far outweighs this minimal risk.
- › Alarmed cabinets can discourage unnecessary removal. While the alarm does not call 911, many people assume it does and will close the cabinet if not needed.
- › Ensure the cabinet alarm has a working battery.

4. EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

- › At minimum, all staff, coaches, and activity groups must know where AEDs are located.
- › Post a brief message near the cabinet explaining:
 - The AED is a lifesaving device
 - It must remain accessible
 - If the cabinet is found empty, report it immediately to school administration or local police

5. OPTIONAL ENHANCED SECURITY

- › Some AED cabinets can be connected to local EMS, requiring the user to call 911 to receive an unlock code.
- › Consult your AED vendor and local EMS agency to determine whether this type of cabinet is appropriate for your school.