

Proper Terminology for LAUSD Emergency Actions in Incident Descriptions and ISTAR

A **disaster** is a sudden calamitous event with significantly disruptive or destructive consequences. Disasters can be caused by naturally occurring events (such as an earthquake, landslide, or tsunami), or human-caused events, either accidental (such as a toxic spill or mass vehicle crash), or deliberate (such as a terrorist attack or sabotage).

OFTEN CONFUSED:

Lockdown – This action is taken when the threat of violence or gunfire is identified or directed by law enforcement and it is necessary to prevent unauthorized entry of any occupied campus areas. During a lockdown, students are to remain in the locked classrooms or designated safe locations at all times (This term is often confused with “Shelter in Place”. In LAUSD, a lockdown is used for violence/gunfire/police directive and has an emphasis on locked doors).

Shelter in Place - This action is taken to place and/or keep students indoors to provide a greater level of protection from airborne contaminants in outside air. Shelter-in-Place is implemented when there is a need to isolate students and staff from the outdoor environment and includes shutting down classroom and/or building heating/air conditioning systems. During a Shelter in Place, no one should be exposed to the outside air.

Looking for “softer” language for keeping students indoors?

Indoor Activities Schedule – can be implemented by an administrator at any time. No special permission is needed and it is not an official emergency action. Examples of when an Indoor Activities Schedule may be used include inclement weather, smell of smoke that may be bothersome but is not hazardous, or extreme outdoor temperatures.

OFTEN CONFUSED:

Evacuate/Building Evacuation - This action is taken after the decision is made that it is unsafe to remain in the building. It is most commonly used in response to a fire, after an earthquake (following drop, cover, and hold on), or any emergency where the building and its contents are perceived to be a threat to student safety (In LAUSD, we use the term “evacuate” to mean leaving the building, not the school grounds).

Relocation - This action is taken after a decision is made that it is unsafe to remain on the campus, and leaving to an off-site assembly area is required, such as during a tsunami or large hazardous materials release. (In LAUSD, we use the term “relocation” when going off campus, NOT evacuation).

OUTDATED LANGUAGE OFTEN USED:

Drop/Cover/Hold On –This action is taken to protect students and staff from flying or falling debris and is commonly used during an earthquake or explosion (Use instead of older terms such as duck and cover, drop and cover, drop/cover/hold).

