

HB 1695/SB 817

Public elementary & secondary schools; cardiac emergency response or emergency action plans.



Bill Patron: Delegate Alex Q. Askew (95th House District) and Senator Aaron R. Rouse (22nd House District)

What The Bill Does:

Each public elementary or secondary school shall develop and implement a cardiac emergency response plan or an athletic emergency action plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving an individual who is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency (i) while on school grounds and (ii) in the event that such school has an athletic department or organized athletic program, while attending or participating in an athletic practice or event sponsored by such school or conducted as a part of such school's athletic department or organized athletic program.

Why Does This Matter?

In the United States, over 2,000 healthy young people under the age of 25 die every year due to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). SCA is a "life-threatening emergency that happens from an abrupt and unexpected loss of heart function leading to loss of consciousness and collapse."

How Does This Impact Students?

This bill impacts students as schools will enhance and facilitate cultures of safety and responsiveness. By activating and adhering to comprehensive cardiac emergency response plans, school staff will be prepared to potentially save the lives of students who experience cardiac emergency events.

How Does This Impact School Divisions?

Public elementary or secondary school officials shall work directly with local emergency service providers to integrate the cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) or athletic emergency action plan (EAP) into the local community's emergency medical services response protocols.

Each CERP or athletic EAP shall integrate nationally recognized evidence-based core elements and nationally recognized evidence-based guidelines and shall integrate provisions and guidelines, consistent with relevant law, relating to:

- Establishing a cardiac emergency response team;
- Activating such team in response to a sudden cardiac event;
- Integrating the CERP or athletic EAP into the local community's emergency medical services response protocols in accordance with *Code of Virginia* § [22.1-271.9](#), subsection C;
- Practicing at least annually responses to sudden cardiac arrest on school grounds through the use of drills;
- Placing and routinely maintaining AEDs in the school building in accordance with nationally recognized evidence-based guidelines;
- Placing clearly marked and easily accessible AEDs at each venue where school-sponsored athletic practices or competitions are held;

- Determining, in accordance with guidelines set by the American Heart Association or other organization focused on emergency cardiovascular care, the placement of any AED in a school building or venue pursuant to subdivisions 5 and 6 and ensuring that any such AED is identified with appropriate signage and is on-site or made available in an unlocked location on school property in a manner such that the AED can be accessed and placed on an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency within three minutes;
- Ensuring training in first aid, CPR, and the use of AEDs by appropriate staff, including school nurses, athletic trainers, and coaches, that follows evidence-based guidelines set forth by the American Heart Association or nationally recognized guidelines focused on emergency cardiovascular care;
- Disseminating the CERP or athletic EAP to appropriate individuals throughout the school community; and
- Reviewing, evaluating, and, as necessary, amending the CERP or athletic EAP on an ongoing and annual basis.

What Resources Are Available?

- *Code of Virginia* [8VAC20-132-240](#) School facilities and safety outlines safety requirements for school facilities.
- The Virginia Department of Education provides resources on how to implement CERP and the importance of AED accessibility on the [Cardiac and Emergency Management | Virginia Department of Education](#) webpage.
- The American Heart Association provides resources and information for schools to develop and implement CERPs on its [Cardiac Emergency Response Plans \(CERPs\) webpage](#).
- [Project Adam](#) provides comprehensive information on how schools can become Heart Safe Designated sites.
- The [Virginia School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Emergency Response Plan webpage](#) offers school divisions and other interested stakeholder's curriculum and training on critical incidents and crisis management.
- The [Running Effective AED Drills-Essential Part of Emergency Plan webpage](#) contains comprehensive strategies on running effective school-based cardiac emergency response drills.
- The [National Athletic Trainer's Association Position Statement: Emergency Action Plan Development and Implementation in Sport](#) includes a comprehensive position statement to support safe school environments.
- The [National Association of School Nurses Position State on Emergency Response](#) Position Statement shares information on how emergency preparedness is imperative to safe and supportive learning environments.
- The [School Nurse Checklist](#) provides school divisions comprehensive guidance that includes school-year safety procedures, such as AED, CPR and First-aid resources.

What Additional Items Will Be Released?

- The Department of Education will release updated guidance on Cardiac Emergency Response on or before 07/01/2025.

Local Educational Agency Next Steps:

- Each local educational agency (LEA) shall develop a cardiac emergency response program, that includes policies and guidelines for cardiac emergency response by school staff.
- Run periodic drills (at least annually) to ensure effectiveness of CERP teams and review and revise plans for efficiency and evidence-based response times.
- Engage in regular automated defibrillator device maintenance, according to best practice guidance and manufacturers recommendations. Maintenance will include maintenance log documentation, availability of additional pads (child and adult, if applicable), and batteries.
- Ensure sufficient AEDs are available, identifiable with appropriate signage, and accessible (unlocked) in each school building according to the American Heart Association or other organization focused on emergency cardiovascular care best practices.
- Ensure AED accessibility is integral in the CERP and placed on an individual experiencing a cardiac emergency within three (3) minutes.
- Ensure training in first-aid, CPR, and the use of AEDs to appropriate staff, in accordance with Administrative Code: [8VAC20-132-240](#). The Virginia Department of Education, in its *Guidelines for Policies on Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention in Student-Athletes* recommends members of the school-based Emergency Response Team (that could include the school's nurse and other school staff) are certified in first-aid, CPR, and use of AEDs.
- Share the CERP with the school's community, especially coaches, teachers, and parents, and identify community-based supports that can assist with the school's emergency response, local emergency medical services, school resource officers etc.

Who is the VDOE Contact:

Joseph Wharff, Director of Behavioral Health and Student Safety
Joseph.Wharff@doe.virginia.gov
804-750-8077