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# Chapter 1. Test Security Incident Management

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CALIFORNIA  
Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

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## CAASPP Security Incidents and Appeals Procedure Guide

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### 2016-17 Administration

Smarter Balanced for English Language Arts/  
Literacy and Mathematics Summative Assessments  
California Alternate Assessments for English  
Language Arts/Literacy, Mathematics, and  
Science  
California Science Test

*Measuring the Power of Learning.™*

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## Background

### Additional Resources:

- *California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Online Test Administration Manual* Web document—  
[http://www.caaspp.org/rsc/pdfs/CAASPP.online\\_tam.2016-17.pdf](http://www.caaspp.org/rsc/pdfs/CAASPP.online_tam.2016-17.pdf)
- CAASPP Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS) Process for Summative Assessments Web page—  
<http://www.caaspp.org/stairs/>
- *Smarter Balanced Paper-Pencil Testing Test Administration Manuals* Web documents—linked at <http://www.caaspp.org/administration/about/smarter-balanced/>
- *CAASPP Paper-Pencil Test Administration Manual for the Standards-based Tests in Spanish* Web document—<http://www.caaspp.org/rsc/pdfs/CAASPP.ppt-tam-sts.2016-17.pdf>

The online CAASPP STAIRS form, accessed through the Test Operations Management System (TOMS), is the starting point for local educational agency (LEA) CAASPP and CAASPP test site coordinators to report a test security incident or other testing issue that interferes with the administration and completion of the assessment. **It is also a mandatory first step before an appeal can be filed.** In some cases, such as when reporting an impropriety, this is the **only step** that needs to be completed.

The LEA CAASPP coordinator is responsible for notifying the CDE, via the online CAASPP STAIRS form, of any incidents that occur before, during, or after testing. The CAASPP test site coordinator is responsible for immediately notifying the LEA CAASPP coordinator of any security breaches or testing irregularities that occur in the administration of the test but may also submit the form.

LEA CAASPP coordinators and CAASPP test site coordinators must ensure that all test security incidents are documented by means of the CAASPP STAIRS form. After the form is submitted, an e-mail containing a case number and next steps will be sent to the submitter (and to the LEA CAASPP coordinator, if the form is submitted by the CAASPP test site coordinator) via e-mail. Ensure that communications generated by the e-mail address [DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov](mailto:DONOTREPLY@cde.ca.gov) are not automatically sent to a junk mail or spam folder.

Some incidents may require that an appeal be submitted to reset, reopen, invalidate, or request a grace period extension for a test. LEA CAASPP coordinators or CAASPP test site coordinators can make the determination by submitting the online CAASPP STAIRS form. After you have entered the details of the incident, you will see the next steps you must take on the *CDE Review Decision* Web page that tells you what action you should take—either by having the LEA CAASPP coordinator or CAASPP test site coordinator fill out an appeal request in TOMS, saving the confirmation e-mail for your records, contacting the CDE by phone at CDE at 916-445-8765, or contacting the California Technical Assistance Center (CalTAC) by phone at 800-955-2954 (LEA CAASPP coordinators only; CAASPP test site coordinators should contact their LEA CAASPP coordinator). The next steps you must take will be repeated in the confirmation e-mail.



**Note:** LEA CAASPP coordinators must contact CalTAC to make a request to restore a test that has been reset in error. This type of appeal request can only be made by a CalTAC representative.

## Types of Incidents to Report

### Definitions

Test security incidents, such as improprieties, irregularities, and breaches, are behaviors prohibited because they either give a student an unfair advantage or compromise the secure administration of the assessments. Whether intentional or unintentional, failure by staff or students to comply with security and administration rules constitutes a test security incident.

Table 2 describes the three levels of test security incidents for which a form will be filed. Appendix A on page 56 contains the Test Security and Incident Chart that lists the incident levels and includes examples of issues that are associated with the types. It includes a fourth type, “none,” that describe incidents that are administrative in nature and do not require reporting such as test expirations.

**Table 2. Definitions for Test Security Incidents**

Type	Definition
<b>Impropriety</b>	An unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing, and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test or of impacting test security or test validity. These circumstances can be corrected and contained at the local level. An impropriety should be reported to the LEA CAASPP coordinator and CAASPP test site coordinator immediately. The coordinator will report the incident <b>within 24 hours</b> , using the online <i>CAASPP STAIRS</i> form; instructions for access are on the <a href="#">STAIRS Process</a> Web page on the CAASPP portal.
<b>Irregularity</b>	An unusual circumstance that impacts an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test or impact test security, or test validity. These circumstances can be corrected and contained at the local level and submitted in the online Appeals System for resolution. An irregularity must be reported to the LEA CAASPP coordinator and CAASPP test site coordinator immediately. The coordinator will report the irregularity <b>within 24 hours</b> , using the online <i>CAASPP STAIRS</i> form (instructions on the <a href="#">STAIRS Process</a> Web page).
<b>Breach</b>	An event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Examples may include such situations as a release of secure materials or a security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications for the Consortium and may result in a Consortium decision to remove the test item(s) from the available secure bank. A breach incident must be reported to the LEA CAASPP coordinator immediately. The LEA CAASPP coordinator must <b>immediately</b> call the California Department of Education (CDE) at 916-445-8765 to report the breach; in addition, he or she must complete the online <i>CAASPP STAIRS</i> form <b>within 24 hours</b> (instructions on the <a href="#">STAIRS Process</a> Web page).

## Reporting Timelines and Activities

**Improprieties** must be escalated in accordance with state policies and procedures, protocols, and/or guidelines **within 24 hours of the incident** via the online *CAASPP STAIRS* form on the [STAIRS Process](#) Web page (access the [link to the Test Operations Management System \[TOMS\]](#)).

**Irregularities** must be escalated in accordance with state policies and procedures, protocols, and/or guidelines **within 24 hours of the incident** via the online *CAASPP STAIRS* form on the [STAIRS Process](#) Web page ([access the link to TOMS](#)).

A **Breach requires immediate notification/escalation** to the CDE. The LEA CAASPP coordinator **must immediately telephone the CDE at 916-445-8765** and then submit a report **within 24 hours**, using the online *CAASPP STAIRS* form on the [STAIRS Process](#) Web page ([access the link to TOMS](#)).

## Applicable Tests

Please note that STAIRS and the online Appeals System are for the 2016–17 Summative Assessments only. Test incident levels can apply to any test administered in the CAASPP System whether they are computer-based or paper-pencil tests. However, not all types of issues can be applied to all tests. For example, the incident type “Student(s) leave the test room without authorization” is an impropriety that can occur during any test. However, the incident type “The live student interface or Test Administrator Interface is being used for practice instead of the training or practice tests” is a breach associated with only the online tests.

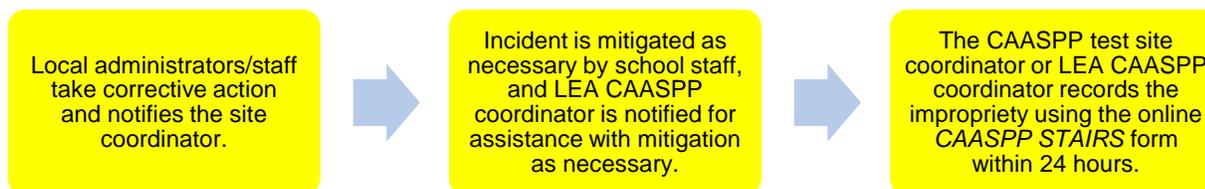
The procedure for reporting incidents is different for the Smarter Balanced and Standards-based Tests in Spanish paper-pencil tests. To report an incident involving either of these paper-pencil tests, contact the CDE directly at 916-445-8765.

## Required Action Steps

**The Test Security Required Action Steps** depict the required actions for each test security incident in a process flow diagram format.

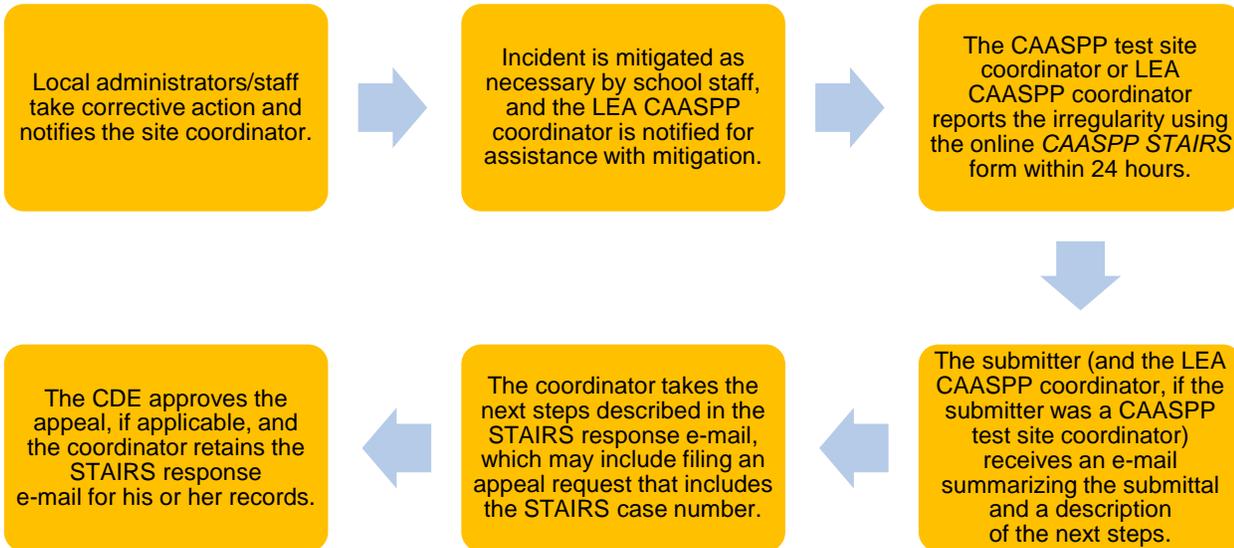
### Impropriety

*Unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test or of impacting test security or test validity. (Example: Student[s] leaving the testing room without authorization, or related instructional materials were left on the walls in the testing room.)*



### Irregularity

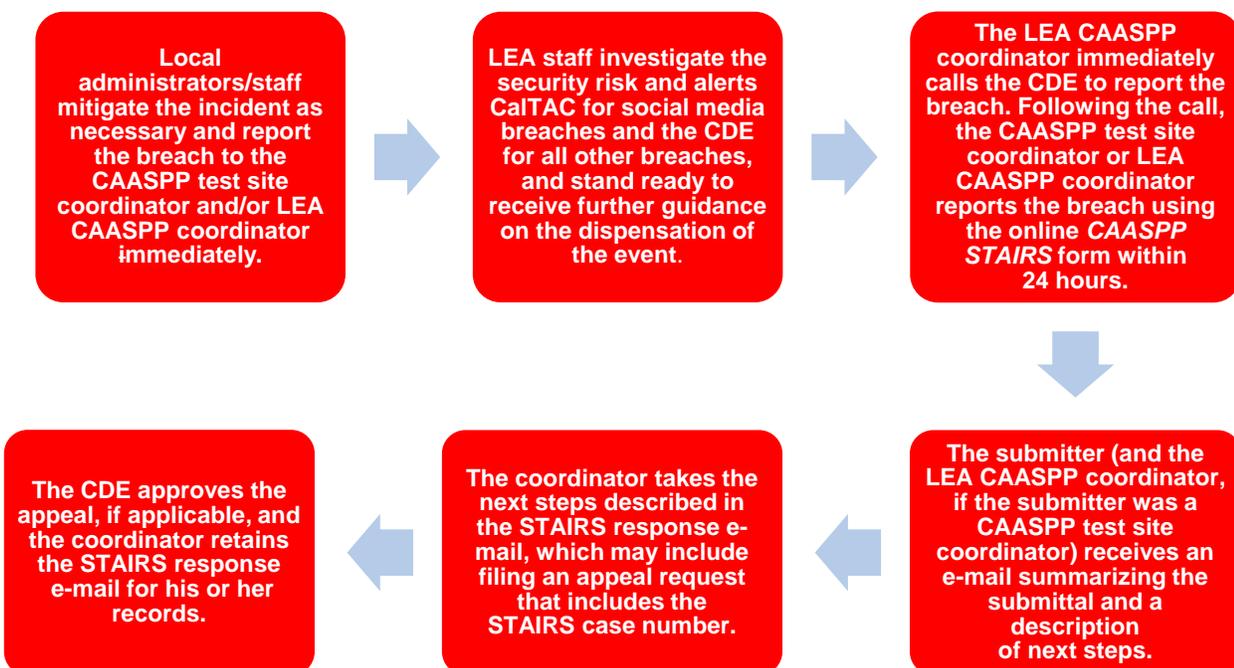
*An unusual circumstance that impacts an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test or impact test security or test validity. These circumstances can be contained at the local level. (Example: Disruption during the test session such as a fire drill, or student(s) cheated or provided answers to each other.)*



## Breach

*A test administration event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Breaches require **immediate** attention and escalation to CalTAC for social media breaches and the CDE, **via telephone**, for all other breaches. Following the call, the CAASPP test site coordinator or LEA CAASPP coordinator must report the breach using the online CAASPP STAIRS form within 24 hours.*

*Examples may include such situations as exposure of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications. (Example: Test administrators modifying student answers, or test items shared in social media.)*



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## Commonly Reported Security Issues and How to Avoid Them

Local educational agency (LEA) California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) coordinators should work with CAASPP test site coordinators and other LEA staff to reduce the chances that student testing will be interrupted or delayed were a testing incident to occur.

- Verify that student test settings are correct in the Test Operations Management System (TOMS) and/or the Test Administrator Interface. Incorrect settings mean that the student's testing will be interrupted or delayed while the *CAASPP Security and Test Administration Incident Reporting System (STAIRS)* form is submitted and the Reset appeal is requested.
- Set up an appropriate schedule with testing times that ensure all students can test in a timely manner. This will avoid the need to submit the *CAASPP STAIRS* form and request the Re-open appeal.
- Limit requesting a Restore appeal only to those cases where a test has been inadvertently or improperly reset. To request this type of appeal, the LEA CAASPP coordinator must contact the California Technical Assistance Center.
- Limit requesting a Grace Period Extension appeal if a technical issue has occurred that resulted in the expiration of the 20-minute pause rule.