

DISASTER RESOURCE GUIDE

Active Shooter Preparedness: Best Practices and Tips from Industry Experts

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DISASTER RESOURCE GUIDE



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The Disaster Resource GUIDE has been published since 1996 by The Emergency Lifeline Corporation of Santa Ana, CA. Emergency Lifeline was founded in 1985 by Kathy Rainey in response to the devastating Mexico City earthquake, with the mission to help organizations, government agencies and families prepare for earthquakes. The GUIDE is an extension of that mission and provides valuable resources to businesses and other organizations worldwide to help them build resilience.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



This publication is a Special Edition of the Disaster Resource GUIDE, focusing on the important topic of Active Shooters and what we can do to prepare for and manage these tragic incidents. This is an unfortunate reality of our pressurized and media-saturated world: Sometimes individuals or groups

resort to indiscriminate killing of people in an office, school or public space. As business continuity professionals, we must address this threat and help our colleagues prepare.

This edition starts with a comprehensive look at how these Active Shooter Events have evolved since what is considered the first example in the Texas Bell Tower shooting in 1966. The author, Steven Crimando, offers valuable insights from his many years of experience dealing with crises and traumatic events.

Then we have a study on Active Shooter Preparedness which was conducted by Emergency Management and Safety Solutions and Everbridge. Regina Phelps, founder of EMS Solutions, is an internationally recognized expert in emergency management and continuity planning and is a frequent GUIDE author.

Another industry expert, Ted Brown, has written an article on the important function of conducting table top exercises for active shooter events. Ted conducts seminars on table top exercises and trains clients in Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, schools and industry.

Finally, Andrew Woods has written an article offering his perspective as a UK resident who has lived with the threat of domestic and international terrorism all his life.

These articles by industry experts can help you evaluate your own preparedness for Active Shooter Events. The authors also offer expert advice to assist you in addressing areas of needed improvement. And we offer a special thanks to Everbridge, the sponsor of this edition of the GUIDE.

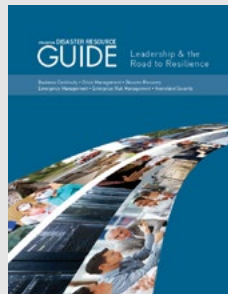
The GUIDE is now in its 20th year of publication! We have been the industry's "one stop" resource for business continuity and disaster preparedness, and our Continuity eGUIDE was the industry's first newsletter. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you, our readers, and I always welcome any feedback or suggestions you might have.

Sincerely,

Kathy Rainey

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One-Stop GUIDE



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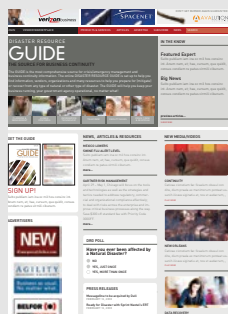
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THE EVOLUTION IN RISK & RESPONSE: NEXT GENERATION ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS

BY STEVEN M. CRIMANDO, MA, BCETS, CHS-V



Active Shooter Events (ASEs) are highly dynamic, rapidly evolving situations. In 63 incidents closely analyzed by the FBI in which the duration of the event could be determined, 44 were over in five minutes or less and of those 23 ended in two minutes or less. They happened so quickly that the shooting was over before police arrived. Unlike other violent crimes, the “active” aspect of an ASE inherently implies that both law enforcement personnel and citizens have the potential to affect the outcome of the event based upon their responses. (FBI, 2014)

To effectively prepare for such a fast-moving and potentially devastating threat like an ASE, leaders and decision-makers should be aware of the evolving risk and new approaches in mitigation.

The Evolving Risk

The frequency and characteristics of ASEs have continued to change in scope and complexity since the Texas Bell Tower shooting in 1966, often cited as the first active shooter incident. The rate of ASEs has tripled over the past several years as well. Leaders and planners therefore are confronted with the reality that there are more events,

involving great numbers of casualties, demanding a higher level of readiness. It is important that planning efforts are aligned with today's ASE risks, not yesterday's. While most ASEs involve lone actors, statistically more often using handguns than long guns, several recent events force planners to also consider the possibility of Hybrid Targeted Violence (HTV). HTV is defined as the use of violence, targeting a specific population, using multiple and multifaceted conventional and unconventional weapons and tactics. The HTV attackers often target several locations simultaneously (Frazzano & Snyder, 2014). While HTV attacks are not exactly new, or unheard of in the U.S., intelligence estimates show that international extremist groups are very interested in initiating, supporting and inciting this kind of attack on American soil. There have been several examples of HTV over the past several years, including multi-pronged attacks in Mumbai, the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Paris, Boston and San Bernardino. Although not as recent, the Beslan School siege is another example of HTV. HTV attacks differ from the more common Active Shooter incidents and include several complicating factors, such as:

- Well-trained, tactically competent, and willing-to-die perpetrators;
- Multiple operators (attackers) working in small tactical units;
- Effective internal and external communications/coordination;
- Purposeful luring of first responders to inflict even more carnage;
- Use of fire to complicate first-responder operations and cause further damage;
- Potential use of chemical, biological or radiological agents; and
- Use of high-powered military type weapons and explosives, including suicide bomb vests.

HTV involves tactics typically associated with terrorism. There is another place that terrorism intersects with more traditional workplace or campus violence, and that is in the area of Type V violence. It is important that leaders and planners understand the concept of Type V violence and integrate it into

overall violence prevention and response strategies.

As a brief introduction or refresher of OSHA's five primary types of workplace violence:

Type I violence occurs during the commission of a property crime such as a robbery, theft or trespassing. In this scenario, there is no legitimate business relationship between the offender and the organization. The organization or victim is selected because of the perception that there is something of value to be taken, such as cash, medications or electronics. Type I violence is most common in convenience stores, liquor stores, and gas stations, as well as taxis and limousines, where people may work late at night, all alone, and have cash on hand. This type of workplace violence is the most prevalent, and 85% of workplace homicides occur in this type of circumstance.

There have been several examples of Hybrid Targeted Violence over the past several years, including multi-pronged attacks in Mumbai, the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Paris, Boston and San Bernardino.

Type II violence is the most prevalent in hospital and health care environments and in fact, health care and social service workers are four times more likely to be the victims of violence on the job than any other type of worker in the U.S. (OSHA, 2014). In instances of Type II violence the offender is known to the organization as a client, customer or patient, and the violence occurs during the routine delivery of

OSHA'S FIVE PRIMARY TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Type I violence

Occurs during the commission of a property crime such as a robbery, theft or trespassing.

Type II violence

Most prevalent in hospital and health care environments and in fact, health care and social service workers are four times more likely to be the victims of violence on the job than any other type of worker in the U.S. (OSHA, 2014).

Type III violence

"Workplace violence;" coworker-to-coworker violence. The perpetrator is a current or former employee (or student) of the organization.

Type IV violence

"Intimate Partner Violence" when violence and abuse follow a worker from home to work. Typically a spillover of domestic violence into the workplace and refers to perpetrators who are not employees or former employees of the affected workplace.

Type V Violence

The violent actor is an extremist of some sort who believes that violence is necessary, justified or deserved in their radical views.

sidered **Type IV** or "Intimate Partner Violence." It is important for employers to recognize that violence and abuse at home are not just personal problems; they can and do intrude into the workplace, sometimes violently with tragic consequences. There are many cases each year, often involving multiple victims, when a former spouse or partner brings their violence or aggression to their partner's workplace. The perpetrator may know their partner's work hours, parking location or other information that may make them vulnerable. The risk of violence increases significantly when one party attempts to separate from the other.

Type IV violence is typically a spillover of domestic violence into the workplace and refers to perpetrators who are not employees or former employees of the affected workplace. Women are more often the targets. Hospital and health care environments may be particularly vulnerable to Type IV violence since the workforce is likely to be predominantly female.

Lastly, in instances of **Type V Violence**, the violent actor is an extremist of some sort who believes that violence is necessary, justified or deserved in their radical views. In such cases violence is directed at an organization, its people and/or property for ideological, religious or political reasons. Violence perpetrated by extremist environmental, animal rights, and other value-driven groups may fall within this category. In Type V violence, target selection is not based on a sense of personal or professional injustice in the workplace, but rather rage against what the targeted organization does or represents. The shooting at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs in November, 2015, is an example of extreme ideology driving an Active Shooter Event. Hate crimes and terrorism are examples of Type V violence especially when they are directed against an organization and its employees.

All five types of workplace violence have the potential to evolve into Active Shooter Events. Type V violence blurs the lines between workplace violence

services. In some settings the risk of assault or injury by customers or clients represents a real and ongoing threat in everyday work.

The type of violence most commonly thought of as "workplace violence" is **Type III**; coworker- to-co-worker violence. There are many instances in which this also involves worker-to-supervisor, and in some cases supervisor-to-worker violence. In academic settings this may manifest itself as student-to-student or student-to-faculty violence. In Type III workplace violence the perpetrator is a current or former employee (or student)

of the organization. The motivating factor is often one or a series of interpersonal or work/ school-related conflicts, losses or traumas, and may involve a sense of injustice or unfairness. Type III violence accounts for about 7% of all workplace homicides, and those in positions of authority are often at the greatest risk of being victimized. It is important to note that even workers or students who have separated from the organization may still represent a risk of violence in some situations.

When violence and abuse follow a worker from home to work, it is con-

and terrorism. Consider these three mass shooting incidents:

1. The Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris in January 2015
2. The attack on the Armed Forces recruitment center and Naval Reserve Center in Chattanooga in July 2015, and
3. The San Bernardino attack in December 2015.

In each instance, the victims were shot while on-the-job and at a work-related function. In the San Bernardino case, one of the attackers was also a co-worker. Each case was motivated by foreign terrorist organization propaganda, and the perpetrators were true believers willing to die for their cause. The media and politicians often argue if such events are workplace violence or terrorism; Type V violence is the place where terrorism and workplace violence intersect.

Some work environments, especially campus settings, which are open and active, may be attractive targets employing the tactics of terrorism during violent attacks.

[Integrate Active Shooter Preparedness into Overall Violence Prevention Efforts](#)

Active Shooter Events are high-profile incidents that stir emotions, even for otherwise level-headed leaders. Even though most leaders recognize that ASEs are low-probability, high-consequence situations, they may be asked, or ask themselves in the wake of each new shocking headline, “Are we ready for this?” It is not uncommon for organizations to let the “tail wag the dog” when addressing the Active Shooter risk; that is to say, creating specific Active Shooter policies and procedures that are divorced from other violence prevention efforts.

Active Shooter Events can be motivated by all and any of the five types of violence. For violence prevention policies, plans and exercises to be effective, it is helpful to integrate the concept of Type V violence into the mix of other types of workplace violence. In the moment that shots are fired, the shooter’s motives are completely irrelevant.

Regardless if the shooter is or was an employee or student, an enraged spouse or partner, a distraught family member or a homegrown extremist, the action steps needed to survive and minimize the carnage are the same. By integrating Type V violence into the organization’s training programs, employees and students can not only

“Fight” means:

DISTRACT: Interrupt the Shooter’s focus

DISRUPT: Interrupt the Shooter’s momentum or rhythm

DISARM: Interrupt the Shooter’s access to weapons

receive information about the common warning signs (e.g., isolation, paranoia, feelings of injustice, etc.) associated with other types of workplace violence, they can simultaneously learn the pre-attack warning behaviors related to terrorism and ASEs. In the San Bernardino case, the shooter was a covert Jihadist. It was unlikely that coworkers who may have been familiar with the red flags related to workplace violence would have spotted the signs that suggest that someone may be on a pathway to mass violence.

By integrating all five types of workplace violence into the organization’s approach to violence prevention it is possible that “bystander intervention” can mean more than “fight” during an attack. Integrated training serves as a “force multiplier” and helps those in the environment better detect and deter all types of violence, including mass violence motivated by a terrorist mindset.

[Provide Reality-based Training and Resources](#)

One of the most pressing realities to convey in active shooter response training is the concept of the “response gap.” It is a hard, cold fact that the shooter always has the tactical advantage, at least at the onset of the incident, and until law enforcement arrives when the shooter becomes the “hunted” rather than the “hunter.” Every major active shooter guidance stresses the point that during the initial law enforcement response, inbound officers will not stop to assist the wounded. It is also understood that EMS may not be able to enter the “warm zone” until the shooter is neutralized and the situation is made safe. Some communities have begun to adopt the “Rescue Task Force” model, preparing a limited number of EMS responders to operate in the warm zone with the proper training and equipment. Individuals inside the shooting event who are able to find shelter may be in lock-down mode and tucked away in safe rooms or hard to find places for an extended period of time while officers clear the scene of additional suspects and/or suspicious materials.

[Stopping the Killing](#)

When considering the critical role of bystander intervention, it is important to remember that in studies of ASEs, even when law enforcement was present or able to respond within minutes, civilians often had to make life and death decisions, and therefore, should be engaged in training and discussions about the decisions they may face. Training must be reality-based and aligned with the actual dynamics likely to be encountered in an ASE. Simply showing training videos or informing employees and students that they should “run, hide or fight” is insufficient. Leaders and planners would do well to remember that “practice does not make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect”, therefore it is critical to prepare people for the real challenges they may face in an ASE.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



It is important to stress that “fight” means:

- Distract: Interrupt the Shooter’s focus;
- Disrupt: Interrupt the Shooter’s momentum or rhythm;
- Disarm: Interrupt the Shooter’s access to weapons.

vention can and does make a difference in those critical minutes before police arrive. Lives can be saved by the actions of those in the immediate shooting environment with the right knowledge, awareness and skills.

Stopping the Dying

Training should also envision the moments after the shooting regardless if the shooter has been downed or has moved on. It is likely that there will be serious medical and psychological trauma that requires immediate attention, and that others in the environment may be the best and possibly the only sources of rapid assistance.

The most common cause of preventable death in an active shooter incident is the failure to control severe bleeding. Across the U.S., on average, it takes approximately 7 to 15 minutes for first responders to reach the scene and often longer for them to safely enter and start treating patients. Victims who experience massive trauma don’t have that much time and can often bleed to death in as little as three minutes. Access by EMS, in some cases, could take up to 30 minutes before initial patient contact – likely longer. Mortality rates are high as patients “bleed out” prior to medical contact while resources are waiting in staging. Given this harsh reality,

some communities and organizations have begun to train and equip citizens in bleeding control, also referred to as “B-CON.”

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has recently started the “Stop the Bleed” campaign, and communities, like Glendale, Colorado have begun using average citizens as first responders to assist professional emergency responders and reduce the number of casualties during an active shooter event.

In addition to instruction in the basics of B-CON techniques, some organizations have begun prepositioning B-CON supplies in safe rooms and other points likely to experience casualties. Wall-mounted Kits, Carry-Kits and Throw Kits are designed to provide bystanders and initial first responders with quick and easy access to essential medical equipment for stopping life-threatening bleeding. Each Throw Kit contains high-visibility illustrated instructions that take the user through step-by-step procedures to ensure proper care and device application based on what they observe as injuries. The Throw Kit also includes a tourniquet, occlusive trauma bandage, petrolatum gauze, a tape board, emergency blanket and casualty marking card. No matter how rapid the arrival of professional emergency responders, bystanders will always be first on the scene. It is important to leverage this resource to save lives and reduce both the physical and emotional trauma that may arise for those standing helplessly nearby watching a coworker suffer and die simply because they had no awareness, knowledge or skills to help save a life.

Managing Psychological Trauma

Imagining the “response gap” between the first shots fired and arrival of police and EMS, compounding the medical trauma in the shooting environment is the potential psychological trauma of facing a real life threat and possibly witnessing others injured or killed. The reaction of people exposed to this degree of overwhelming psychological stress can make a bad situation worse. There is also a growing body of neuro-

Many people will have no prior experience handling or even being near a firearm.

Many people will have no prior experience handling or even being near a firearm. They should be taught to push the weapon down and to the side (remembered by the acronym “DATTS”), not up or straight down, and not to grab the muzzle of the gun. They should also be trained to use teams, use improvised weapons, and use the element of surprise. Research clearly indicates that bystander inter-

psychological evidence indicating that rapid psychological support is critical in reducing the likelihood of long-term mental health complications stemming from exposure to traumatic events. For both clinical and tactical reasons, it will be necessary to begin managing the psychological trauma associated with an ASE immediately, preferably during the incident itself. Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an evidence-informed approach for assisting children, adolescents, and adults in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism. It is intended to be used in the first 48 hours of a violent or threatening event to help reduce the physical and emotional arousal (stress response) that can lead to more harmful (frantic, unfocused) behaviors and potential long-term mental health consequences.

PFA is an “every person” skills set. Just as you don’t have to be a doctor, nurse or EMT to use basic medical first aid, you don’t have to be a mental health professional to use PFA. It is intended to be used by whoever is on the scene or in the incident environment that can initiate basic psychological support and help stabilize the emotional response to the situation. As an example, many viewers of the Active Shooter training video, “Run>Hide>Fight” often ask what can or should be done with the woman in the red sweater who is so emotionally overwhelmed. PFA is an approach to refocusing and grounding the profound emotional response that might lead to her and others around her to being killed. Managing acute stress reactions in the midst of a crisis is another critical task for bystanders.

Although there is a significant national effort underway to promote “Mental Health First Aid,” it is important for planners and leaders to be aware that Psychological First Aid and Mental Health First Aid are not the same. Mental Health First Aid is focused on individuals who have or who may be developing a diagnosable mental health disorder. In that model of support, participants learn about the major categories of mental illnesses, the signs and symptoms of those mental ill-

nesses, ways to assist someone in a mental health crisis, and how to connect individuals in a mental health crisis with the appropriate resources. Mental Health First Aid is not intended to be used in a traumatic event. Psychological First Aid is to be used with everyone, regardless if there is evidence of a mental health problem or not. More specifically, it is focused on the normal reactions normal people have to abnormal events. Both are helpful skill sets to develop in the workforce, but Psychological First Aid, not Mental Health First Aid, would be helpful in an ASE.

Communicating the Risk

Rapid, structured communications save lives. The single best way to protect the workforce or student population during an active shooter incident is to deny the shooter potential targets. Rapid, pre-constructed messages delivered to multiple points upon immediate awareness of the threat can redirect staff, students, and others away from harm and toward safety.

ASEs evolve quickly and time is of the essence. Valuable moments are lost if people are milling around in confusion and panic, leaving them vulnerable and exposed. In training, it is critical to convey the concept that in high-threat situations, it is not enough to run from danger; it is equally or more important to run towards safety. Authorities (i.e., DHS, FBI, others) suggest plain language, not code words, for active shooter incident notification. Research shows people do not panic when given clear and informative warnings; they want accurate information and clear instructions on how to protect themselves in the emergency. Not everyone will understand a code system, and so plain language warnings and clear instructions should be given to make sure everyone in danger understands the need to act.

By pre-developing messages and testing emergency notifications capabilities, leaders and planners can help more quickly and effectively move people away from danger and toward safety. Everything associated with ASE

response comes down to speed. Rapid communication can help deprive the shooter of their initial tactical advantage and better enable bystanders to intervene in an effective manner.

The great American poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best, “In skating over thin ice, our safety is in our speed.” In planning for ASEs, focus on the response gap, realize that everyone in the immediate environment is a potential first responder, and training them as such, and provide the necessary knowledge awareness and skills to succeed. Remember that bystander intervention, beginning with early recognition of the warning signs, as well as specific skills to both stop the killing and stop the dying, will be critical to the success of an active shooter response plan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven M. Crimando is a subject matter expert and trainer specialized in human factors/behavioral sciences in homeland and corporate security, violence prevention and intervention, emergency and disaster management. Steve is a Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress (BCETS) and Certified Trauma Specialist (CTS). He holds Diplomat status with the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress and the National Center for Crisis Management. Steve is the principal of Behavioral Science Applications and serves as a consultant and trainer for the federal, state and local law enforcement and emergency management agencies, as well as multinational corporations and NGO’s worldwide.

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ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS RESEARCH REPORT

BY EVERBRIDGE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY SOLUTIONS



The “Active Shooter Preparedness” research was conducted in July, 2016. A total of 888 organizations were surveyed about their safety plans and ability to manage an active shooter situation. The goal of this research was to gain insight into the security challenges facing today’s companies, especially when it comes to active shooter situations.

Between 2014 and 2015, according to the FBI, the United States experienced nearly six times as many active shooter incidents as during the period between 2000 and 2001. Despite the increasing severity of this problem, U.S. companies are unprepared. Preparedness requires communication and practice plans to make sure responders know who is at risk and people know what to do if an event happens. Companies cannot rely solely on police and other government assistance: an FBI study of active shooter events between 2000 and 2013 found that 60% of the incidents ended before the police arrived.

The sample focused on larger organizations: 58 percent were from organizations with more than 500 employees – and 44 percent of those respondents were from organizations with more than 1000 employees. Those responsible for the security and emergency preparedness at their organizations completed the survey. The most common titles were Director of Security, Manager or Director of Emergency Management, and Manager or Director of Business Continuity. Three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) were responsible for multiple locations.

Key Findings

- 69 percent of respondents view an active shooter incident as a potential top threat to their company or organization. Workplace violence was cited as a top threat by 62 percent.
- Communicating to people who may be in an impacted building and confirming their safety was seen as the biggest challenge during an active shooter situation (71 percent of respondents).
- Safety concerns are growing: 79 percent of executives/leaders are more concerned about employee or student safety than they were

two years ago. 73 percent said that employees or students are willing to exchange some aspects of privacy for enhanced security.

- However, 39 percent of respondents said they didn't have a communications plan in place for active shooter events.
- An overwhelming 79 percent replied that their companies or organizations were not fully prepared for an active shooter incident.
- 61 percent do not run any active shooter preparedness drills at all.

Analysis

Respondents were overwhelmingly concerned about violence and violent acts – such as active shooter situations – taking place at their company or organization. Despite that worry, a majority of respondents also said that they were not properly prepared for an active shooter situation, calling out communication to those affected as one of the major issues.

The research also found that over a third of respondents didn't have a communication plan in place, nor were training or safety drills conducted at a majority of their organizations – which are two of the more com-

mon ways to prepare companies and employees for the potential of a violent act. Communication plans and readiness go hand in hand, as companies must have a way to share critical real-time information with all parties in these life or death situations.

1. COMPANIES ARE CONCERNED ABOUT VIOLENT ACTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Three of the top five threats that companies are preparing for are active shooter situations (69 percent), workplace violence (62 percent) and terrorism (38 percent).

79 percent of executives and leaders are more concerned about employee or student safety than they were two years ago.

2. COMMUNICATION DURING CRITICAL EVENTS IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE

71 percent of security leaders believe that communicating to impacted individuals is their biggest challenge during an active shooter situation. This is followed by the challenge of locating people who may be in an impacted building or facility (55 percent). In order to be properly prepared, companies must have a communications plan in place.

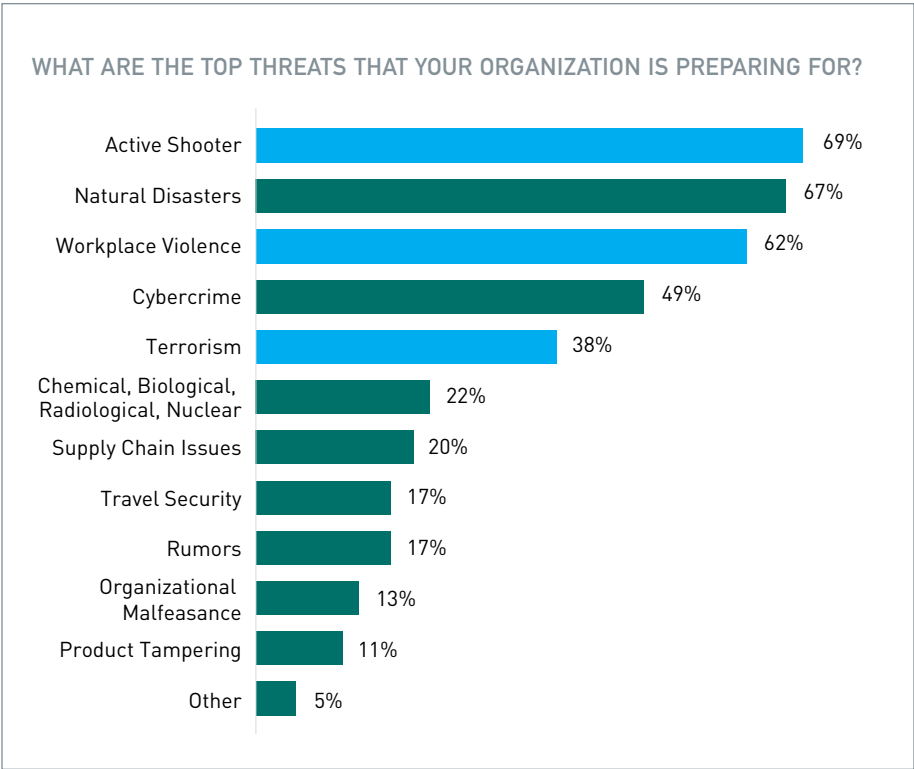
Respondents also agree on the importance of having a method for employees and students to easily report information back to safety officials during an incident, with 94 percent recognizing the importance of this form of communication.

3. DESPITE RECOGNIZING VIOLENT ACTS AS TOP THREATS, COMPANIES ARE STILL UNPREPARED

While respondents reported that they understood the threat of violent acts – and the need for communication channels to be in place – many are still unprepared.

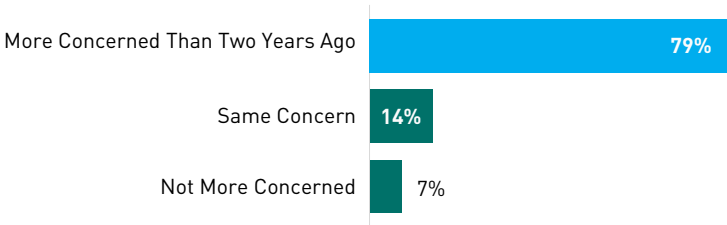
39 percent don't have a communications plan in place for active shooter events – and almost the same margin (44 percent) don't have a plan to communicate and escalate alerts in active shooter situations to those most likely to be impacted.

A majority of respondents (61 percent) do not run any active shooter preparedness drills at all, further showing how unprepared companies are for potential incidents.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

EXECUTIVES AND LEADERS IN MY ORGANIZATION ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT SAFETY THAN TWO YEARS AGO



Respondents were asked directly how prepared they felt they were for an active shooter event – and only 21 percent felt that they were prepared. 79 percent replied that their organizations were *at best* somewhat prepared for an active shooter incident. Even among those who feel prepared, only 7 percent are “very much prepared.”

Despite recognition of active shooter situations as a major problem, companies are not addressing the problem and must educate, plan and prepare to manage such an incident.

Respondents were also asked about whether executives and leaders in their organizations were more concerned

about employee or student safety than they were two years ago and an overwhelming majority (79 percent) stated that they were.

Communication During Critical Events Is A Major Challenge

71 percent say that communicating to impacted individuals is their biggest challenge during an active shooter situation. Security leaders also face the challenge of locating people who may be in an impacted building or facility (55 percent). Companies must prepare for active shooter situations by developing and practicing a communications plan.

Despite Recognizing Violent Acts As Top Threats, Companies Are Still Unprepared

While respondents reported that they understood the threat of violent acts – and the need for communication channels to be in place – many are still unprepared.

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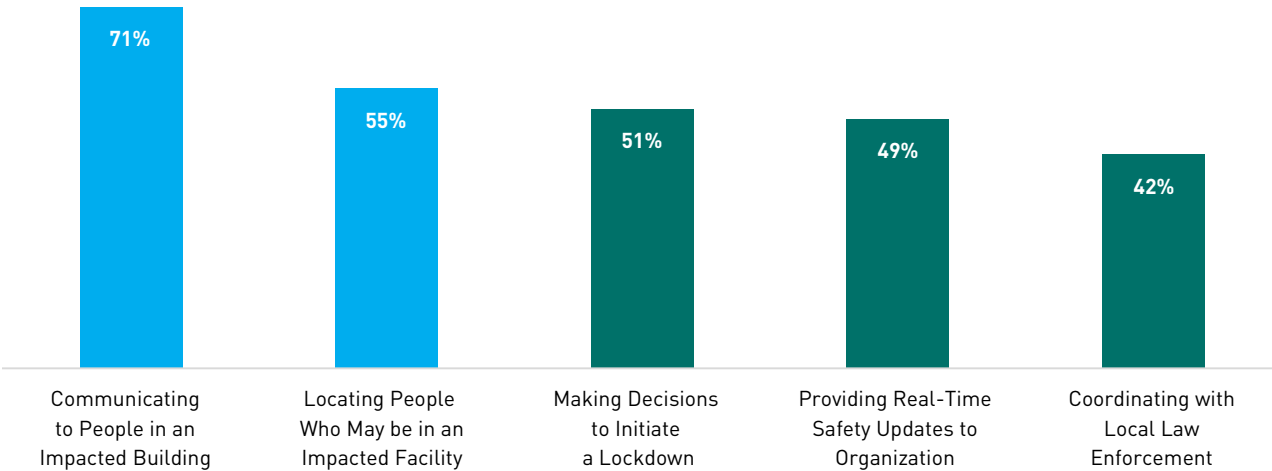
A similar margin to the above (44 percent) stated that they did not have a plan in place to communicate and escalate alerts in active shooter situations to those most likely to be impacted.

A majority of respondents (61 percent) shared that they do not run any active shooter preparedness drills at all, further showing how unprepared companies are for potential incidents.

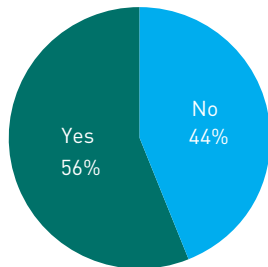
ABOUT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY SOLUTIONS

EMS Solutions has been providing professional services in the area of incident management, business continuity planning, and safety exercise design since 1982. During that time, EMS Solutions has worked with over 1,000 clients, including many Fortune 1000 companies. A partial list of clients includes Nike, IMF, Whole Foods Market, Northern Trust,

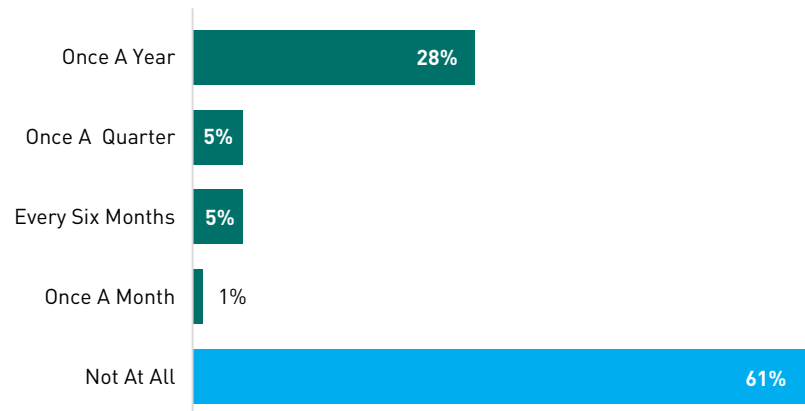
DURING A LOCATION SPECIFIC ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENT, WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES/CONCERNS?



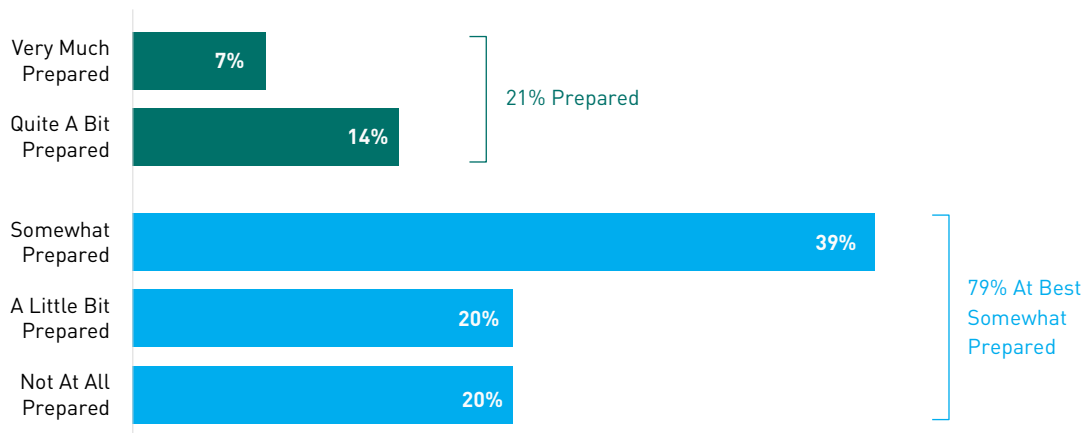
DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE AN ESTABLISHED PLAN OF HOW TO COMMUNICATE AND ESCALATE ALERTS IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION TO THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE IMPACTED?



HOW OFTEN DO YOU RUN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL?



ON A SCALE OF 1 5, HOW PREPARED DO YOU FEEL YOUR ORGANIZATION IS FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT?



VISA, Lam Research, Intuit, Stanford University, International Paper, Bank of Canada, PG&E, Cal-ISO and the World Bank. Regina Phelps, RN, BSN, MPA, CEM, EMS Solutions; Founder, is an internationally recognized expert in the field of emergency management and continuity planning. For more information, please visit www.ems-solutionsinc.com.

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PREPARING FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT: A TABLETOP EXERCISE

BY TED BROWN



Image: Maria Giannopoulos, Mifflin Street Meeting, John Benson

If your organization has never fired anyone, has never laid anyone off, has only single employees that have never been married or divorced, and have no significant others in their lives, then you don't have to worry about Work Place Violence (WPV) or an Active Shooter. If your organization does NOT fit this profile, then you need to prepare for an Active Shooter. Management needs to understand that they are personally liable for not providing for the safety and security of their staff (OSHA 1910-34139). Several executives have been convicted under that statute and are serving time in jail.

Management needs to educate their staff regarding how to act during an active shooter incident. An employee needs to know:

- How to identify themselves as not being a threat to the law enforcement personnel (e.g. cell phones can look like a weapon during the “fog of combat”, backpacks can be suspected of containing weapons, etc.)
- Their purses, brief cases, tablets, etc. can be confiscated by law enforcement
- During the clearing phase employees or visitors may need to stand in line for an hour or more depending on how many people are involved and how many law enforcement officers are checking people.

Most organizations are unprepared. How do you prepare? Start by creating an “All Hazards” Business Continuity Plan, and an Incident Command Team (ICT) and Plan (ICP). The first is to manage the business for any eventuality, including a Work Place Violence event, when your business may be shut down as an active crime scene. The latter is to manage the incident. Both plans need to be tested, for an untested plan is worse than no plan at all; because it causes Senior Leadership to believe “We’re ready” when they actually are not. And the best way to test both plans is with Tabletop Exercises.

Rules for Successful Tabletop Exercises

Do not start with a workplace violence tabletop: Pick any other scenario to exercise the plans. Regardless of the maturity of the BCP and ICP, most organizations are ill prepared for a Work Place Violence event. Test the plans, publish After Action Reports (AAR), complete the AAR plan improvements. Then conduct a WPV Tabletop.

It takes two, a facilitator and a note taker: Many times we have conducted Tabletop Exercises with organizations that had previously done them with just a leader and no scribe. This approach results in missing or incomplete After Action Reports.

Make it realistic and include news film footage, quotes, and articles such as:

“ The Term ‘Active Shooter’ is a perfect description for what happens in these increasingly familiar incidents. One or more people begin shooting everyone in sight, either for a specific purpose or simply at random. As to be expected, when a new rash of crimes comes into being, law enforcement begins adapting and gearing up to meet the challenges the incidents present. ”

Source: Lt. Dan Marcou, Retired, 32 years with the La Crosse, Wisconsin Police Department.

“ A man who became distraught as he was being briefed on his mother’s condition by a surgeon at Johns Hopkins Hospital pulled a gun and shot and wounded the doctor Thursday, then killed his mother and himself in her room at the world-famous medical center, police said. The gunman, 50-year-old Paul Warren Pardus, had been listening to the surgeon around midday when he became emotionally distraught and reacted, and was overwhelmed by the news of his mother’s condition. – Baltimore ”

Source: Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld III.

“ Pennsylvania man shoots, kills ex-wife as she plays organ at church service. The deranged elementary school teacher shot his ex-wife and then returned moments later to shoot her again and make sure she was dead, police said. ”

The Associated Press

The initial exercise should be conducted without law enforcement to get people familiar with the concepts and identify areas for improvement. Thereafter try to engage law enforcement in the exercises. Try to establish a liaison relationship with the local police and fire departments.

Some key principles

- Participants can’t say “Probably”
 - Remember, the purpose of the Tabletop is to test and improve the BCP or ICP. When someone says “probably,” that means they’re speculating and not executing the plan.
- Ask participants: “Where is it written?” – Like the “probably” issue above, this question is to verify what’s being said is what’s written in the plan.

- Participants shouldn’t say: “We did that a few moments ago.” Remember we’re operating against a timeline. In real life you can’t go back.
- When the facilitator asks “Who”, the answer must be specific. Specify names and functions or responsibilities.
- There are no wrong answers! Don’t discourage participation.
- Best practices change, so annually review the corporate procedures against the current best practices and update as appropriate.

Objectives and Scope of Tabletop Exercises

- Discuss communication paths and capabilities. In a disaster, the most important thing is communication. In a disaster, the first thing to break is communication.

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- Ensure the functionality of the Business Continuity Plan or Incident Command Plan. Do they work?
 - Verify the essential functions, critical processes, and dependencies are identified. They should have been identified in the BIA and documented in the plans.
 - Identify how each critical process will continue. Will work-arounds be required? Do they exist?
 - Verify team members understand their roles and tasks. It's a good idea to conduct Tabletops with just the back-up personnel, after thoroughly testing the plans with the primary team members.
 - Document gaps and shortfalls, but DON'T FIX them. This is a very important role for the facilitator. It's human nature to want to immediately fix a problem once identified. Resist this temptation. Document the problem for inclusion in the After Action Report.
 - Match expectations to human behavior. Will people actually do what the plan says they are supposed to do? Many ICPs assume that employees will assemble outside so that a head-count can be taken. With an active shooter, isn't that the last thing we want? But the ICT and ICP must have a way of identifying who got out and who's still inside. That's the first thing the police will want to know when they arrive.
- The facilitator and scribe must review the notes immediately following the exercise.
 - The AAR must contain specific action items, individual named owners and completion due dates.
 - The AAR must be in at least two forms: a spreadsheet with the Action item, owner and due date and an Executive Summary document.
 - The AAR should be presented in at least two different meetings: To the Tabletop participants and to Senior Leadership. For the ICT, there may be some overlap. But a key concept and frequent finding is that the CEO or most senior elected official should not be the Incident Commander. They should manage the organization's business, not the incident.

Some sample notes from actual WPV Tabletops

1. Would lock down – won't work when lose power – doors would automatically unlock: Investigate alternatives.
2. Unclear what external property manager would do: Meet with property manager to understand their role.
3. Building has no PA; how would employees be alerted: develop an emergency notification capability.
4. No panic button at reception: investigate installing a button or two (one internal; one for the police.)
5. Off-line discussion with HR on policy for employee with restraining order: Develop and document policy and procedure.

Quality After Action Reports

- They require a separate "scribe." It's impossible to both facilitate and take notes.

6. Make sure the ICP has a decision to communicate with customers or not based on the event and the communications: update ICP.
7. Reinforce WPV plan; need floor plans; revisit panic button: provide floor plans to ICT and first responders.
8. Critical – employee relations – how do we communicate out to employees: determine how to communicate to employees and vice versa.
9. What do we expect from Security (outsourced – not employees), and do they have the capability: Meet with external physical security organization.
10. What about cars in the garage? How to sweep? : Develop and document procedures.

Conclusion

Every organization needs Business Continuity Plans and Incident Command Teams and Plans. These plans must be tested at least once a year. The lowest risk, highest return way to test these plans is Tabletop Exercises which require two facilitators. The CEO should not be the Incident Commander. Employee, customer, and stake holder communications are key and will be the first thing to break. Most external security organizations are not armed and will not intercede with an Active Shooter. Educate! Educate! Educate! Test! Test! Test!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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ACTIVE SHOOTERS AND THE EVOLVING THREAT ENVIRONMENT

BY ANDREW WOODS



This opinion piece conveys the perspective of a UK-based author on the current state of security and terrorism issues across the globe. The piece conveys the perspective of a UK subject who has lived with the threat of domestic and international terrorism all his life. A number of simple but effective strategies are outlined that have been developed through years of practical experience of having to manage terror related issues.

[We Always Fight the Last War](#)

Europe and the United Kingdom have faced terror attacks for many years. The asynchronous style and format of attacks have varied but the intended result is always the same. Terror is described by MI5 as: “The use or threat of action designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public, or a section of the public; made for the purposes of advancing a

political, religious, racial or ideological cause; and it involves or causes:

- Serious violence against a person
- Serious damage to a property
- A threat to a person's life
- A serious risk to the health and safety of the public; or
- Serious interference with or disruption to an electronic system.

From the IRA bombing in Birmingham to the Bombing of the London underground in 2007, the goals have been the same: to change government policy. For some years the methods to do so have remained similar, until Beslan in 2004, the Mumbai attacks in 2011 and Kenya.

Bombing buildings and public transport had been the preferred method. Planning a bombing campaign requires training and an often complex logistical and support network. The security services across the globe became very good at intercepting and neutralising these threats because of the complexity. Thankfully, the same was true with chemical and biological attacks. In fact, the security services have driven a change in the style of attacks because of their success.

So What Does the New Landscape Look Like?

Many in the security services say "it's not if but when." While bombing remains a threat, it may no longer be the tool of choice. Attacks may include bombs – in particular, suicide bombs – but will often feature multiple methods of attack. The style of attacks have three main driving forces:

- Civilian casualties, which are often more desirable than collateral damage
- Simple attacks against "soft" targets, which will still make the news
- Economic shutdown of areas through heightened risk or alleged attacks

Breaking this down into plain English means that the blueprint of such attacks to come will take the form of:

- Mass attacks: Groups of organised attackers aiming to cause mass casualties such as Paris or San Bernardino

MY HISTORY WITH TERROR ATTACKS

Terror alerts are the new normal says the (Telegraph), but for anyone who grew up in the '80s, like myself this is nothing new - having lived under the threat of the Irish Republican Army and listening to stories of the Blitz. One of my first memories of a terror incident in the '80s is of being evacuated from a Woolworth's in Croydon because of a suspect package. Thankfully, it was a false alarm. Unlike September 11, 2001 – that is a date I will always remember with a chill and a feeling of dread in my stomach. At the time I was working for a company with offices in the towers. I recall the panic at the Head Office, trying to account for everyone. We couldn't contact two people who were both friends and colleagues and so started the frantic search! Trying every phone you could. Constantly refreshing web pages and watching the rolling news for any piece of information, until the phone and internet systems went down. Thankfully they both turned up alive and well no more than 24 hours later. The pattern repeated itself on July 7, 2007, with yet more high-profile attacks in London. Again there was a frantic search for friends and loved ones. Watching the 24/7 rolling news and having that numb feeling that makes you sick to your stomach. Even so, we must go on. We must not let the terrorists win. We must keep calm and carry on.

My story is not uncommon. My attitude to terror is not uncommon for England. My experiences above will hopefully give you some insight to the article.

- Low-intensity attacks: Small numbers using improvised weapons such as cars and knives
- False reports of terror attacks: Cause authorities to falsely respond

One or a combination of these styles of attack require a smaller logistics and support network than the larger-scale operations described above. In some cases they require none other than the

desire to attack – such as the killing of Drummer Lee Rigby. The security services continue to intercept the threats but as we have seen in Brussels and Munich, casualties do not even need to occur for the impact to be large.

With many of the recent incidents the attackers have not only been themselves prepared to die, but see this as a key objective of the operation, along

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

with mass casualties. This will often mean that those taken captive will be executed in cold blood as seen in Belsen, Kenya, Mumbi and Paris, with people having to play dead, running AND escaping as those captured are executed. Even the government advice telling people to hide has been widely criticised as when faced with no choice they may be forced to fight back. Trying to get a bomb on to a plane is complex and time consuming. Training, arming and deploying shooters is less so but still difficult. “Lone wolf” attacks with cars, knives and improvised weapons require little to no planning. It is no leap of the imagination to conclude we will see more mass civilian attacks.

With live streaming so readily available and ISIS forces already using Go Pro cams in Syria, it will only be a matter of time before we see terrorists live streaming the carnage they are causing as it happens.

A Nation Responds

A factor that is often overlooked is how a population responds to a terrorist attack. This can best be measured in the ways that France and Belgium responded to the December 2015 attacks.

Following the shootings in Paris many local people flooded the streets the following day to lay flowers and show respect to the fallen, ignoring advice from the local security services.

Conversely, in Belgium the city of Brussels was on total lock down. Many people reporting that shops remained closed, and road and rail were deserted.

Different cities – even different demographic populations – will respond differently.

Significant factors in the selection of future targets include the level of security at a location, if civilians are armed or if armed police or the army are present, and the infrastructure in place to respond. As mentioned above, the logistical differences between an active shooter attack and events such as bombings play a significant role in target selection.

The New Media

The attack in Paris continued the transition of how media reports terror. Material that would never have been shown was broadcast live, uncensored on the internet. In the past any reporter that posted such graphic footage would never have worked again. The Bataclan marked a watershed moment of such unfiltered content.

With 24/7 media now reporting raw feeds directly to websites and TV we can expect to see footage that is more graphic than ever before. Often during a crisis pictures or footage may be posted before the emergency services have arrived.

With live streaming so readily available and ISIS forces already using Go Pro cams in Syria, it will only be a matter of time before we see terrorists live streaming the carnage they are causing as it happens.

Conclusions

With the evolving threats it is vital to understand how to respond and what you as an individual or emergency management professional can do to reduce risks to yourself or organization, particularly in reference to the active shooter scenario which can involve an unknown number of perpetrators and attacks that can vary in length and intensity. The conclusions are split into three sections:

- Personal
- Governmental
- Business

Personal

As an individual there are three simple steps you can take to protect yourself:

- **Be alert.** Keep your eyes and ears open to what is going on around you.
 - Watch for suspicious activity
 - Turn your music player down so you can hear what is going on
- **Know your location.** Look for exits, stair cases and ways out.
- **Do not stop.** If you are exiting a location do not stop to take pictures or videos or to call others.

A major question that arises alongside these questions is, “Should I shelter in place or escape?” This is above all a personal decision and it should be remembered that hostages are often not the priority for the attackers.

Taking these three simple steps can significantly increase your chances of survival. It may seem like common sense but some people choose to record video rather than evacuate.

ADDITIONAL STEPS INCLUDE:

- **Be prepared.** Keep some simple supplies with you – water, a flash-light and a first aid kit. Additional items: Heavy duty gloves and shoes, a dust mask, map, spare power supply for your mobile and eye protection
- **Have a plan.** Designate a safe place and know how to get to it.
- **Learn to save a life.** Trauma treatment and tourniquets applied by civilians do often save lives. It could even be your own!
- **Exercise.** Both your exit strategy and yourself as you may need to walk home.

In many cases where metropolitan centres have been attacked, public and private transport networks have been shut down. Being prepared to walk out or stay overnight is a good precaution to take.

Governmental

In the event that a major terrorist attack occurs the governmental responses will be focused on containing the attack, managing casualties and managing those directly impacted. Giving clear

instructions on how and when to act is essential. After a major incident the lack of public information creates a vacuum of information. This vacuum will be filled by the media or worse social media.

Social media is often seen as a cheap and effective way to quickly communicate with many people during an event. While this can be true it is not a guaranteed solution because:

- Posts/Tweets age quickly and become outdated or irrelevant.
- There is no guarantee a person has read the most up to date message.
- Your feed can be hijacked.

It is critical in a major incident to remain in control and ensure that messages get to the right people at the right time. From evacuating an area to keeping the public informed of critical information this can help reduce casualties, aid in responding to the incident and keep the public informed. A good example was how mass communication was used during the Boston bombings and should serve as a template for how to respond.

- At the point of the explosions mass communications were used to account for employees and conduct welfare checks.
- Mass Comms were then used to inform people of route closures and areas to avoid.
- Finally, mass comms were used in detaining the suspects by keeping residents informed about the police operations.

After some incidents communities will often come together to help restore the area. This sentiment can be a blessing or a curse depending on the situation. It will depend on the attitude towards terror. A good illustration of this is the way that Paris and Brussels reacted after the terror threats and attacks in December of 2015. In Paris many people despite being told to stay in contracted to morn and lay flowers for the lost. While in Brussels business reported a 90% loss of business. Having

the community engage and help with a clean-up or donate blood will be seen by the media as a very positive step.

Business

Planning for a terror attack as a business is often seen as a folly as there is a wide held belief that the government will take care of the situation. The police are best equipped and trained to deal with a terrorist incident--but it does not require you to be the specific target to be impacted. The disruption can be far more wide reaching than just the incident location. While the incident is ongoing you may be left to manage the situation as the authorities will be managing the actual incident and its fallout. This may result in businesses needing to rely on your employees and networks to ensure you can carry on working, ensure your employees are safe and manage any additional actions. The disruption for a wide spread terror attack often materialises in restricted access to an office or location. When the next attack happens there are a handful of Golden Rules by which to live:

HAVE A PLAN

- Contact your employees, especially the travelling ones.
- Manage the media.
- Contact governmental bodies if required.
- Keep your business operation at a minimum acceptable level.
- Be prepared to manage the emotional fallout of the incident.

EXERCISE THE PLAN

- Ensure that the leadership know the plan.
- Ensure your employees know how to respond.
- Have your crisis team plan out different scenarios.

Having a well-rehearsed plan and communication strategy can significantly help you in a terrorist attack but it may also be used in other events. Often the largest concern after an attack is locating and ensuring people are OK. To do this effectively you need a multi

modal system as single modes can return results as low as less than 10%, while manual calling trees take far too long, are too labour intense and unreliable.

An area that is often overlooked is the emotional effect of a terror attack. For a person to be affected they do not necessarily need to be involved in the incident. Employees may be shocked or stunned because of the attack. This may result in productivity dropping to employees needing or waiting to go home. It is essential that if this occurs to ensure that you engage with the correct agencies and healthcare professionals. Many larger companies have welfare programs that can be utilised. Services may also be made available through health care and through agencies such as police departments. It is vital to engage with professionals in trauma and grief counselling to ensure the welfare of employees.

Summary

In 2016 the threat of global terror is only going to increase. Numerous groups are dedicated to attacking the West. This is underscored with many Police, Army and Governmental bodies saying 'it's not if but when.' Attacks will be against softer targets with civilian casualties as the goal. The least protected are seen as the optimal targets, with a primary focus on casualties. While we have limited control of the complex geopolitical situation, we can do our little bit by preparing ourselves, communities and companies.

In this article I have quoted many terrorist attacks and news stories, all illustrating tragic cases where friends, families and loved ones have been lost. The cases I have referenced only represent a small number of the total of global events.

What we can do is be prepared to respond to the event, be prepared for the type of attack and then keep calm and carry on.



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