

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POLICE



What is an Active Shooter?

- An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.
- Active Shooters are unpredictable and the situation evolves quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.
- Most situations are over within 10 to 15 minutes, before specialized law enforcement units arrive. Individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter to save their own lives.

ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

- Suspect activity is *immediately* causing death and serious injury in an environment with the potential for mass casualties. These could include:
 - School
 - College Campus
 - Shopping Mall
 - Sporting Event
 - Workplace
 - Restaurant

- Though not the first Active Shooter event nor even the first Active Shooter event in a school, the events of April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO changed the way law enforcement responds to these types of events.

COLUMBINE



- April 20, 1999
- Littleton, CO
- 2 SUSPECTS (STUDENTS)
 - DYLAN KLEBOLD
 - ERIC HARRIS
- 13 KILLED
- 23 WOUNDED
- Killings occurred between 1119 hrs and 1135 hrs (16 minutes)
- Both suspects commit suicide at 1208 hrs
- Law Enforcement arrive on scene within three minutes of start of incident including SRO who was eating lunch in parking lot.
- Patrol forms a perimeter around the campus and building.
- SWAT enters building at 1206 hrs
- Police discover bodies of suspects in library at approximately 1510 hrs

“The Columbine Effect”

- No immediate police intervention is due to lack of training and a departmental policy to wait for SWAT action.
- Failure of immediate police action likely results in lives lost.
- Review of law enforcement actions results in a paradigm shift empowering patrol officers to take immediate action to prevent further loss of life in ACTIVE SHOOTER situations.

“The Columbine Effect”

- Law enforcement response practices that changed as a result of lessons learned after Columbine have resulted in faster intervention by police and have saved lives at numerous events including:
 - College: VA Tech - 2007
 - School: Newtown, CT - 2012
 - Mall: Salt Lake City, UT - 2007
 - Workplace: Naval Ship Yard: Washington, DC - 2013
 - Numerous Others

WORKPLACE SHOOTINGS

- Much more likely than a school shooting event.
- In U.S. between 1999-2009, roughly 600 homicides occurred at the workplace each year.
- Shootings accounted for approximately 80% of homicides.

(US Dept. Of Labor Statistics)

WORKPLACE SHOOTING: EDGEWATER TECHNOLOGY

- December 26, 2000
- Wakefield, MA
- ONE SUSPECT
- Employee Michael McDermott
 - Rifle, shotgun, pistol
 - .460 Weatherby Mark V at his workstation
 - Disgruntled over financial dispute with superiors
- SEVEN DEAD
- Suspect committed shootings, moved to building lobby and awaited police arrival.
- Suspect surrendered to police without further incident.



POLICE RESPONSE

PRIORITIES

During an active shooter response, police will prioritize the following objectives:

- Stop Active Shooter
- Rescue Innocents and Victims
- Provide Medical Assistance
- Preserve the Crime Scene

POLICE RESPONSE

TACTICS

- Police officers, working alone or in small teams, will move through the building attempting to locate the suspect. If located, police will stop and apprehend the suspect including application of appropriate use of force.

POLICE RESPONSE

Once the suspect is in custody and the potential threat is reduced, police personnel will begin a methodical evacuation of the building to:

- 1) Locate and treat the injured
- 2) Account for building occupants
- 3) Ensure additional suspects are apprehended
- 4) Conduct interviews of all building occupants

POLICE RESPONSE

AFTERMATH

- Building occupants should expect potentially long periods of time before they are contacted by police teams in the building. There will likely be little information or guidance available during the event. Repeatedly calling 911 to ask for information will only delay the response and tie up resources. Police will need to interview all building occupants and this may be a long process.

POLICE RESPONSE

- The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers.
- These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises.
- Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

REPORTING THE INCIDENT

When communicating to law enforcement or to a 911 dispatcher, the following information is critical to provide:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter(s)
- Number and type of weapons held by the shooter(s)
- Number of potential victims at the location

How to react when law enforcement arrives

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

LOCKDOWN vs. EVACUATION

Two strategies for preserving your safety

- Selecting the appropriate strategy depends:
 - your abilities
 - your responsibility to others in the building
 - the ability to secure your area
 - the avenue of evacuation
 - actionable information regarding the location of the threat

PLANNING

- Employers should have a plan for their workplace and workforce in the event of an emergency.
- Plan should include mitigation of threat, response in case of emergency in the building and aftermath of event.
- Selecting strategy will depend on numerous factors.

BUILDING STRATEGIES

- These events are rapidly evolving and loss of life can occur very quickly.
- Once the building population comes in contact with the threat, the chance for loss of life greatly increases.
- Strategies should be based in delaying contact between the threat and the building population for as long as possible.
- Delaying contact allows time for first responding officers to arrive on scene, locate the threat and take appropriate action.

BUILDING STRATEGIES

- The safety of the building population can be based on providing buffering layers between the building population and the threat.
 - Deny the threat access inside the building
 - Deny the threat free mobility inside the building
 - Deny the threat access to rooms/secure areas inside the buildings
 - Building population must have contingency plans to move if buffering fails

BUILDING STRATEGIES

- If buffering is not possible due to nature of the facility, then evacuation may be better option.
- In general, evacuation will increase confusion, reduce the effectiveness of the law enforcement response and may cause contact between the threat and the building population.

EMERGENCY PLANS

- CLEAR
- ROBUST
 - REDUNDANCIES
- DECENTRALIZED (AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE)
- RAPIDLY IMPLEMENTABLE
- ALLOWS FOR MODIFICATION BASED ON RAPIDLY-EVOLVING EVENTS

PLAN PRIORITIES

- IDENTIFY
- COMMUNICATE
- RAPID IMPLEMENTATION
- CONTINGENCY PLANNING
- AFTER-EVENT RESPONSE

IDENTIFY

- IDENTIFY THE THREAT
 - What qualifies as a “THREAT”?
 - Who determines what qualifies as a “THREAT”?
 - What types of events will trigger the application of the plan?

COMMUNICATE

- Activation of the response plan must be communicated to the entire facility and facility population.

RAPID IMPLEMENTATION

- Once the THREAT is identified, the response plan must be able to be activated quickly.
- Once the plan is activated, the plan must be able to be implemented in a short amount of time.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- Plan must be able to react to rapidly evolving events.
- Stakeholders must understand that the plan cannot address every eventuality.
- Stakeholders may have to make their own decisions about their safety and their course of action.

AFTER EVENT RESPONSE

- Plan should have considerations for post-event activities.
 - Interaction with law enforcement including investigators
 - Interaction with the media

QUESTIONS?