



**Three Essential Goals
of
Workplace Violence Response**

Actions that every building must take to effectively respond to a serious workplace violence incident

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Three Essential Goals of Workplace Violence Response

A Practical Guide for Property Managers, Chief Engineers and Security Directors

Over the past decade, workplace violence incidents have become a hot topic in the media. Numerous times each year we hear of another workplace assault where there are multiple casualties. Incidents where there are only one or two casualties have become so common that they no longer shock the public conscious and are rarely reported on a national level.

In April 2014 U.S. Attorney General Holder requested \$15 million in funding for law enforcement “active shooter” training. This is vitally important training for police response, but no one is discussing what actions can and should be taken before the police arrive. How can building management and security intervene/react effectively to reduce injuries and loss of life.

We are going to discuss the three critical goals that every commercial building should strive to achieve if there is a serious workplace violence incident. How these goals are achieved is going to vary from building to building. **There is no “one size fits all” approach.**

NOTIFICATION

The first goal of our response plan is rapid notification. Depending on your building, there are several different types of notification that need to be given.

Police Notification

Lets start with police notification. I know what most of you are probably thinking, police notification is so obvious why are we wasting time discussing it. The reason is that when we conduct our workplace violence response scenario exercises we commonly have issues with the police notification. It is common for the person calling 911 to give nonessential information to the evaluator playing the role of the 911 operator. It was such a common problem that we created 911 Notification Pocket Cards that we distribute to everyone who works in one of our client buildings.

The first thing that needs to be relayed to the 911 operator is the physical location of the incident. Followed by the essential details, suspect description, injuries and the best place for responding officers to meet building security.

Electronic Notification

Many buildings now have the systems to electronically notify everyone on the contact list. An electronic notification should be transmitted so that everyone who is not currently at the location of the incident will stay away. It is important to note that electronic notification should not be the primary method used to notify everyone currently in the building.

Audible Notification

In the event of an incident either in the building or in the vicinity of the building, an audible notification should be transmitted over the buildings PA system. It is our contention that the notification should inform them of the threat and the last known location of the threat. The notification should NOT tell them what they should do. That decision should be made by them. Each individual course of action is determined by where they are in relation to the threat.

AREA DENIAL

Area denial is crucial because it changes the landscape and options for the hostile actor. The primary benefit of area denial is that it reduces the number of potential victims. If you rapidly take action and restrict the suspects access to all or part of the building, you have effectively saved the life of every person in that area. The circumstances will dictate when lockdown procedures should be enacted.

The other benefit of area denial is that it makes it easier for the responding police officers to locate a suspect. When training police officers' active shooter response, one of the points that I repeatedly drive home is: **time equals lives**. If the suspect is able to freely move about the facility it will greatly increase the amount of time that it takes the police to locate the individual. In contrast, when police know the general location of the suspect they can aggressively move to that location and quickly engage.

FACILITATION OF RAPID POLICE RESPONSE

In virtually every workplace violence incident involving a firearm, the perpetrator is expecting to be the only person with a firearm. When the police arrive, one of three things is going to happen: surrender, suicide or a gunfight with police. Any three of those results are good for everyone in the building. J. Pete Blair, Ph. D. of Texas State University recently released a report about active shooter events from 2000 to 2010. In his report Blair stated that in 56% of the attacks, violence was still occurring when the police arrived and had to use force to end the incident.

What does all of this mean to you? **The quicker that we can get police to the threat, the quicker the attack will stop and more lives will be saved.**

Meet First Responders Outside

This goal is achieved a variety of ways. First, advise the police of the safest route to approach the building and, if possible, meet the responding officers outside the

building. Next, approach the police in the least threatening manner possible. In most workplace violence incidents the suspect looks the same as everyone else. Because of this, security needs to let the responding officers know that they are not a threat. The best way to do this is to approach the officers with hands open, empty and over the shoulders. Security officers should not get offended if responding officers initially treat them like a potential suspect. The police officers are just trying to process everything coming at them.

Repeat Important Information

Even though the 911 call has been made and the details of the situation have been relayed to the operator, give the first responders a quick update of the incident. When there is an incident, there are many calls to 911. A variety of suspect descriptions will be coming into 911. Be sure to repeat the suspect information and the last known location of the suspect.

Building Specific Information

With Fortress Consulting, all of our instructors are veteran law enforcement officers and active shooter response instructors. When we were designing our training program we sat together and brain stormed what items we would want if we had to respond to a serious incident. When our list was finalized we created our P.A.S.E. kit (Police Active Shooter Equipment) kit. We supply all of our client building with a P.A.S.E kit. If your building has a kit that has building specific information, make sure that the kit is given to responding officers. It is doubtful that a police officer in a metro area will be intimately familiar with every office building. A building specific kit will give first responders to tools that they need to rapidly move through the building and locate the suspect.

CONCLUSION

All of the tasks needed to achieve these goals should be compiled into a response procedure. Once that procedure is written, it is imperative that the plan is tested in a training exercise. I cannot stress this point enough: any emergency response plan that has not been tested is merely theory. Realistic, scenario based training that is

being conducted by qualified instructors will point out weak points in a response plan. Once those weak points are identified, correct the issue with a new protocol
In closing ASSESS - PLAN - TRAIN - REPEAT.