

Active Shooter Response — Preparedness is the Key

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." - Benjamin Franklin

Emergency planning is often performed as a result of a catastrophe. Unfortunately, this oversight in advance planning may lead to a more severe outcome. It's important for public entities to be prepared for emergency events since they have a responsibility to protect the public and it's essential for them to respond quickly to assure their operations. The frequency of active shooter incidents has increased over the last few years. The events in the last couple of months can help remind organizations that everyone is vulnerable to catastrophic occurrences. The time to prepare for these situations is now. It's important that organizations provide employees with training on what to do in the event of an active shooter situation.

The Interagency Security Committee, which consists of 54 federal departments and agencies, has published a guidance document called "Planning and Response to an Active Shooter: An Interagency Security Committee Policy and Best Practices Guide". The intent of the document is to provide guidance on the development and implementation of an effective active shooter plan, which includes:

- Proactive steps that can be taken by facility tenants to identify individuals who may be on a trajectory to commit a violent act.
- A preferred method for reporting active shooter incidents, including informing all at the facility and those who may be entering the facility.
- How to neutralize the threat and achieve safety objectives.
- Evacuation, shelter-in-place, hide and lockdown policies and procedure for individual locations.
- Integration with internal incident commanders and external incident responders.
- Information concerning local area emergency response agencies and hospitals (i.e., name, telephone number and distance from location).
- How operations will be restored.

It can be easy for organizations to slip into a state of complacency when it comes to emergency situations because they believe that it won't happen to them. According to a recent report, in only 13 percent of active shooter cases did the subjects make verbal or written threats to cause harm to the target. This shows how important it is for public entities to be prepared to respond when the unexpected occurs.

An active shooter policy is recommended if none exists. If organizations already have a policy, now is a good time to review it. For additional assistance, contact Bill Raab of the Glatfelter Public Practice risk control team at wraab@glatfelters.com.

References

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