

Mass Shootings: Planning and Response

For Fire and EMS services

v1.0

Firefighters Support Foundation

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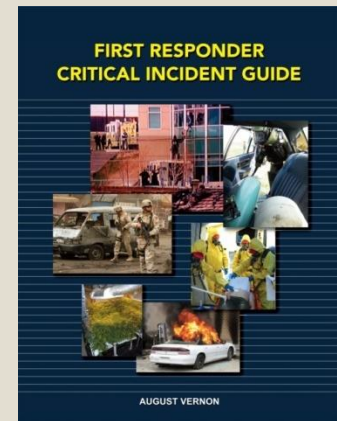
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First Responder Critical Incident Guide

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A video presentation by Mr. Vernon of this program is available free by download at www.ffsupport.org, from the "training" page.

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To prepare first responders, emergency management, school system and other officials with some basic tools and information needed to develop or assess a multi-agency mass shooting response plan.

Goal

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- A rapid, safe and successful response to these chaotic situations requires planning and preparation.
- The likelihood of a mass shooting incident is low, BUT public safety officials must prepare for these situations. Who would have thought that a one-room schoolhouse in Amish country would be the site of a mass shooting?
- Recent mass shootings and active shooter events have demonstrated the need to prepare all local, regional, state, and federal resources to plan for and respond to these events.

Why bother?

- This is not a tactics or hands-on program.
- The guidelines and procedures discussed in the presentation should not replace common sense and experience. It is impossible to plan for every situation.
- New best practices, lessons learned, and training become available on an on-going basis, and your plans and procedures should be updated on a regular basis.

Notes

- The purpose of this program is to:
 - Familiarize first responders and command staffs about trends in active shooter/mass shooting events.
 - Help them to understand the nature of current and emerging threats.
 - Suggest resources, plans and training that will minimize the loss of life in these events.
- This program is not meant as the complete training in and of itself. You will want to supplement this program with training from one of the many good organizations and instructors that can provide further training and exercises.
- We are not trying to tell you **how** to train and plan, but rather **what** to plan and train for.

Purpose

Please remember that this information is only an educational guide and you should **ALWAYS** refer to your local training, guidelines, policies and procedures!

Notice

- The “bad guys” (criminals and terrorists) are more determined, violent and heavily armed than ever before.
- Crisis situations such as terrorist events, criminal attacks, active shooters and similar threats are occurring with alarming frequency.
- No two incidents are the same. Factors ranging from the shooter’s motive, their weapons, knowledge of the location and the number of staff and visitors present can all influence the outcome of an incident.

Threat Trends

- Many organizations have historically regarded safety and security as a low priority rather than an important **function** and **responsibility**. “Spare tire” mentality.
- This sense of security and complacency has been shattered by recent events, including numerous mass shooting incidents and 9-11.

Security is Fundamental

- U.S. schools extensively guard against fire:
 - Fire drills
 - Sprinkler systems
 - Building codes, etc.
- Yet not one *child* has died from fire in any U.S. school in over 25 years (excluding dorm fires).
- Well over 200 deaths have occurred by active shooters in the same period here.
 - But training and preparation for these events meets with stiff resistance and denial

Skewed Priorities

- **Critical agencies must meet and plan together:**
 - Law Enforcement Agencies
 - Fire Department
 - Emergency Medical Services
 - School System
 - Emergency Management
- **Identify the top 5 or 10 locations (target identification)**
 - Elementary Schools
 - High Schools
 - Colleges/Universities
 - High Profile Businesses
 - Large Crowds/Venues
- **Assign an officer to each if possible to assist/liaison.**

Pre-Incident Planning

- Law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency management, school system and other officials all share the same primary priorities during a mass-shooting event: *life safety and incident stabilization.*
- Planning and interagency cooperation for a mass shootings or any critical incident type of event should be paramount.
- Mass shootings can and do occur in metro, urban, suburban and rural settings.

Pre-Incident Planning

- It is critical to bring all the key agencies together, such as law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency management, hospitals and the school system to discuss and plan for this type of event.
- Every jurisdiction, big or small, should have a multi-agency planning group or Terrorism Task Force (TTF). These would be an excellent foundation group to bring this issue before.

Pre-Incident Planning (2)

- Preparation is the key to responding to a mass shooting incident, including a clear idea of your actions before the incident occurs.
- The first step in your preparation is a review of your agencies guidelines and procedures when responding to a mass shooting or threats of violence.
- As with any multi-hazard assessment and planning process, it is a great idea to do a **multi-agency exercise** (tabletop or functional) to bring all the key agencies together and rehearse the plan once it has been completed.

Pre-Incident Planning (3)

- School resource officers are great asset!
- Having facility safety plans in place is critical.
- Know the codes for lock down.
- Be able to identify rooms from the outside.
- If you rely on or will respond with other agencies, you MUST train together.

**Pre-Planning saves lives:
Lessons Learned**

- Every business/school/facility/campus should have a “crisis kit”. It is important that these boxes be updated and ready for immediate use.
- The kit should be in a location that is readily accessible to the staff responsible for the boxes upkeep, transport and security.

Crisis Response Kit

- The designated staff (with deputies when appropriate) in charge of the kit should take it when the facility is locked down or evacuated.
- Kit must be removed during drills for consistent training and planning efforts.
- A back-up kit with duplicate information should be placed in an alternate location in case the primary location is inaccessible.

Crisis Response Kit (2)

- Fire alarm & sprinkler system turn-off procedures
- Utility shut-off valve locations
- Gas line and utility lines lay-out
- Cable television & phone shut-off
- First aid supplies
- Keys / Diagrams of campus
- Teacher, student and employee roster (with photos)
- List of students/employees with special needs
- Blueprints of buildings
- Maps of surrounding area
- Aerial photos of campus

Crisis Response Kit: Example Contents

- Will you loan fire trucks or staff to law enforcement agencies for their use during the response and the investigations? Do you have a policy to do so?
- Law enforcement may need fire and EMS coverage and equipment (vehicles, ladders, breaching tools, fire extinguishers, trauma packs, SKEDs, etc.) during the event.

Pre-Incident Planning

- EMS may need to provide tactical medics and set up several triage areas away from the scene.
- Law enforcement will need to provide security and over watch (sniper protection) for the fire and EMS units entering the hot zone.
- There is tremendous need for an immediate coordinated effort among all agencies to ensure a safe and effective response.

Pre-Incident Planning (2)

Facility/business/school/college management should:

- Prepare a Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that addresses all hazards, including armed attack/violent situations.
- Train their staff to be familiar with the plan.
- Train students/employees on what to do.

Pre-Incident Planning (3)

- When an incident occurs there are a few options:
- Move all staff, students and visitors away from danger.
- If the shooter is near the entrance to a location, the safest option may be to **shelter-in-place**, by going to a room, locking the door, taking cover and staying out of sight.
- If staff, visitors or students can reach an **external exit** while keeping their distance from the shooter, they should evacuate.

Pre-Incident Planning (4)

Create a prevention environment

- Vigilance for warning signs of possible security threats or issues.
- Procedures to report security threats or concerns.
- Staff and students awareness of the environment (suspicious people, activity or items).
- Encouraging staff and students to report suspicious items or behavior.
- Crisis Management Planning Teams

Pre-Incident Planning (5)

- It's very important that police, fire, and EMS train together.
- The site of a disaster is not the place to "try out" new ideas!
- If the security of fire or EMS personnel is ever in question, do not use such tactics.

Pre-Incident Planning/Training



FIRST RESPONDERS SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE, HANDLE, APPROACH OR DISARM A CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED IED; THIS IS A JOB FOR SPECIALLY TRAINED PERSONNEL.

For more information on IEDs, see the Firefighters Support Foundation's program: *Responding to Bombs, Bomb Threats and Suicide Bombers*, www.ffa-support.org.

IEDs

- Multi-agency pre-planning is critical!
- First arriving units have a drastic effect on the progress of the incident. Must quickly and safely conduct a “windshield survey” and provide scene size-up.
- **Remember that there is a difference between “law enforcement on scene” and “scene is secure”.**
- Fire and EMS should remain in staging areas until the scene is secured by law enforcement when possible. This process may take several hours.

Response Issues

- Establish a command post (CP) after contact and rescue teams have been deployed.
- Communicate with LE contact and rescue teams.
- Deploy responding officers (inner and outer perimeter; address relief personnel).
- Deploy medical and fire first responders.
- Designate staging area for arriving units and equipment.
- Contain and protect spectators, families, media.

Unified Command

- Incident scenes spread over a large area may need to be quickly divided into smaller branches/divisions.
- Responders may initially run into victims fleeing the incident. Responding vehicles may attract victims to them.
- Information should be gathered from these individuals and they should be directed to safe areas using verbal commands or PA systems.

Response Issues (2)

- Immediate interagency cooperation/unified command is essential.
- Clear communications (personal and radio) are necessary for effective operations.
- Access to helicopters for overhead assessments is a real plus when possible.

Response Issues (3)

- These situations could become a prolonged hostage event.
- Events are most likely to occur during business/school hours.
- Young children may not understand instructions and may even hide from responders.

Response Issues (4)

- Notify all key agencies & supporting entities as soon as possible (emergency management, hospitals, etc.)
- Plan on a large and immediate media response. **Think OPSEC when it comes to live video!**
- Plan on a large and immediate response of parents, family and friends to the incident scene.

Response Issues (5)

- Fire and EMS personnel should wear helmets and clearly marked fire or EMS jackets.
- If there is any doubt that a responder will not be seen as a firefighter or EMS, responders should wear a road vest or t-shirt with highly visible lettering.
- This can apply to other staff such as emergency management, school officials, management, etc.
- Body armor should be obtained for those responding into the "impact" area when possible.

Response Issues (6)

- Fire alarms and sprinkler systems may be operating, adding additional confusion and noise to the situation. Turn off if not needed.
- Windows should be observed and monitored for signs of attackers, victims, safe areas, etc.
- Responders may have friends or family among the victims, wounded or dead.

Response Issues (7)

- During these types of events, related and unrelated 911-call volume will go up.
- Use a trained and qualified individual to establish a Landing Zone (LZ) or Helispots for multiple aircraft.
- Staging, command, triage, and treatment areas may have to be ½ to 1 mile away from the scene.

Response Issues (8)

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- Use of Tactical Medics in supporting law enforcement operations is encouraged.
- The school/college/business internal crisis management team should be activated as soon as possible. They will have access to plans and crisis kits.
- Business/facility/school resource/security officers and maintenance personnel can provide useful information such as maps, keys and codes.

Response Issues (9)

Have a knowledgeable **Contact Person** at likely targets with:

- Keys.
- Building and grounds layout.
- Procedures for control of utilities.
 - Fire alarm, gas, power, phone, TV, Intercom, Internet.
- Personnel roster.
 - Contact numbers and photo.
- Roster of key responders with numbers.
- First aid supplies.
- Command / Staging / Media / Evacuation sites.

Response Issues (10)

- Tactical medics may be the only staff allowed in the “warm” and “hot” zone to provide care.
- EMS may need to utilize “scoop and scoot” and “load and go” from the incident.
- Casualty collection points may be established in safe areas inside or outside a facility.
- EMS may need to implement disaster procedures such as triage tags, casualty collection points and field treatment areas for minor injuries.

EMS Response Issues

- **Only enter the scene if it is confirmed that all suspects are confined or neutralized! This depends on local guidelines and procedures.**
- Only a small number of fire and/or EMS personnel should enter under these circumstances.
- Additional law enforcement officers should ensure safe passage.
- The healthy civilians can help evacuate the walking wounded.

When to Enter

- Local Emergency Operations Centers (**EOC**) should be activated as soon as possible for long term response, recovery, management, investigative and support efforts.
- Joint Information Center (**JIC**) should be established involving all key agencies and players to manage the local and national media efforts.

Scene Assistance

- Prepare for VIP visits after an incident.



After the Incident

- Family Assistance Centers (**FAC**) may need to be established near the site and other remote locations.
- Helpline phone numbers should be initiated.
- **CISM** (Critical Incident Stress Management) efforts should be considered for all responders.

Scene Assistance

- **Follow local policies and procedures.**
- Each community should have a plan in place to address these types of events.
- The more our public safety agencies prepare, the better they are prepared to respond to and effectively manage any type of situation that might arise. The community has entrusted us with their safety.... **SO LETS PREPARE NOW!**

Conclusion

Thank you & be safe!



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