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INTRODUCTION

Active Shooter situations are very high profile events, and they demand a great deal of attention in the media, and throughout the communities that these events directly involve. As with recent examples, an entire Nation can be drawn toward issues that are fervently debated and passionately argued as people try to ascertain how something like this happened and how could it have been prevented. The Lafayette Police Department would like to share some information on how you can better protect yourself during an Active Shooter situation, and what you can expect from Law Enforcement during our response.

According to the Active Shooter - How to Respond (October 2008) publication from the Department of Homeland Security, "An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearm(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims". We know that these events are over relatively quickly, and Law Enforcement has learned that our response strategies had to change to adapt to this type of threat. There are some things for you to consider as well, to help increase your chances of survival, and to help reduce the casualties of others.

HOW YOU CAN RESPOND

Your best chances for survival may have already improved just by thinking ahead of time, about what you might do during an active shooter scenario. Understanding and knowing your surroundings may be the first step. Do you know where the exits are, and do you have an escape plan? If you cannot escape, do you have a plan to hide and take steps to protect yourself in your current environment? Hiding may be your best strategy given the circumstances. Know that your immediate actions may be copied by others. Children or customers will likely follow the actions of someone perceived as having good situational awareness or someone in a leadership role.

If you evacuate...

- Have a plan for escape if you can do so safely, and leave your personal items behind.
- Follow instructions of the police. When encountering Police, keep your hands visible.
- Help others escape if possible, and do not move wounded people.
- Direct people away from the area an Active Shooter is believed to be located.
- Call 911 if you can do so safely. Provide the Police with the information they ask for.

If you must stay and hide...

- Make sure the active shooter does not see you. They often migrate toward visible, easy targets.
- Close and lock the door to a room if you are inside. If you cannot lock the door, move a heavy piece of furniture in front of the door if possible.

- If there is a window to the room you are in, move away from the window and remain out of sight and silent. Hide behind a cabinet or under a desk.

If you must confront an active shooter...

- Only if there are no other options, and your life is in peril, you may be forced to physically confront and engage the offender in an effort to save your own life.
- Use whatever item(s) you may have access to as a weapon.
- Be as aggressive and forceful as you can in an effort to overpower the shooter.

UNDERSTANDING THE POLICE RESPONSE

Police officers will move as quickly as possible toward the active shooter. This means that police will bypass injured people in the process to first eliminate the immediate threat to life. The Police will quickly form teams and they may not all be dressed the same. Police may be armed with an assortment of weapons and other tactical protective gear. Officers may be shouting commands designed to keep you safe. As a general rule, moving past the officers toward the direction they came from will your best route of escape. Here are some other suggestions.

- Do not yell at officers and remain as calm as possible.
- Keep your hands visible with fingers spread apart.
- Put down any items you have in your hands and avoid any quick furtive movements.
- When it is safe to do so, provide the location of the active shooter(s) and their description.
- When it is safe to do so, provide the types of weapons the shooter possesses.
- If possible, provide the location of victims and their status.

Once you are outside or at a safe location, you will likely be asked to stay in a particular location for several reasons. Police may need additional information from you about what has occurred and who might be involved. Police will also want to begin an accountability process to make sure everyone is accounted for.

A BUSINESS MODEL APPROACH

Businesses should conduct a threat and vulnerability study to consider the possibility of an active shooter scenario, and then determine what plans and preparation are needed for that organization. Schools serve as an excellent example for active shooter planning and training models. A well written plan that is exercised properly will provide a much better chance of keeping employees and customers safe, and help reduce loss of life.

Active shooters at businesses are often known to someone at the organization. The offender can be a current or former employee, or a disgruntled spouse or domestic partner of a current employee. A company's Active Shooter plans may compliment current plans for issues such as Workplace Violence. When developing your organizational plans, consider the creation of a planning team. Bring together the many different stakeholders to increase the effectiveness of the end product. Once a plan is created, it needs to be shared with all employees, and the plan needs to be exercised. If your facility is so inclined, invite local Police to engage in Active Shooter, SWAT, or Bomb Squad training scenarios at your facility.

As with most organization plans, the plans need to be reviewed and updated at least on an

annual basis. Plans should be exercised or trained, and that training should be documented. The plans should be accessible to anyone needing them.

- Create a Zero Tolerance environment for Workplace Violence issues. Treat threats to employees seriously and address the issue immediately when it involves an employee offender.
- Create an effective reporting system to address issues before they become problematic.
- Post evacuation routes clearly. Consider creating a "Safe Room" inside large facilities for employees to use in the event of such an emergency.
- Create an emergency alert notification system so employees know how to react to a given threat based alert or alarm.
- Have a team assess the facility for vulnerabilities. Decide if cameras will benefit your organization.
- Have the same team determine if steps should be taken to secure work areas better by restricting access through improved locks or electronic access points.
- Create a Safety Response Team to immediately address emergencies at your facility. They should have access to secure areas, access to floor plans, a contact list for key personnel, and access to emergency supplies.

After many active shooter events have occurred, we often hear people say that they "never thought it would happen here". We all probably feel the same way, but the reality of it is, we never know. We can hope that it never happens here, but for some of us, we should prepare or plan as if it might. There are steps we can take to reduce the likelihood that it would happen here. Do not tolerate bullying, and treat threatening behavior seriously. Do not ignore warning signs, and communicate effectively.

If you have any additional questions about Active Shooter or Workplace Violence strategies, please contact the Lafayette Police Department at 765-807-1200 or on the web at lafayettepolice.us.