

Interagency active shooter mitigation and preparedness



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The increased frequency of active shooter incidents since 2001 has brought a sobering light for the necessity to improve preparedness, mitigate the risk of active shooter events and put forth efforts intended to prevent future occurrences. Active shooter events evolve quickly and are often times unpredictable incidents that leave nationwide tragedy in their wake and have affected several places where the nations citizens congregate, such as schools, and places of worship. In order to fight this type of attack, first responders and legislators across the nation have turned to mitigation tactics in order to effectively respond and possibly prevent the steadily increasing reoccurrences.

The agreed-upon definition of an active shooter by U. S. government agencies including the US Department of Homeland Security has described the active shooter as an: “ Individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area is “ an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.” Specifically, this definition implies that the shooter involves the use of firearms. Agreeing to a set definition across the board is the first step forward against any type of terror attack including active shooters.

In order to put forth mitigation policies and legislation empirical data and statistical analysis of active shooter scenarios would be needed to provide the baseline for establishing future mitigation programs. In 2013, the president passed into law the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012, granting the attorney general the authority to assist in the

investigations related to violent public events and mass shootings. This research was intended to provide essential results to aid in mitigation and response efforts. Building upon this initiative, two years later, the FBI released a study showing that “ active shooting incidents” had increased at an average annual rate of 16 percent between 2000 and 2013 (Blair and Schweit, 2014). This study found that in the years between 2010 and 2016, on average, 127 Americans were shot in active shootings annually, ranking the United States one of the highest from the rest of the world. The goal of these investigations and studies was to provide federal, state, and local law enforcement with data to base future emergency management plans that aim to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from active shooter attacks. To follow suite the NYPD conducted their own analysis in 2016 to support a mitigation response to the increasing active shooter events. This study was geared more toward finding out similarities among the active shooters in order to analyze ways to mitigate future occurrences.

Following these studies, several presidential and legislative initiatives were able to use this as a basis to begin mitigation concepts across federal and state agencies. One such agency is The Interagency Security Committee (ISC), under the authority of Presidential Executive Orders 12977 and 13286 (Doss & Shepherd, 2015). This committee consists of 54 Federal departments and agencies and is chaired by the DHS. One of its missions is to commit to the implementation of the best practices plan laid out in a guide in which uses the FBI’s 2014 study as the basis. The clear-cut solution across the board was not only to respond to these incidents as they occur but to provide education and training on how to prevent them from

happening in the future. This concept is based off and structured after the emergency management cycle and reverberates throughout all interagency training and implementation.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses the “ whole community” concept and promotes this initiative by providing resources and training on active shooter awareness, incident response, and workplace violence (Doss & Shepherd, 2015). DHS offers free courses, materials, and workshop training on active shooter situations to raise awareness of behaviors that may indicate potential active shooter tendencies. Being able to read signs of trouble within an individual can help to mitigate future attacks, and involves the entire community in the process.

While local and state authorities are usually the first ones on the scene for active shooter responses, the Federal Bureau of investigations is fully devoted to supporting these entities by offering training, expertise and resources prior to and after an active shooter incident occurs. The FBI works within the scope that successful prevention lies with several of the public and private entities collaborating efforts. To which, the FBI offers behavioral awareness training to help academic, mental health, law enforcement, and government entities recognize potential active shooters headed toward violent actions. In 2002, The Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University was created to fulfill the need for active shooter response training specifically geared towards first responders. Later on in 2013, the FBI partnered with the ALERRT Center at Texas State and named ALERRT their national standard for active shooter response training[1]. Receiving similar training across all responders and <https://assignbuster.com/interagency-active-shooter-mitigation-and-preparedness/>

governmental entities improves collaboration and communication among interagency events.

The Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) website has an active shooter resource page available to help with community preparedness. This page offers first responders further training, courses, guidelines, checklists for preparedness, plans and lessons learned application to train from.

Recognizing the increased active shooter threat and the swiftness with which active shooter incidents unfold, these study results support the importance of training and exercises— not only for law enforcement but also for citizens. It is important, too, that training and exercises include not only an understanding of the threats faced but also the risks and options available in active shooter incidents. Seeking to avoid these tragedies is clearly the best result. The FBI remains dedicated to supporting prevention efforts within all communities affected by these tragedies.

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