Planning and Response to an Active Shooter

An Interagency Security Committee Policy and Best Practices Guide

2021 Edition

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
Interagency Security Committee

Change History and Document Control

Rev. #	Date	Changes	Approver
1.0	7/21/2015	Initial Issue	ISC
2.0	11/12/2015	FOUO Information Removed for Public Release	ISC
3.0	2021	Reviewed and updated	ISC

Message from the Interagency Security Committee Chair

A key strategic objective of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is to "defend against urgent threats and hazards." CISA achieves this objective in part through deliberate and collaborative planning and preparedness. As the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Chair, I am pleased to introduce *Planning and Response to an Active Shooter: An Interagency Security Committee Policy and Best Practices Guide, 2021 Edition*.

The ISC vision is *federal facilities, the people who work at them, and those who visit them are safe and secure throughout the country*. The ISC consists of 64 departments and agencies who work to develop security policies, standards, and recommendations for nonmilitary federal facilities in the United States.

This document outlines and updates policy requirements for the development and review of an active shooter preparedness plan, along with the training and exercise(s) necessary to support that plan. Furthermore, it provides recommended guidance intended for use by federal departments and agencies to plan and enhance preparedness for an active shooter incident along the full continuum of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Topics covered in this document include:

- ISC Policy
- Pre-Incident Planning
- Incident Actions
- Post-Incident Recovery
- Resources/Templates

This document represents exemplary collaboration within the ISC Active Shooter Working Group and across the entire ISC.

David Mussington PHD CISSP CMMC-RP
Executive Assistant Director for Infrastructure Security
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

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ISC Policy

Intent

The updated Interagency Security Committee (ISC) policy is intended to be applied to all buildings and facilities in the United States occupied by federal employees for nonmilitary activities. These include existing owned or leased facilities; to be purchased or leased facilities; stand-alone facilities; federal campuses; individual facilities on federal campuses; and special-use facilities. Although ISC policy is not a requirement for agencies of the legislative and judicial branches, wherever possible it should be considered for implementation by those organizations, in particular those who share space with the applicable executive branch departments and agencies to ensure a unified approach to this threat.

Policy

Each facility shall have an active shooter[1] preparedness plan, reviewed annually and updated as needed. At a minimum, a plan shall include the following elements:

- Pre-Incident Planning
    - a) Workplace Violence Prevention[2]
    - b) Communication
    - c) Training
    - d) Exercises
- Incident Actions
    - a) "Run, Hide, Fight"
- Post-Incident Recovery
    - a) Employees
    - b) Operations

For multi-tenant facilities, the Facility Security Committee (FSC) is responsible for the active shooter preparedness plan. For single tenant facilities, the senior representative of the tenant is responsible for the active shooter preparedness plan. When drafting, reviewing, and updating the plan, all facilities shall collaborate with the facility security organization (e.g. Federal Protective Service [FPS], U.S. Marshals Service [USMS], etc.), on-site law enforcement agencies (if applicable), and first responder agencies.

Tenant representatives shall provide training, materials, and awareness discussions to inform employees of active shooter preparedness plans as they are created and whenever they are updated.

- Employees shall be trained in the federally endorsed "Run, Hide, Fight"[3] concept.
- Employees shall be informed of the importance of having a personal plan.
- New employees shall be given active shooter preparedness training during the initial onboarding period and annually thereafter.

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[1]An active shooter is defined as an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. Other terms used include active assailant, active threat, and violent intruder.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources.

[2] Workplace Violence Prevention is a part of the Insider Threat Program. See the National Insider Threat Task Force Mission Fact Sheet dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/products/National_Insider_Threat_Task_Force_Fact_-Sheet.pdf .

[3] Options for Consideration Active Shooter Preparedness video: cisa.gov/options-consideration-active-shooter-preparedness-video The video is also available in multiple languages.

The active shooter preparedness plan shall be exercised periodically (e.g. tabletop, functional, full-scale, etc.) or as the threat warrants. As appropriate, exercises may be narrower in scope to address a smaller portion of the facility or population with emphasis on employee participation. Plans and exercises should consider the needs of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The policy requirements outlined above are requirements for all buildings and facilities in the United States occupied by federal employees for nonmilitary activities. The best practices and recommendations in this document are not policy requirements; instead, they are meant to assist with the implementation of an active shooter preparedness plan as mandated by this policy.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction to Planning Guidance

Our Nation's federal departments and agencies are entrusted with providing safe and secure environments for our government's essential functions and assets, including the personnel and public who may occupy or conduct business at these facilities. Leaders must plan for emergencies at federal facilities that range from active shooter incidents, hostage situations, and similar security challenges to natural threats, which include fires, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and pandemics. Many of these emergencies occur without warning; therefore, it is critical for all facilities to develop plans to help ensure the safety, security, and general welfare of all facility occupants. National preparedness efforts are based on Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 8: National Preparedness. This directive represents an evolution in our collective understanding of national preparedness based on lessons learned from natural disasters, terrorist acts, active shooter incidents, and other violent incidents.

PPD-8 characterizes preparedness using five mission areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Emergency management officials and emergency responders who engage with federal facilities are familiar with this terminology. These mission areas align with the three incident phases: the pre-incident, the incident, and the post-incident. Prevention, protection, and mitigation activities mostly occur before or are modified after an incident, although these three mission areas are frequently applicable during an incident. For example, injury prevention can and should occur before, during, and after an incident. Response activities occur during an incident, whereas recovery activities can begin during and after an incident.

Planning teams at federal facilities responsible for developing and revising Occupant Emergency Plans (OEPs) and procedures should use the concepts and principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to incorporate planning efforts into existing emergency programs and plans that are related to active shooter incidents and other hostile threats.

This document provides Facility Security Committee (FSC) members, emergency planners, disaster committees, executive leadership, and others involved in emergency preparedness, response, recovery and operations planning with detailed discussions of unique issues federal facilities face before, during, and after active shooter incidents. As our Nation continues to draw on lessons learned from active shooter incidents, leaders should incorporate those lessons learned into existing or newly created plans and procedures.

2.0 Background

In this document, we use the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)'s definition of an active shooter: "An individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area."[4] Active shooter incidents are dynamic and quickly evolve. In active shooter cases, firearms are the weapon of choice, but any weapon (such as a knife, etc.) can be used to harm innocent individuals. These incidents affect numerous places where people congregate, such as schools, workplaces, shopping malls, places of worship, and other public areas. The high number of casualties from these kinds of attacks highlights the importance of improving preparedness to help mitigate the effects of potential future occurrences. A single profile does not exist for an active shooter, but comprehensive assessments of incidents, research,

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[4] The FBI's definition of "active shooter" can be found at the following link: fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources

and analyses of previous perpetrators' motives indicate that patterns or target identification methodologies do exist. Although a single active shooter profile does not exist, there are several concerning behaviors of potential active shooters (See *Section 4.1: Workplace Violence Prevention*).

Most attackers experience multiple motivators and stressors prior to carrying out the attack[5]. Attackers may select a single victim to retaliate against a perceived injustice or grievance. Attackers may also direct their aggression toward an entity that embodies a perceived injustice, such as a federal department or agency. Often, intervention is required to stop the shooter and mitigate harm to potential

> **Washington Navy Yard, Building 197**
> On September 16, 2013, an active shooter opened fire at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. The assailant used his authorized access to the Naval Sea Systems Command and, over the course of 70 minutes, killed twelve people and wounded seven before being killed by police.

victims[6]. Therefore, individuals must be prepared, both mentally and physically, to survive for an unspecified duration of time during an active shooter incident.

Continuous evaluation of these incidents is necessary and should be aimed at the detection, management, and resolution of an impending crisis to effectively exercise early prevention mechanisms. In 2019, the FBI published *Active Shooter Incidents: Topical One-Pagers, 2000-2019* outlining statistical data from 277 active shooter incidents within the United States between 2000-2018[7]. Figure 1: *A Snapshot in Time; Key Research Findings* highlights data from this report related specifically to government facilities.

Examples of recommended practices and matters to consider have been included in this document for planning and implementation purposes. However, Facility Security Committees (for multi-tenant facilities) and the senior representative of the tenant (for single-tenant facilities) must consider what is most appropriate for their facility and occupants in conjunction with the facility security organization, local emergency managers, security planners, and first responders. Additionally, planning teams should consider federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial laws and regulations.

Various documents, studies, and websites are devoted to the awareness of active shooter incidents (e.g. the United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, Mass Attacks in Public Spaces – 2019[8]). Reference *Section 7.0: Resources/Templates* for a list of resources and links that may be useful in developing or reviewing active shooter preparedness plans. These websites are updated as lessons are learned. The resources vary in content; collectively, they provide overviews of past shooting incidents, findings, background analyses of shooters, weaponry used, resolution of events, training, equipment, and best practices. The inclusion of certain references does not imply endorsement of any documents, products, or approaches. Other resources may be equally helpful and should be considered as new plans and procedures are created and existing plans and procedures are revised.

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[5] Silver, J., Simons, A., & Craun, S. (2018). A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 – 2013. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20535. (fbi.gov/resources/library)

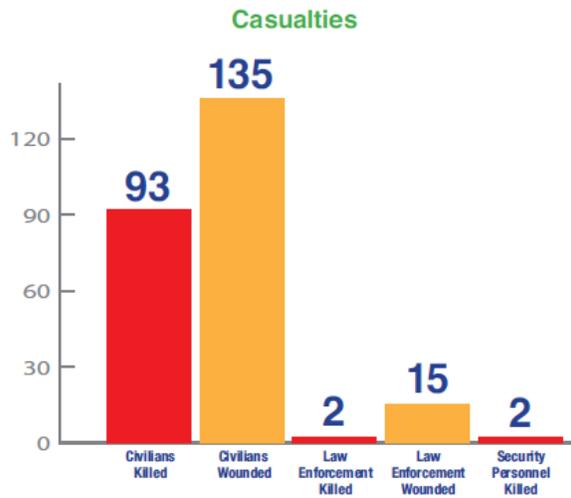[6] Active Shooter Incidents: Topical One-Pagers (fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-one-page-summaries-2000-2018.pdf/view)

[7] Ibid

[8] United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, Mass Attacks in Public Spaces – 2019 secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2020-09/MAPS2019.pdf

Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2019

28 Total **30** Shooters

Casualties

Category	Count
Civilians Killed	93
Civilians Wounded	135
Law Enforcement Killed	2
Law Enforcement Wounded	15
Security Personnel Killed	2

Incident Resolutions

- **5** Commited Suicide (red)
- **10** Killed (green)
- **15** Apprehended (blue)
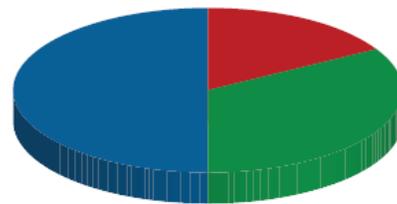
Shooter by Gender

- **29** Males
- **1** Female
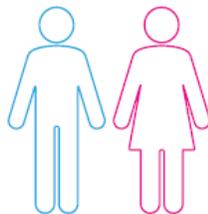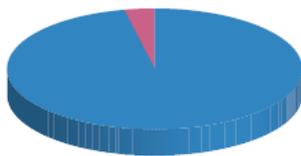
2 Multiple Shooter Incidents

Shooter by Age Group

Age Group	Count
<20	5
20-29	13
30-39	4
40-49	5
50-59	2
60-69	1
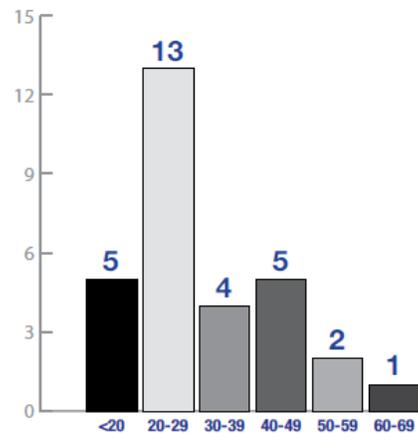
Incidents by Location Type

Commerce: 12   Education: 3   Government: 4   Open Space: 5   Residence: 0   House of Worship: 2   Health Care: 2   Other: 0

Figure 1: A Snapshot in Time; Key Research Findings[9]

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[9] Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2019, the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 2020. fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-in-the-us-2019-042820.pdf/view

Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2019

- Health Care Facilities, 12
- Houses of Worship, 13
- Government Properties, 30
- Educational Facilities, 60
- Other, 3
- Residences, 12
- Open Spaces, 42
- Commercial Facilities, 133
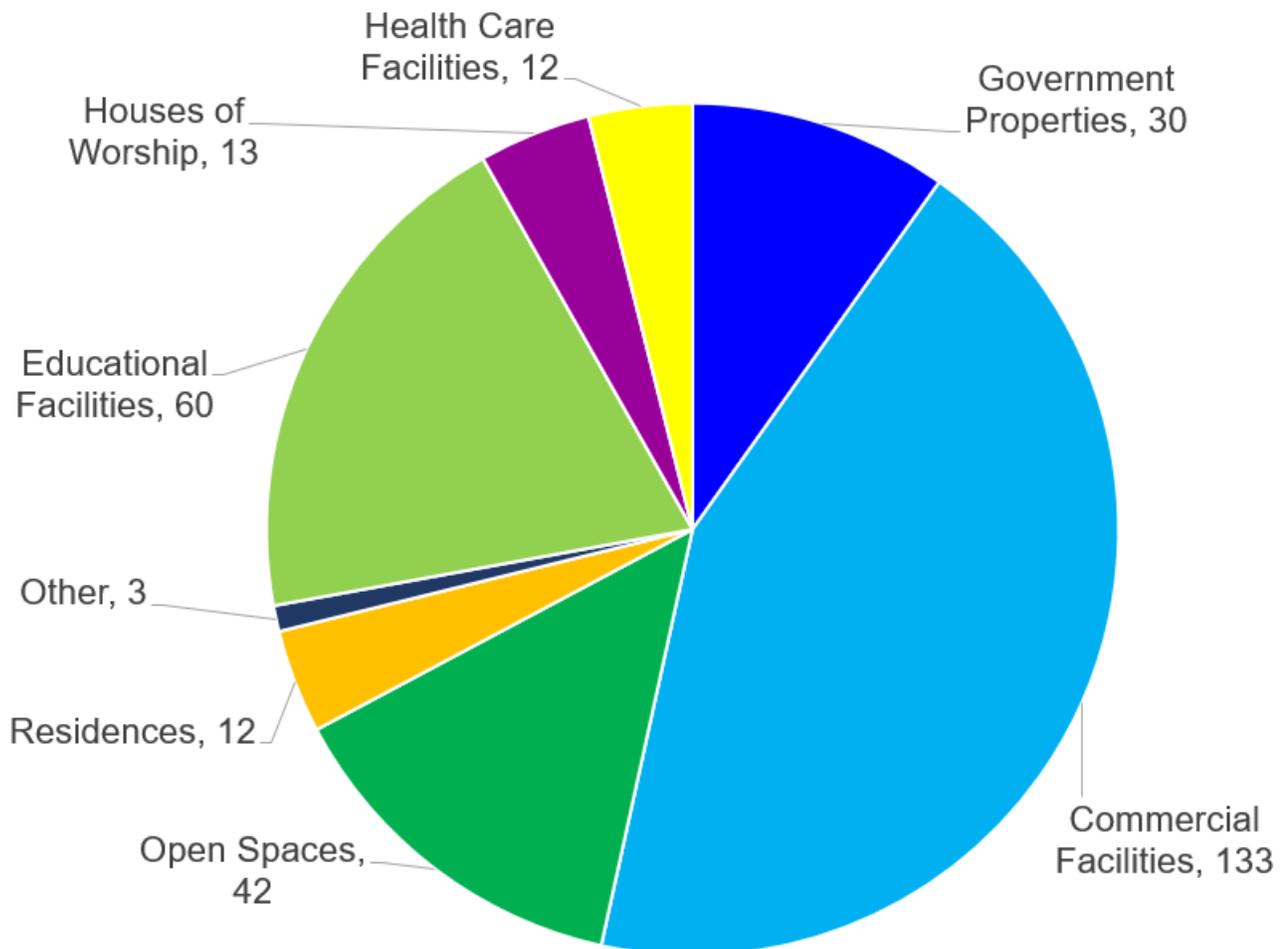
FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. Active Shooter Events from 2000 to 2013, Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2014 and 2015, 2016 and 2017, 2018, 2019

Figure 2: A Snapshot in Time; Key Research Findings, Incidents' Locations[10]

Courthouse - Las Vegas, Nevada
On January 4, 2010, a gunman opened fire in the Las Vegas Federal District Courthouse, immediately prior to the access control and screening area. Disgruntled about a reduction in Social Security benefits, the gunman killed a court security officer and wounded a U.S. Marshal before being killed by police.

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[10] Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2019, the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 2020 fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-in-the-us-2019-042820.pdf/view.

3.0 Applicability and Scope

Pursuant to the authority of the ISC contained in Executive Order (EO) 12977, October 19, 1995, "Interagency Security Committee," and as amended by EO 13286, March 5, 2003, *Planning and Response to an Active Shooter: An Interagency Security Committee Policy and Best Practices Guide* is intended to be applied to all buildings and facilities in the United States occupied by federal employees for nonmilitary activities. These include existing owned or leased facilities; to be purchased or leased facilities; stand-alone facilities; federal campuses; individual facilities on federal campuses; and special-use facilities.

Agencies located in federal facilities shall implement this policy and may use this ISC guidance to mitigate, prepare for, and promote victim and responder survival during active shooter incidents. Training and exercises are designed to inform facility active shooter preparedness plans and improve awareness, prevention, and education.

4.0 Pre-Incident Planning

An active shooter preparedness plan is a critical component to facility occupant safety. Active shooter incidents are trending upwards, and the random nature of the threat and operating area presents a complex challenge to federal security and law enforcement personnel. Ideally, federal security and law enforcement will deter and prevent active shooter attacks altogether. Should deterrence and prevention fail, occupant knowledge and application of emergency procedures and protective actions will save lives. Therefore, an active shooter preparedness plan that delineates procedures to protect life and property in federally occupied space during emergency conditions is an essential tool before, during, and after an active shooter incident.

Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement and other first responder personnel are invaluable resources in developing the preparedness and response component of an active shooter preparedness plan. Security organizations and Facility Security Committees (FSCs) should coordinate with local law enforcement to maximize response effectiveness and to minimize confusion and delay. Building strong partnerships with law enforcement and fire departments, as well as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organizations, will ensure first responders are familiar with the facility layout, entrances and exits, video surveillance systems and controls, and other vital issues. Providing this detailed information to first responders allows them to move through a facility rapidly during an active shooter incident to quickly locate and incapacitate the shooter. Incapacitating the shooter minimizes casualties and allows first responders time to ensure areas are safe to tend to people in need. Security organizations should also consider conducting facility familiarization after-hours and in darkness to allow for realistic walk-throughs or training and exercises to support better preparedness for an active shooter incident.

Plans should include collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders may comprise leadership, security, facility owners and operators, property managers, the human resources department, risk and Insider Threat Program managers, and the training department. External stakeholders should include local, state, federal, tribal, and territorial law enforcement officers, EMS, emergency management, and fire personnel.

Preparing for and responding to an active shooter incident at federal facilities poses unique challenges. Prior to finalizing or updating the active shooter preparedness plan, those responsible should expect to encounter and address a variety of potential challenges.

These challenges include but are not limited to:

- Facility size
- Facility population
- Existing security practices
- Agency mission(s)
- Childcare centers
- Interaction with the public (e.g. visitor centers, courts, multi-tenant facilities)
- Campus environments
- Areas of ingress and egress
- Mixed-use spaces (e.g. retail shops)
- People with disabilities and others with access and functional needs
- Law enforcement response time
- Communications

Additionally, effective active shooter preparedness plans include coordination and development of the following:

- An Insider Threat Program that proactively evaluates, identifies, and mitigates workforce issues by training tenants to know and recognize the warning signs posed by malicious insiders
- A preferred method for reporting active shooter incidents, including informing all those at the facility or all those who may be entering the facility
- Life-safety objectives
- "Run, Hide, Fight"
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments, including where and how to evacuate when primary evacuation routes are unusable
- How to select effective "hide" locations
  - In advance of an active shooter incident, occupants should review potential locations that, at a minimum, provide concealment from the assailant. However, optimal locations include ballistic protection known as "cover," consisting of thick walls made of steel, cinder block, brick and mortar, or other material capable of stopping a bullet.
  - It is a best practice to use safe rooms when hiding from an active shooter. Safe rooms are securable rooms that provide cover from the shooter. These rooms are safer than typical hiding locations, but no one is ever completely safe during an active shooter incident until the threat is neutralized. Consider retrofitting safe rooms into existing facilities and including them with new construction. Planning teams should ensure safe rooms are accessible for persons with disabilities and should consider stocking them with:
    1. First aid kits (including tourniquets)
    2. Hardline phone, hand-held radio
    3. Employee roster and emergency contact numbers
    4. Water, toiletries, cleaning wipes
    5. Floor plan showing emergency evacuation routes and exits
    6. Electrical outlet or charging capability

7. Straps or ropes to assist in securing outward-swinging doors

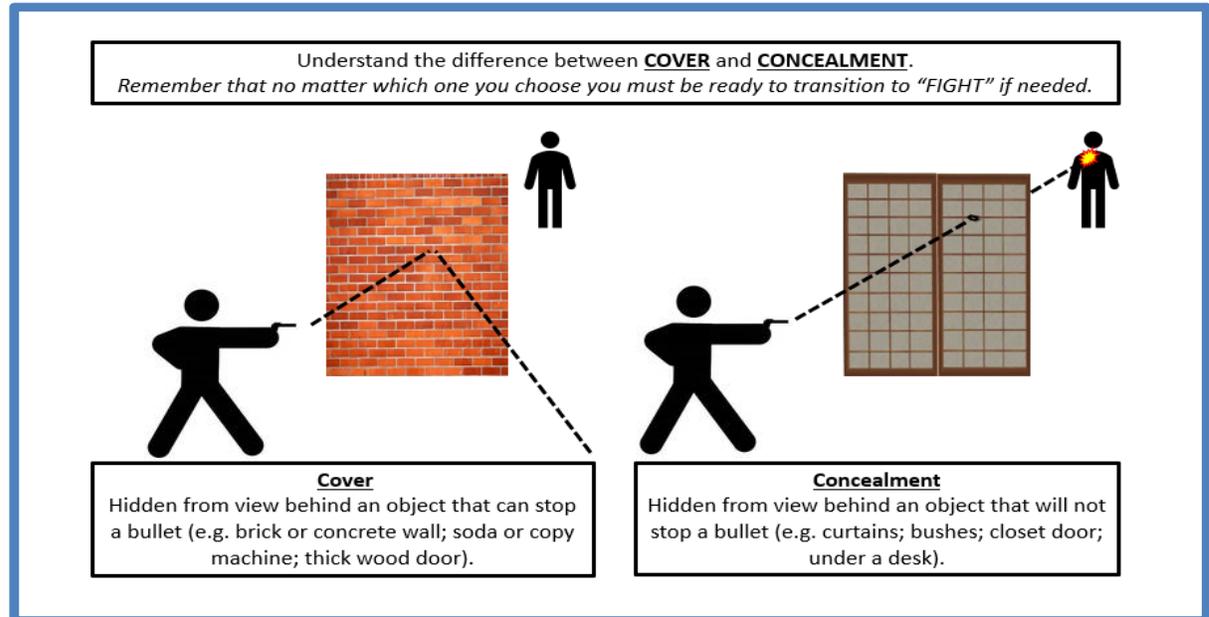8. Doorstops to assist in securing inward-swinging doors

Figure 3: Cover and Concealment

- Discussion of when it might be appropriate to defend or attack
- Family Assistance Centers
- Joint Information Centers
- Personnel Processing Centers
- Discussion with local law enforcement officials and the implications of the facility as a crime scene
- How operations will be restored
- A method to ensure the overarching active shooter preparedness plan is unclassified while safeguarding sensitive response plans for employees and law enforcement officers pursuant to agency directives and guidance

The Risk Management Process (RMP)[11] and the Occupant Emergency Plan (OEP) share a mutually supportive relationship. The OEP establishes basic procedures for safeguarding lives and property in and around federal facilities during emergencies[12]. Title 41 102-74.230 through Title 41 102-74.260 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) requires federal departments and agencies to have an OEP[13]. As mandated by the CFR, facility Designated Officials are responsible for establishing, staffing, and training an Occupant Emergency Organization (OEO) which will develop, implement, and maintain the OEP. Independent but complementary to the OEP process, the security organization will conduct a risk assessment of the facility per the RMP. As part of that assessment, the impact of an active shooter incident, among many other undesirable events, will be assessed and countermeasures will be recommended to mitigate the threat. These recommendations will be presented to the FSC or the senior representative of the tenant for a single-tenant facility for approval. If approved and implemented, the countermeasures will likely influence the OEP and the active shooter preparedness plan and therefore should be analyzed and incorporated appropriately. Federal agencies can take two approaches to

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[11] The most current Risk Management Process for Federal Facilities standard can be found at cisa.gov/isc-policies-standards-best-practices.

[12] For more information, see Occupant Emergency Programs: An Interagency Security Committee Guide, March 2013. The guide can be accessed at: cisa.gov/publication/isc-occupant-emergency-programs-guide

[13] 41 CFR 102-74.230 through 102-74.260

meet the active shooter preparedness plan requirements. The plan can be included as an addendum or a functional annex to the OEP or it can be developed as a separate, standalone document. If facilities use standalone plans, their OEP (and any other applicable documents such as the Facility Security Plan) should reference the standalone document. For larger facilities, a separate document is likely more appropriate, but it is ultimately up to the decision-makers at the facility.

4.1 Workplace Violence Prevention

Most acts of workplace violence occur as some form of verbal or non-verbal threat, bullying, harassment, or non-fatal physical assault. However, acts of physical workplace violence might start as some form of non-physical violence, so agencies must take all threats seriously and respond appropriately. It is also important to note a threat will not lead to a violent act in most cases. The threat itself, however, damages workplace safety and must be addressed.

Research and analysis from active shooter incidents consistently shows that current or former employees are perpetrators of some of these events. In fact, most attackers displayed some concerning behavior prior to the actual event. Therefore, all personnel should be trained on concerning behavior recognition and should be encouraged to share concerns they may have regarding coworkers through proper reporting procedures as defined by the agency. A reasonable awareness of the warning signs that can precede an act of violence may prompt occupants to share their concerns with someone who can help.

To prevent workplace violence situations from escalating to active shooter incidents, active shooter preparedness plans should emphasize the importance of immediately reporting workplace violence. Procedures for reporting workplace violence vary according to the type and intensity of violence involved; most federal workplaces have a variety of reporting options. Depending on the nature of the situation, available resources, and the need for security/law enforcement involvement, reports may be made by or provided to:

- The employee's supervisor
- The employee's colleagues and co-workers
- The responsible security organization
- Human resources or organizations such as equal employment opportunity, the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, another federal equivalent, etc.
- Appropriate agency security (e.g. personnel security, adjudicators, etc.)
- Federal Protective Service (FPS) Megacenters
- Local mental health agencies or crisis intervention organizations
- Local law enforcement departments

In addition, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)[14] should be properly implemented and promoted. The effectiveness of any workplace violence program is greatly enhanced in an organization with an active, well-known EAP presence. Agencies with active programs promote the EAP by:

- Issuing periodic statements from top management endorsing the program and reminding employees of the services offered by the EAP
- Having counselors attend staff meetings to familiarize agency employees with the counselors

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[14] Refer to your organizational website or human resources for information relating to your specific Employee Assistance Program. guidanceresources.com

- Having counselors give special briefings and seminars for managers, employees, and union stewards
- Reminding employees that, by law, all services provided by the EAP are confidential

Individuals may also report concerning behaviors through an Insider Threat Program (InTP) office. Executive Order 13587, *The National Insider Threat Policy*, directs executive branch departments and agencies to establish, implement, monitor, and report on the effectiveness of InTPs. Research and analysis have consistently shown the importance of early reporting to help prevent insider threats such as active shooter incidents. Although studies continue to show limited reporting of concerning behaviors or observable stressors, InTPs provide avenues for anonymous reporting as well as the capability to formally report concerns to an authority or group capable of addressing them.

For additional information pertaining to insider threats, refer to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) website on insider threat mitigation, the National Insider Threat Task Force[15], the CISA *Insider Threat Mitigation Guide,* and internal agency insider threat resources.

The 2013 *Report on the National Summit on Multiple Casualty Shootings*[16] identified five non-linear components of mass casualty violence prevention:
- Identifying a person posing a potential threat of violence
- Notifying the appropriate authorities with this information
- Evaluating the threat credibility
- Intervening to prevent the threat
- Documenting the intervention and disseminating the information within applicable laws and regulations

Facility employees should learn the signs of a potentially volatile situation that could develop into an active shooter incident. Each employee should be empowered to proactively seek ways to prevent an incident with internal resources or additional external assistance. The FBI's *A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013*[17] (June 2018) indicated that each shooter, on average, displayed four to five concerning behaviors over time that were observable to others around the shooter.

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[15] National Insider Threat Task Force Mission Fact Sheet National_Insider_-Threat_Task_Force_Fact_Sheet.pdf

[16] Paparazzo, John, Christine Eith, and Jennifer Tocco. 2013. Strategic Approaches to Preventing Multiple Casualty Violence: Report on the National Summit on Multiple Casualty Shootings. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. fletc.gov/sites/default/files/imported_files/publications/summits-on-preventing-multiple-causality-violence/e021311546_MultiCasualty-Violence_v508_05APR13.pdf

[17] Silver, J., Simons, A., & Craun, S. (2018). A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 – 2013. Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20535. (fbi.gov/resources/library)

Lessons Learned: Pre-Attack Indicators	Tucson, Arizona
Post-attack analysis identified the presence of multiple behaviors: • Displays of aggressive attitude/temper • Unusual interest in firearms or weapons • Discusses intent to harm others • Indications of mental health issues • Noticeable decrease in work performance	On January 8, 2011, an active shooter opened fire at a political rally held by U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords killing six and wounding thirteen others before being subdued by civilians, including one wounded victim. The post-incident investigation identified multiple "red-flags" including mental health issues such as bouts of paranoia and unpredictable interactions, disruptive behaviors resulting in expulsion from college, and increased interest in firearms.

Table 1: Pre-Attack Indicators

For more information about behaviors and patterns, refer to the ISC's *Violence in the Federal Workplace: A Guide for Prevention and Response and Violence in the Federal Workplace: Appendices A, B, and C; Awareness, Resources and Case Studies*[18].

4.2 Communication

Understanding the different communications modes and methods available to facility occupants will ensure successful communication in each of the pre-incident, incident, and post-incident phases.

Pre-Incident	Incident	Post-Incident
• Ensure facilities have a mass-communications capability that can reach the facility population at multiple locations (e.g. phone or computer alerts for employees, announcements/flashing lights for visitors or those away from their desks) • Ensure announcements include "plain language," not solely code words • Ensure there are plans in place for notification of persons with sight or hearing disabilities	• Occupants repeat the announcement to others in the workplace • After reaching safety or barricading within a room, dial 911 and provide key information on incident (see Section 5.1) • If barricaded in a room with exterior windows, mark your location and key information on windows using markers, lipstick, crayons, etc.	• The facility Public Information Officer, or whoever is assigned these duties, will augment the Joint Information Center (JIC) • Training for all personnel involved in post-incident communications is strongly recommended • Conduct liaison with first responders

For information to be actionable, it must be accessible. For example, visual and auditory aids and cues (such as posters, sirens, etc.) are only useful if the audience can see or hear them. For those with a hearing or visual disability, the information conveyed through these means may not be accessible. Partnering with local disability entities, such as Americans with Disabilities Act Centers, governors' disability councils, mayoral task forces, and independent living centers for assistance with tools, methods,

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[18] cisa.gov/publication/isc-violence-federal-workplace-guide

resources, and protocols can make life-saving differences for employees and visitors with a variety of access and functional needs or disabilities. Lessons learned from past incidents include the following:

- Always have multiple communications options
- Use any communication option available
- Do not rely on others to relay critical information
- Do not make assumptions of who knows what
- Do not assume others know what you know
- Do not assume you know everything you need to know
- Ensure all standard emergency notifications are accessible in alternative formats so everyone has situational awareness
- Establish a knowledgeable liaison with the first responder command post
- Communication can be a challenge despite best efforts of trained professionals; as such, do not wait for notifications to take the appropriate protective actions.
- Use clear verbal messages as new employees and visitors may not understand code words

4.3 Training and Awareness

An active shooter preparedness plan should be the source document used in the development of a training program. Early identification of an active shooter event is paramount to establishing an effective response. Federal facility staff engaged in security roles should receive training in agreed-upon methods of notification and common terminology.

Training is one of the best activities to help prepare personnel to react quickly and effectively in emergency situations. When considering training options for active shooter incidents, the federal agency should conduct a thorough review to identify the best training approach for their facility occupants. A review should assess the specific features of the facility itself along with the needs and capabilities of the personnel occupying the facility.

Awareness campaigns of the active shooter threat can help ensure a much higher chance of reacting quickly and surviving an incident. Training participation opportunities should be extended to the external first responders likely to support the facility in an active shooter incident.

After the active shooter preparedness plan is approved, occupants should become intimately familiar with it through training. The method of instruction depends on several factors. Instructor-led training is more formal and requires a time commitment from participants for the duration of the course. In some cases, online or web-based instruction is a suitable alternative that can reduce or alleviate scheduling conflicts or travel requirements, but web-based instruction often does not highlight the specific details of an individual facility, such as exit plans, safe rooms, etc. Posters and other visual aids illustrate key learning points and should be situated in prime locations at the facility. The resources remind facility occupants of the training program's objectives, strengthen their retention of essential information, and ensure occupants are aware of the possibility of an active shooter incident.

An active shooter training video entitled "Run, Hide, Fight" was developed and produced by the Houston Mayor's Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security and funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security[19]. This six-minute video, which is endorsed by multiple federal agencies, dramatizes an active

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[19] Options for Consideration Active Shooter Preparedness Video: cisa.gov/options-consideration-active-shooter-preparedness-video. The video is also available in multiple languages.

shooter incident in the workplace. The video demonstrates the unpredictable and quick-changing nature of active shooter incidents. Its purpose is to educate the public by demonstrating response actions during such an incident so they can prepare accordingly for an active shooter incident.

Another critical element of a training program is teaching how to communicate effectively. Teaching managers and emergency personnel effective communication is as essential as teaching staff and management effective evacuation procedures. Accessible and Section 508[20] compliant scenario-based training (to include the location of first-aid equipment) that addresses a wide range of variables is strongly encouraged. Training should include communication with facility staff, security, and other occupants and first responders.

Facility staff may also be trained in the basics of hemorrhage control so care can be given as quickly as possible. This training can include basic information on how to improvise a bandage and apply direct wound pressure. Tourniquets have been shown to be lifesaving, but it is unlikely commercial tourniquets will be immediately available in most circumstances. Therefore, training for staff could include when to use a tourniquet, how to improvise a tourniquet, and the correct application of a tourniquet. After conducting training sessions, it is essential to augment the medical training with additional learning opportunities in the classroom, via online learning, or through practical exercises. All first-aid training should be conducted by a qualified source.

For additional information and training resources, see the reference section in this document.

Lesson Learned & Best Practice: Stop the Bleed Training

In the 2016 Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, a study showed that sixteen fatalities resulted because timely care was not provided for survivable wounds. Just three years later, a teacher saved the life of a wounded student during the 2019 Saugus High School shooting by quickly utilizing a bleeding control kit containing gauze and tourniquets. The Department of Homeland Security endorses the *Stop the Bleed* national awareness campaign and call-to-action. *Stop the Bleed* is intended to cultivate grassroots efforts that encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives. See dhs.gov/stopthebleed for additional information on receiving training and becoming an instructor.

4.4 Exercises

Most federal facilities practice evacuation drills for fires and take protective measures for natural disasters. The same emphasis should be applied to active shooter exercises. Exercises should be designed for the needs of the individual agency and conducted in a manner that includes all people normally involved in the mitigation of an active shooter incident. Employees also benefit from briefings and participation in active shooter drills. Remember, during an active shooter incident the natural human reaction is to be startled, feel fear and anxiety, and even experience initial disbelief and denial. Those present can hear

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[20] Law that requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities.

noise from alarms, gunfire, explosions, and people shouting and screaming. Exercises provide the means to regain composure, recall at least some of what has been learned during training, and commit to action. Exercises reinforce the "Run, Hide, Fight" mantra and improve the likelihood of action in a real event.

People with disabilities and others with access and functional needs should help develop all phases of exercises; they are the subject matter experts regarding their disabilities and needs, and their life experiences will add reality to any exercise scenario. Good planning includes conducting exercises with first responders and facility security teams, including any security or law enforcement officers who are employed in the facility. Coordinating with internal and external stakeholders is one of the most effective and efficient ways to ensure everyone knows their role and the role of others at the scene. These exercises should include a walkthrough of the facility to allow local law enforcement officials to familiarize

themselves with the site, provide input on "safe" rooms, become knowledgeable on evacuation routes, understand the capabilities of the internal security force, and recognize hazardous areas within the facility (e.g. magnetic resonance imaging devices and radioactive materials). Facility planners should also consider and plan for how to care for the critically injured from the event.

There are many types of exercises, starting with discussion-based exercises such as seminars and tabletop exercises. Activities can graduate to task-based exercises, which focus on key functions and responsibilities (i.e. functional exercises). Finally, a full-scale exercise is operations-based and utilizes personnel and equipment from multiple jurisdictions. Exercises can involve the entire facility population and local responders or be narrower in scope to address a smaller portion of the facility or population. Announce all drills and exercises prior to conducting them. Recommended exercise topics include:

> **Lesson Learned: Avoid Using Fire Alarms**
>
> When conducting active shooter response exercises, highlight NOT pulling the fire alarm. As noted in the review of the 2019 shooting in Virginia Beach, people are trained to immediately evacuate a building on hearing a fire alarm. In the case of an active shooter, this may cause people to leave their barricaded areas and enter hallways and stairwells, thereby placing them in greater danger. Further, in many buildings the fire alarm disables the elevator (which might be needed to evacuate injured or mobility impaired persons) and unlocks doors that access different floors from the fire escape (which increases an active shooter's freedom of movement). A review of the 2015 Inland Regional Center shooting in San Bernardino, California noted that the overwhelming level of noise from the fire alarm, coupled with a strobe light system, created a level of chaos that can "cause a high stress situation that affects officers' abilities to apply response strategies learned during training."

- Pre-designated assembly points for people who need assistance evacuating
- Verified points of accessible egress
- Internal exercise training program for all employees, including volunteers to respond to specific assembly areas
- Established alert and notification procedures
- Pre-determined communications capabilities
- Incorporate employees who have current and valid credentials in EMS, law enforcement, or fire services to assist
- Location of first-aid equipment

> **Best Practices: Building Floorplans**
>
> In 2011, the New York City Police Department's Counterterrorism Bureau published *Active Shooter: Recommendations and Analysis for Risk Mitigation*.[21] This document analyzed active shooter incidents from 1966 to 2010 to assess best practices for mitigating active shooter risk. Building floorplans, blueprints, and other documents noting the building's vulnerabilities or critical areas are generally handled as controlled unclassified information with limited distribution. However, these documents should be made available to law enforcement responding to an incident—preferably prior to an incident.
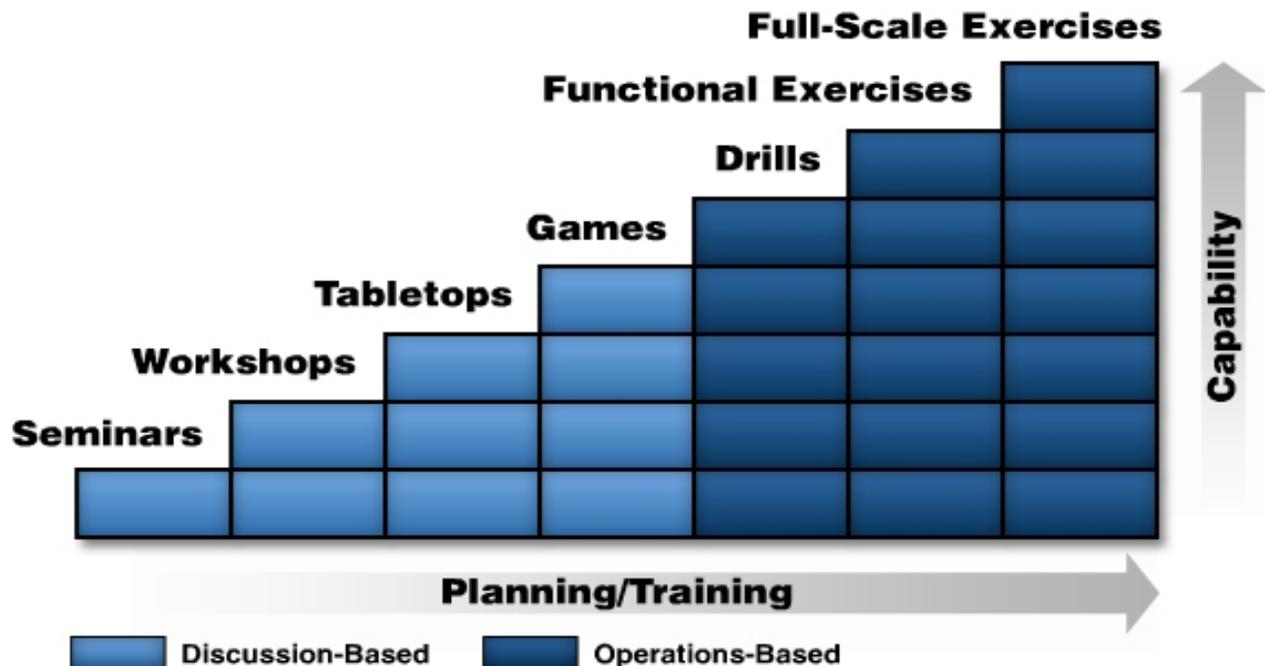
Figure 4: Exercise Building Block

Depicting scenarios and considering response options in advance will help individuals and groups quickly select their best course of action. It may be valuable to schedule a time for an open conversation regarding the topic at the facility. Though some individuals may find the conversation uncomfortable, they may also find it reassuring to know that their organization is thinking about how best to deal with this situation. Several active shooter scenarios should be considered because actual events are unpredictable. Feedback from these exercise sessions will be valuable in determining weaknesses in the plan and improving both plans and training. Per the policy outlined previously, exercises shall be conducted periodically or as the threat warrants and should include the latest mitigation techniques and any recent changes in the active shooter preparedness plan. Planning for an exercise may include an initial planning conference (concept design/development), a midterm planning conference (testing/designing objectives), an advanced Incident Command System (ICS) workshop, a crime scene preservation seminar, a final planning conference, controller and evaluator briefing, recovery and restoration discussion, an after-action conference, and post-exercise improvement planning.

Information for the design and conduct of exercises is available from Federal Emergency Management Agencies' Independent Study (IS) program. FEMA IS courses that would be beneficial in exercise planning and conduct include:

- IS-120.C: An Introduction to Exercises
- IS-130.A: How to be an Exercise Evaluator
- IS-139.A: Exercise Design and Development
- IS-360: Preparing for Mass Casualty Incidents
- IS-362.A: Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools

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[21] The FEMA IS program can be accessed online via: http://www.training.fema.gov/IS.

Lesson Learned: Breaching Equipment

Storing breaching equipment, such as bolt cutters and sledgehammers, in federal police vehicles will expedite response by police into secure areas where an active shooter may be roaming freely. During the 2007 active shooter incident at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia responding officers attempted to gain access to the shooter's location through two different doors, which were chained shut. Attempts to shoot the padlocks off were unsuccessful. This was further substantiated in the 2015 Inland Regional Center shooting in San Bernardino, California when officers had to radio for breaching equipment to gain access through secured card-entry doors.

5.0 Incident Actions

When an incident occurs, it is important to follow the plan and any instructions given during the incident. However, individuals will often have to rely on their own judgment to decide which option will best protect lives, including their own. No single response fits all active shooter incidents, but ensuring everyone knows their response options and empowering them to react decisively will save valuable time and will ultimately save lives.

There is no definitive best reaction during these incidents, but implementing the "Run, Hide, Fight" concept can increase the odds of survival. Unless otherwise directed by law enforcement or other emergency personnel, individuals should apply the "Run, Hide, Fight" options. However, local leaders can help occupants better prepare, respond, and recover by discussing active shooter considerations and entrusting occupants to make the best decision they can at the time, based on their individual circumstances. During an active shooter incident, those present will rarely have all the information they need to make a fully informed decision about applying "Run, Hide, Fight."

It is common for people confronted with a threat to initially not recognize the possible danger. A 2005 investigation by the National Institute of Standards and Technology into the collapse of the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001 found that people close to the impacted floors waited longer to start evacuating than those on unaffected floors. Similarly, during the Virginia Tech shooting, individuals on campus responded to the shooting with varying degrees of urgency. These incidents highlight this sense of denial or delayed response.

When an active shooter incident occurs, facility occupants will look for direction from authority figures. They may not make a distinction between law enforcement officers and other uniformed personnel. In the federal environment, uniformed personnel may be federal agents, other security staff, or law enforcement officers. These individuals may not be present when a shooting begins. Upon hearing weapons fire, announcements of the incident may be made via building notification system or facility occupants.

Fort Hood, Texas

On November 5, 2009, a US Army soldier used his authorized base access to enter a pre-deployment center and open fire. This "insider threat" killed 13 people and wounded 30 more before being wounded and detained by responding military police officers. Soldiers and civilians conducted "Run, Hide, Fight" options, including barricading themselves inside and treating the wounded when the shooter exited the building.

Therefore, all employees should receive training in techniques for reacting to an active shooter incident using the "Run, Hide, Fight" model. Individuals should remain calm and try to remember the procedures they learned in training. Individuals should initiate "Run, Hide, Fight" actions as appropriate and with the goal of surviving the incident.

"Run, Hide, Fight" is not a sequential process, but rather a list of response options. Depending on how close individuals are to the shooter, occupants might run away from the shooter, seek a secure place where they can hide and deny the shooter access, or incapacitate the shooter in order to survive and protect others from harm. Likewise, individuals might first need to hide and then run to safety when able. Although they should follow the plan and any instructions given by appropriate facility representatives during an incident, they will often have to rely on their own judgment. The mental rehearsal of scenarios and response options in advance will assist individuals and groups in quickly selecting their best course of action.

Staff should understand how to lead or direct facility occupants to the nearest evacuation routes (*run*) and identified secure areas (*hide*). Train staff to overcome denial and to respond immediately. For example, train staff to recognize the sounds of danger and forcefully communicate the danger and necessary action (e.g. "Gun! Get out!"). In addition, those closest to the public address or other communications system, or who are otherwise able to alert others, should communicate the danger and necessary action. Internal communication with those in the immediate situation is essential. Security officials are encouraged to use any means necessary, including information technology platforms, software, or devices (e.g. computer messaging, mobile phone applications, etc.) to disseminate information to the workforce in a dynamic environment. Development and use of a pre-scripted message can alert personnel of an active shooter using the public address or other communication systems. A clear and concise message is necessary both for the person making the announcement and those receiving it. A template can be generated and positioned near the public address or communications systems. Important information to transmit is that an active shooter situation exists and what is known about the shooter's location (e.g. inside or outside, what floor, location unknown). Repetition in training and preparedness shortens the time it takes to orient, observe, and act. Upon recognizing the danger, staff or others must alert responders as soon as it is safe to do so by contacting 911 with information that is as clear and accurate as possible.

Personal safety is the primary consideration in any emergency. If possible, help others to safety but evacuate even if others do not follow. Rendering aid can be as simple as rallying victims to "Follow me!" Response to an incident will involve the facility tenants (including visitors), facility security officers (if applicable), responding law enforcement (internal and external agencies), and other emergency responders.

Aurora, Colorado

On July 20, 2012, a shooter opened fire inside a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, killing 12 and wounding 58 others. In the dark theater, moviegoers had little opportunity to attack the shooter, choosing to run and hide for survival. The shooter also booby-trapped his apartment in an effort to injure or kill others.

5.1 Mass Notification Messaging

Emergency planners should develop mass notification messaging for immediate notification of active shooter incidents to facility occupants. The message should be approved by the Facility Security Committee. In campus environments, the message should use a consistent format across multiple facilities. Messages should not impact current fire evacuation messaging preprogrammed into automated fire life safety systems, which should already be in place according to local and federal fire code requirements.

The three primary areas to consider are type of threat, attack location, and actions to be taken. Messages should use plain language, should be concise, and should provide information for facility occupants to determine their best "Run, Hide, Fight" option. Although local planners determine the message that is best for their facility, a message might read: "*Active Shooter, Active Shooter, Active Shooter. Location (in building; on campus; outside; unknown). Implement "Run, Hide, Fight" options*."

5.2 Run

Occupants should make every attempt to distance themselves from the shooter and, when possible, should attempt to exit the facility through the safest route. Given the dynamic nature of a shooter event, evacuating the facility via practiced fire drill routes may put individuals at risk or may not be possible. If law enforcement has not arrived on-site, employees may need to run out of the facility or away from the area and move as far away as possible until they are in a safe location. These options should be clearly

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Lesson Learned: Alternate Escape Routes

In 2007, 32 students and faculty were killed and 17 injured during an active shooter attack at Virginia Tech University. Students in one classroom on the second floor were able to push out window screens and jump or drop to the ground below. Although several suffered injuries from the drop, all survived. Many of those who did not consider or were unable to utilize this type of alternate escape route suffered a far worse fate. Ensure active shooter preparedness training covers alternate escape routes, including how to break out windows or, depending on the facility, even how to break through walls.

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conveyed to employees during facility active shooter training and exercises. Despite the complexity of these incidents, at-risk facility occupants and visitors who can evacuate safely should do so.

When an active shooter is in the vicinity, staff must be prepared both mentally and physically to react to the situation. If the decision to run is implemented, occupants should:

- Evacuate the area as quickly and quietly as possible
- Leave personal belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Only attempt to move the wounded if safe to do so
- Prevent and warn others from entering an area where the active shooter may be located
- Put hands in the air to signal to law enforcements that they are unarmed
- Identify the specific challenges of being in a multi-story building or basement when the location of the threat is unknown
- Follow established accountability protocols
- Call 911 when safe to do so. When possible, provide the following information to law enforcement:
    - Location and number of active shooter(s)
    - Location of caller
    - If there is law enforcement on-site
    - Physical description of shooter(s)
    - Type and number of weapons used by shooter(s)
    - Use or threat of explosives/Improvised Explosive Devices

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- o If shooting is still occurring
- o Number of potential victims at the scene

Best Practice: Complicated Escape Route – Hide/Barricade

If you are in a basement or on the upper floor of a multi-story building, your exit path may be directly into the path of the shooter(s). If you do not know the exact location of the shooter(s), consider hiding or barricading yourself into a room until law enforcement arrives.

Lesson Learned: Avoid Known Physical Rally Points

Maintain awareness during escape and avoid physical evacuation rally points that may be known to the perpetrator. Shooters in the 1999 Columbine High School incident placed booby traps outside of the school and rigged their vehicles as car bombs to maximize injuries. Consider including virtual rally points, such as mass notification systems, call trees, or designated operation centers rather than physical rally points until the area is secured by law enforcement officers.

5.3 Hide

If running is not a safe option, occupants should hide in as safe a place as possible where the walls might be thicker and have fewer windows. Likewise, for occupants who cannot run, hiding may be the only option.

In addition, occupants should do the following:

- Lock the doors and barricade them with heavy furniture, if possible
- Close and lock windows and close blinds or cover windows
- Turn off lights
- Silence all electronic devices
- Remain silent
- Look for other avenues of escape
- Identify ad-hoc weapons and be prepared to fight should the shooter enter the room
- When safe to do so, use strategies to silently communicate with first responders, if possible (e.g. in rooms with exterior windows, make signs to silently signal law enforcement and emergency responders to indicate the status of the room's occupants)
- Hide along the wall closest to the exit but out of view from the doorway (which would allow the best option for ambushing the shooter and for possible escape if the shooter enters or passes by the room)
- Remain in place until given an all-clear by identifiable law enforcement

5.4 Fight

Consider fighting as the absolute last resort if neither running nor hiding is a safe option. Once the decision is made, commit to fight for your life as aggressively as possible. Research shows there is strength in numbers, so recruit others to ambush the shooter with makeshift weapons like chairs, fire

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extinguishers, scissors, books, etc. If fighting is the only option, aim to cause severe or lethal injury to the shooter.

Speaking with staff about confronting a shooter may be daunting and upsetting for some individuals, but great comfort can come from the knowledge that their actions could save lives. To be clear, confronting an active shooter should never be a requirement of any non-law enforcement personnel's job; how individuals choose to respond if directly confronted by an active shooter is up to them.

Consider the following questions if developing a threat annex for the "Run, Hide, Fight" scenario:

- Have discussions about when it might be appropriate to fight been addressed?
- Have discussions about available equipment in a fight scenario been addressed?
- Have discussions related to the concepts of superiority of numbers, surprise, speed, and violence of action been addressed?

5.5 "Run, Hide, Fight" for Occupants with Disabilities

Any actions taken during activation of the active shooter preparedness plan must be as effective for individuals with disabilities as those actions provided for individuals without disabilities. When developing or making changes to the plan, it is imperative to evaluate and address those factors that can affect the access and functional needs population throughout the process. Applicable laws and regulations include but are not limited to:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- EO 12196 "Occupational Safety and Health Programs for Federal Employees" 1980
- EO 13347 "Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness" 2004

As part of each facility's active shooter plan, effort should be made to include different aspects of each person's options: Run, Hide, or Fight.

| RUN	HIDE	FIGHT
• Identify multiple accessible escape routes throughout the facility and outside, which provide cover or concealment. • Rehearse the use of escape routes.	• Identify a safe location on each floor where occupants and visitors may safely barricade during an event • Train people on how to lock down an area and secure the unit with barricades. • Train personnel on the difference between cover and concealment. • Ensure emergency numbers are available at all phone locations.	• Discuss when it might be appropriate to defend or attack. • Discuss the availability of items that can be used to defend or attack. • Discuss the concepts of teamwork and the superiority of numbers, surprise, speed, and violence of action.

Figure 5: "Run, Hide, Fight" Chart

5.6 Interacting with First Responders

The priority for responding law enforcement is to respond to the threat and engage and neutralize the active shooter as soon as possible; all other actions are secondary.

First responders, such as law enforcement, firefighters, and Emergency Medical Services personnel, coming to a federal facility because of a 911 call involving gunfire face a daunting task. The threat of an active shooter incident differs from responding to a natural disaster or other emergencies. Emergency calls can involve actual or future threats of physical violence. Information coming in may be inaccurate and conflicting. This violence might be directed not only in or at the facility and its occupants, but it may also be directed at nearby buildings off-site.

Active shooter incidents are one of the most dangerous situations law enforcement face today. During active shootings, officers will enter the facility and proceed directly to the sounds of violence (gunshots, pleas for life, etc.). Facility occupants should not be alarmed if officers shout commands and push individuals to the ground for their safety. They may employ pepper spray, tear gas, and handcuffs. Officers may be dressed in civilian clothes or patrol uniforms and may be wearing external bullet proof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment. The first officers to arrive on the scene will not stop to assist with injured personnel. Rescue teams consisting of additional officers and medical personnel, if authorized by facility and local law enforcement agency response plans, may follow the first wave and will enter the facility as soon as possible.

If safely accessible prior to their arrival, occupants should retrieve and provide the first responder with a prepared "go-kit" (i.e. go-bag, etc.). A go-kit should include facility materials necessary for first responders (e.g. facility maps, building access cards, alarm codes, etc.) and should not be confused with a

Figure 6: Go-Kit/Personal Emergency Kit Comparison
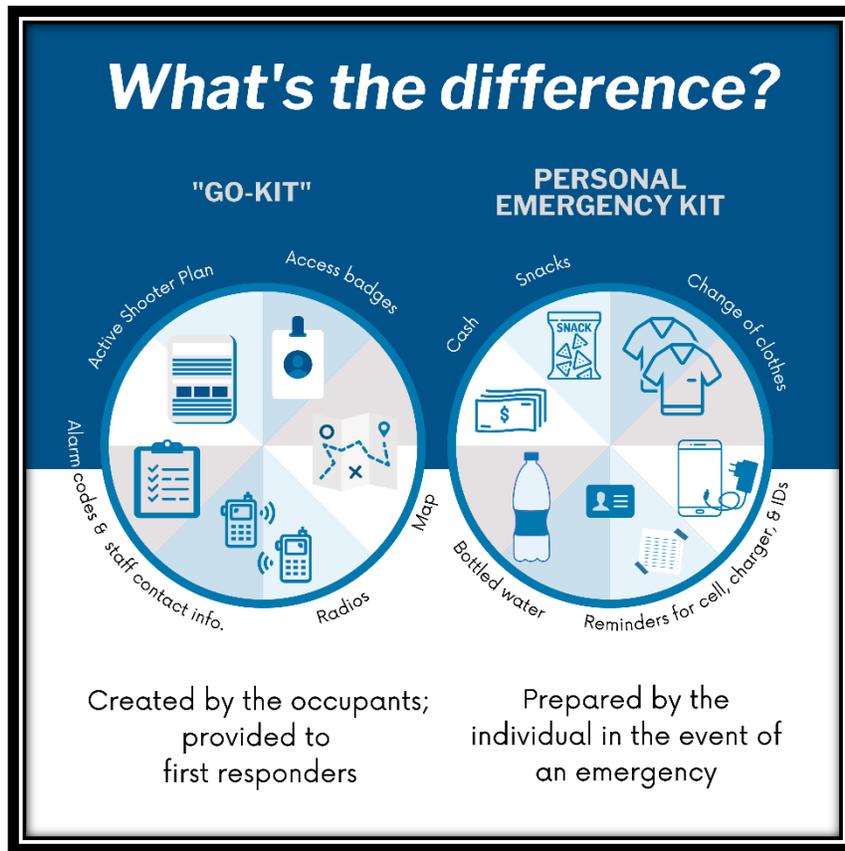
personal emergency kit that could include personal items (e.g. cash, change of clothes, etc.). The sooner law enforcement can discern the threat and react, the more lives can be saved. This is particularly true in an active shooter incident where many innocent lives are at risk in concentrated areas. It is essential that facilities coordinate with their local partners (e.g. first responders, emergency managers, security specialists, and Employee Assistance Program counselors) to identify, prepare, prevent, and effectively respond to an active shooter incident in a coordinated fashion. Timely intelligence is critical during active shooter incidents and essential information should be shared with law enforcement as soon as safe to do so.

Video surveillance accessible to smart phones and other electronic devices must be shared with responding units as soon as practical.

When law enforcement officers arrive at the scene, occupants should (as reinforced through training):

- Follow all instructions from the officers
- Remain calm, think, and resist the urge to panic
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Put down any items
- Avoid making sudden or quick movements toward officers
- Not point, scream, or yell
- Not ask for help from the officers when evacuating
- Proceed in the direction as advised by the officers
- Provide all relevant information to officers when asked, but do not distract responding officers unless it will assist in identifying the location of the shooter or the location(s) of known explosives or booby traps

Lesson Learned: Communications

The United States Army's Internal Review Team recommended that each military installation equip their operations centers with emergency call-taking capabilities following the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood, Texas. This capability would allow operators to automatically identify the address of the caller, as well as the location of the closest first responder, to decrease the emergency response time. Many government facilities do not have this capability. When someone calls 911, the address and telephone number are displayed on the emergency call center's screen. However, it will not show the actual office location from within a facility where the call originated. Federal departments and agencies should provide a reverse call-tree at the entrance of the federal facility that lists the facility phone numbers and the exact office location where the line is installed. By utilizing this tool, first responders could respond more quickly and directly to the exact floor and office.

6.0 Post-Incident Recovery

Once the threat no longer exists and after the wounded have been evacuated, management should engage in post-incident assessments and activities in coordination with local law enforcement and emergency personnel, including:

- Accounting for all individuals (to include casualties)
- Staffing/standing up the Family Assistance Center (FAC)
- Assessing the psychological state of individuals at the scene and referring them to health care specialists accordingly
- Employing continuity of operations plans to ensure mission essential functions are carried out
- Determining a transition plan that includes when to resume normal operations

Once the active shooter is neutralized, the incident site will be an active crime scene. Nothing should be touched unless it involves tending to the wounded. Discuss the implications of the facility as a crime scene with local law enforcement officials in advance.

The Facility Security Committee Chair (in a multi-tenant facility) or the senior representative of the tenant (in a single tenant facility) and other key personnel should plan for an extended, evolving situation and any mass casualty or internal disaster plans may be activated to manage the continuing situation. Daily activities may be altered so law enforcement and first responders can adequately investigate, clear the scene, and rehabilitate the facility to an acceptable level for work activity.

Federal and state laws mandate the care of crime victims in certain circumstances. Therefore, substantial resources and processes are already in place to aid victims and their families, most notably through state agencies, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Office for Victim Assistance. Prior familiarity with these resources, such as existing, dedicated toll-free numbers for victims and their families, will permit officials to immediately provide valuable information to victims, victim families, staff, and others affected by the tragedy.

6.1 Communications/Media Messaging

The Public Information Officer (PIO) or equivalent is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, incident personnel, and other agencies and organizations, as appropriate. The

PIO at the affected facility should coordinate all external communications with the incident command through the Joint Information Center (JIC). Once a JIC is established, a primary PIO will be designated to coordinate all public information including that from the facility PIO.

Planning for successful crisis communications includes:

- Establishing working relationships with local law enforcement, fire services, and Emergency Medical Services beforehand
- Frontloading agency websites with mission, key leaders, etc.
- Developing a public information plan (funding, backups, resources, etc.)
- To the extent possible, developing standard talking points for senior and crisis leadership use when engaging the media
- Quickly disseminating accurate information to avoid misinformation
- Communicating public information specialist assistance needs to law enforcement
- PIO training
- Checklists with necessary and appropriate information
- Reminders that only the PIO is authorized to provide incident information

Lesson Learned: Utilization of the JIC

On October 1, 2017, over 22,000 people attended the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Las Vegas, Nevada. On the final night of the festival, a lone gunman fired into the crowd from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino resulting in the deaths of 58 people and injuring more than 850. On August 24, 2019, FEMA completed the After-Action Report for the event. One observation made by FEMA was that the Nevada 2-1-1 hotline was insufficient to address the volume of calls and personnel lacked training on how to process and distribute information. Three call centers were set up to handle the influx of calls. These hotlines lacked coordination and did not work in unison. FEMA's recommendation was to consider utilizing the JIC to ensure consistent messaging from the various call centers. The JIC enhances information coordination, reduces misinformation, and maximizes resources by co-locating Public Information Officers as much as possible. FEMA also recommended that the JIC location should be established prior to any event in which a mass casualty incident could occur.

6.2 Managing the Responses to Victims and Families

Victim and family support are essential components to ensuring a successful overall response to an active shooter incident. It is important to ensure the response is coordinated through each phase including the immediate response, transition process, and post-crisis support in a way that integrates into the investigative and operational response. Coordination with local resources is critical to ensure a smooth provision of services throughout the duration of the case. The quality of the overall operational response to an active shooter incident will, in large part, be judged by the response to victims and families and should be based upon trust, cooperation, and respect shown to victims, families, and eyewitnesses. Response planning should always track and adjust to meet the needs of the victim, family, and the dynamics of the situation. Some considerations include (but are not limited to):

- Information sharing
- Victim identification
- Family response management teams
- Communications plans
- Resource coordination

6.2.1 Reunification

Having family members wait for long periods of time for information about their loved ones not only adds to their stress and frustration but can also escalate the emotions of the entire group. When the immediate reunification of loved ones is not possible, providing family members with timely, accurate, and relevant information is paramount. The active shooter preparedness plan should include the establishment of a Family Assistance Center (FAC)[22] to provide families with information and access to services during the immediate aftermath of an incident. The FAC should be located away from media view or exposure, the incident command, and the incident site. The FAC location should be coordinated in advance of an incident, to include coordination of written agreements and contracts identifying the use of the location, access control, staffing requirements, and financial responsibilities. The location should not be too close to the incident scene, as the roadways surrounding the incident scene could be blocked off or inaccessible due to a high volume of emergency response vehicles. Family members should know the FAC location in advance of an incident which will also help minimize the number of family members responding and jamming traffic to the incident site.

When families are reunited, it is vital that there are child release processes in place where minors might be involved (e.g. childcare or discharged patients) to ensure children are not released to unauthorized persons. Essential steps to help establish trust and provide family members with a sense of control can be accomplished by:

- Identifying a safe FAC location separate from distractions, the media, and the general public
- Scheduling periodic updates even if additional information is unavailable
- Being prepared to speak with family members about what to expect when reunited with their loved ones
- Ensuring effective communication with those who have language barriers or need other accommodations, such as interpreters and sign language interpreters for deaf or hard of hearing family members

When reunification is not possible because an individual is missing, injured, or killed, how and when this information is provided to families is critical. Before an emergency, the planning team must determine how, when, and by whom loved ones will be informed if their loved one is missing or has been injured or killed, keeping in mind that law enforcement typically takes the lead on death notifications related to criminal activity. This will ensure that families and loved ones receive accurate and timely information in a compassionate way.

Although law enforcement and medical examiner procedures must be followed, families should receive accurate information as soon as possible. In cases where an individual has been killed, describe the importance of processing the scene for forensic and investigative purposes, and for the accurate identification of victims. It is best to avoid making promises that cannot be kept regarding timing of identification and release of victims' remains. Those who are immediately available to talk with loved ones should be identified and trained to compassionately provide family members with accurate information. Crisis responders should be present to immediately assist family members.

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[22] Mass Fatality Incident Family Assistance Operations:
nmvvrc.org/Articles/Mass%20Fatality%20Incident%20Family%20Assistance%20Operations.pdf.

6.2.2 Personnel Processing Centers

During the planning phase, planners should identify a location where occupants are taken when evacuated from the facility. This location is called a Personnel Processing Center (PPC), where affected personnel are assembled for initial accountability, triaged for possible medical care and mental health counseling, and potentially interviewed as witnesses. Like the FAC, the PPC should be located away from media view or exposure, the incident command, and the incident site. Also like the FAC, the PPC location should be coordinated in advance of an incident, to include coordination of written agreements and contracts identifying the use of the location, access control, staffing requirements, and financial responsibilities. The location may be closer to the incident scene than the FAC to accommodate law enforcement interviews and triage by medical and mental health providers. Planners should develop a plan to safely transport occupants to the PPC and then to the FAC after processing has been completed. Like the FAC, the PPC should have phones available to those being processed so they can contact their family, child care, etc., as they will not be able to reenter the facility to obtain personal belongings such as car keys, cell phones, wallets, and purses.

7.0 Resources/Templates

The list below contains links to useful active shooter information:

- DHS Active Shooter Preparedness website: dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness

- FBI Active Shooter public site: fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources

- CISA Active Shooter Training (IS-907: Active Shooter: What You Can Do): training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-907

- FEMA Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship: fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/plan#emergency-operations

- FEMA Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plan: fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/plan#emergency-operations

- FEMA Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Institutions of Higher Education: fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/plan#emergency-operations

- DHS Stop the Bleed Courses: dhs.gov/stopthebleed

- FEMA You Are the Help Until Help Arrives course: community.fema.gov/until-help-arrives

- United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2020-09/MAPS2019.pdf

7.1 ISC Documents Referencing Active Shooter

- ISC Violence in the Federal Workplace: A Guide for Prevention and Response (2019): cisa.gov/publication/isc-violence-federal-workplace-guide

- ISC Occupant Emergency Programs Guide, 1st Edition (March 2013): dhs.gov/publication/isc-occupant-emergency-programs-guide

7.2 Other Government Resources

- DOJ/FBI/NTSB – Mass Fatality Incident Family Assistance Operations: terrorvictimresponse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Mass-Fatality-Incident-Family-Assistance-Operations.pdf

- DOJ Traumatic Incident Management: justice.gov/jmd/hr/hrorder/chpt7- 2.htm

- DOJ Report on the National Summit on Multiple Casualty Shootings: https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/strategic-approaches-preventing-multiple-casualty-violence-report

- DHS Office for Bombing Prevention counter-IED training courses and information: http://www.dhs.gov/bombing-prevention-training-courses

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

TERM	DEFINITION
ALERRT	Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DO	Designated Official
DOJ	Department of Justice
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EO	Executive Order
FAC	Family Assistance Center
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FLETC	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
FOUO	For Official Use Only
FPS	Federal Protective Service
FSC	Facility Security Committee
ICS	Incident Command System
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
InTP	Insider Threat Program
IS	Independent Study
ISC	Interagency Security Committee
JIC	Joint Information Center
NIMS	National Incident Management System
OEO	Occupant Emergency Organization
OEP	Occupant Emergency Plan
PAOPIO	Public Affairs Information Officer
PPC	Personnel Processing Center
PPD	Presidential Policy Directive
RMP	Risk Management Process
USMS	United States Marshals Service

Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Active Shooter/Active Threat	An individual or individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. In most cases, firearms are the weapon of choice during mass casualty incidents, but any weapon can be utilized to harm innocent individuals and typically there is no pattern or method to the selection of victims.
Concealment	Hidden from view behind an object that will not stop a bullet (e.g. curtains, bushes, closet door, under a desk).
Cover	Ballistic protection capable of stopping a bullet, such as steel, cinder block, brick and mortar, or other natural material such as boulders or trees.
Designated Official	The highest-ranking official of the primary tenant agency of a federal facility or, alternatively, a designee selected by mutual agreement of tenant agency officials.
Employee Assistance Program	A voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal or work-related problems.
Family Assistance Center	Providing family assistance following a mass fatality incident through the provision of services and information to family members of those killed and to those injured or otherwise impacted by the incident. It is focused on the immediate aftermath of the incident to give survivors and families of victims a safe, central gathering place. The FAC provides a venue for authorities to provide information to victims, coordinate access to support services, and facilitate the collection of information from families that is necessary for victim identification.
Federal Facilities	Government leased and owned facilities in the United States (inclusive of its territories) occupied by federal employees for nonmilitary activities.
Joint Information Center	A facility established to coordinate critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. The Joint Information Center is the central point of contact for all news media.
Megacenter	Federal Protective Service emergency dispatch centers for the US Department of Homeland Security, serving as the agency's central point of communication and coordination between law enforcement personnel and various security countermeasure systems in use at federal facilities.
Mitigation	The capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. Mitigation also means reducing the likelihood that threats and hazards will happen.
Occupant Emergency Plan	Preparedness documents that cover a spectrum of emergency situations ranging from essential services interruptions, communicated threats, incidents posing a risk of injury or significant property damage, hazardous conditions, and incidents posing an immediate threat to life or property, including active shooter attacks.

Personnel Processing Center	Location where evacuated personnel are assembled for initial accountability, triaged for possible medical care and mental health counseling, and potentially interviewed as witnesses.
Preparedness	PPD-8 characterizes preparedness using five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.
Prevention	The capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent threat. Prevention is the action agencies take to keep a threatened or actual incident from occurring.
Protection	The capabilities to secure facilities against acts of terrorism and man-made or natural disasters. Protection focuses on ongoing actions that protect employees, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard.
Public Information Officer	A member of the Command Staff who serves as the conduit for information to internal and external stakeholders, including the media or other organizations seeking information directly from the incident or event. Responsible for developing and releasing information about an incident to the news media, incident personnel, and other agencies and organizations, as appropriate.
Recovery	The capabilities necessary to assist facilities affected by an event or emergency in restoring the work environment as soon as possible.
Response	The capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened, restore and establish a safe and secure environment, save lives and prevent the destruction of property, and facilitate the transition to recovery.
Security Organization	The government agency or an internal agency component either identified by statute, interagency memorandum of understanding/memorandum of agreement, or policy responsible for physical security for the specific facility.

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Interagency Security Committee Participants (2020-2021)

Interagency Security Committee

Daryle Hernandez

ISC Chief

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Working Group Co-Chairs

Neal Duckworth

Internal Revenue Service

Chad Hyland

Department of Justice

ISC Leads

Bernard Holt

Joe Lang

ISC Support

Glenn Panaro

Working Group Participants

David Mendez Department of Homeland Security	Darlene Shelton General Services Administration
Ryan Boyer Department of Homeland Security	James E. Ward General Services Administration
Fritzner Morel Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Shahpour Eskandary Federal Emergency Management Agency
Michael Davenport Department of Justice	Jordan Harrison United States Department of Agriculture
Michael J. Fluck Internal Revenue Service	Troy Meeks United States Marshal Service
Richard Rainville Internal Revenue Service	Erick Person Department of Energy
Mike Hennig Federal Emergency Management Agency	Sabeena Khanna Department of Energy
Shannon Miers Federal Emergency Management Agency	Esteban Martinez International Boundary and Water Commission

Christopher Strambler
Department of Education

Daniel Rivera
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Irelys Santiago
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Gregory Brock
National Labor Relations Board

James E. Robinson
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

Interagency Security Committee

Bernard Holt
Acting Executive Director

Interagency Security Committee Representative

Lindsey E. Blair
Acting Deputy Executive Director

Glen Legus
United States Marshals Service

Working Group Participants

Jeffrey Afman Federal Emergency Management Agency	William (Chip) Ayers Customs and Border Protection
Douglas Baker General Services Administration	Katheryn (Denise) Ballew Federal Bureau of Investigation
Jerry Castleberry Round Rock Police Department	Brice Cook Department of Energy
Craig Cruz Environmental Protection Agency	Keith Dressel Customs and Border Protection
Megan Drohan Interagency Security Committee	Jim Gallagher Department of Interior
Timothy Gregg Internal Revenue Service	Michael Griffin General Services Administration
Dennis Jahnke Hennepin County Sheriff's Office	Heather King National Security Council
David Knoff California Highway Patrol	David Leighton United States Coast Guard
James P. Leonard Customs and Border Protection	Rob Marohn Federal Protective Service
Charles Lombard National Aeronautics and Space Administration	Sandra Mayhall Federal Bureau of Investigation

Kenneth Marsalis
Federal Aviation Administration

Mark Murray
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

William Morrison
Federal Aviation Administration

Jim Palmer
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

Peter Orchard
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Roger Parrino
Department of Homeland Security

Jennifer Parkinson
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Charles Pipkins
Department of Energy

James Pelkofski
Pentagon Force Protection Agency

Terry Register
Pentagon Force Protection Agency

Bayne Rector
Smithsonian Institute

Bruce Skean
Federal Protective Service

Katherine Schweit
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Scott Ley
United States Marshals Service

Jerry Stanphill
Federal Aviation Administration

John (JT) Stroud
United States Department of Agriculture

Keith Szakal
Department of Transportation

David Vaughan
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Darryl Ward
Department of Interior

Jesse Williamson
Interagency Security Committee