

A Night Forever Etched in Our Minds and Hearts

By Jen Boss

How to better prepare for workplace violence and active shooter events

As the anniversary of October 1st approaches, we reflect on the horror and emotions encompassing that evening and the days following. It was the most horrific active shooter situation to happen on U.S. soil and will forever be a night etched in our minds and hearts. Not only for those of us in Las Vegas, but across the nation. We ask so many times, "Why?" Why did it happen? Sadly, this may never be answered. We don't know why the perpetrator carried out this monstrous act that killed 58 people and injured 851 after firing more than 1,100 rounds.

What we can do is prepare for the future and take what we have learned in order to move forward. In the days following October 1st, I recall an executive stating that he had always prepared his team for what to do in an active shooter situation, and this night brought on different challenges that his team handled flawlessly.

We always teach Department of Homeland Security's "Run. Hide. Fight." It has been instilled in us for years now. Run. If it is safe to do so, run. Run out of the building, run to safety, just run. Hide. If it isn't safe to run, then hide. Hide under a desk, in a locked room with the lights off, in a closet, just hide. Fight. If it isn't safe to run or hide, then prepare to fight. Arm yourself with anything you can find. A chair, a trash can, anything that can be used as a weapon in an attempt to overtake the shooter if/when he enters your area. This is for the last resort, failing all else. A fight for your life.

On October 1st, it was difficult to tell where the perpetrator was, and understandably so; after all, he was on the 32nd floor, giving him an expansive range. People had to take cover, which meant that thousands of people took cover wherever they could. Up and down the Strip, tourists, locals and the like were taking cover in the casinos, stores, anywhere they could get away from the gunfire. Casinos reported hundreds running into their properties, and team members assisting the injured and giving them a safe place for shelter, water and blankets.

What have we learned from October 1st? How can your property be better prepared for active shooter or workplace violence events?

Strategies:

- Plan for critical incidents to occur. They will! Event planning for activities, shows, and other events is a proactive way to prepare for incidents.
- Drill, Drill, Drill.
- Train, Train, Train. (This includes everyone! Top executives down the chain to the first day on the job trainees!).
- Build flexibility into your plan to handle unforeseen consequences.
- Ensure Security Officers are prepared for any call or incident to escalate. At least two officers should respond. Three, if possible.
- Be able to identify people who pose a possible threat to your property. Address door pushers, trick rolls, and prostitution as the potentially violent crimes they are.
- Develop a workplace violence program to identify potentially violent individuals and manage them.
- Off-property events, including team member functions, should be treated as a security concern.
- Use technology.
- Access control.
- Invest in surveillance systems, especially in hotels. Provide additional security surveillance officers.
- Use facial recognition to identify those you don't want on-property, including former team members or suspended team members.
- Use metal detectors at key access points and entertainment venues.

Countermeasures (human tools) for the world we live in include:

- Highly trained and experienced Security Officers
- Armed versus Unarmed
- Emergency Response Teams
- Constant training and drills for critical incidents
- Hotel key checks and patrols
- Most crimes tend to begin or end at the hotel
- K9 Patrol for explosives and firearms. The presence of a K9 patrol offers intimidation that will work to your benefit.
- Badge check systems
- Access control to secure key doors
- Control team member entrance
- Control perimeter and parking
- Facial recognition systems
- Surveillance cameras
- License plate recognition

In conclusion, your property has many strategies and countermeasures to protect team members and guests during active shooter and workplace violence situations that will allow you to operate proactively. It is not just Security that protects the property. ALL team members should be involved in drills and training to ensure preparedness.

Begin implementing your proactive approach now. Remember those we lost and those who were injured and begin preparing your property to proactively act in an active shooter incident, workplace violence situation, or other critical incident. Don't think that your property is immune from the reality that violence can happen anywhere at any time. October 1st was a night forever etched in our minds and hearts, and we became #VegasStrong.

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