

# How Every Executive, Manager, and Supervisor Needs to Prepare

By Derk Boss

## What will you do before emergency personnel arrive in an emergency at your casino?

I had planned to submit an article about training for Table Games personnel. I decided against doing that on November 13. That was the day terrorists attacked and killed 129 (at this point), and injured many more innocent people in Paris, France. Many more lives will be changed forever. I know we all share in the grief of those who lost loved ones.

Our world has changed, again. We are no longer as safe as we used to be, anywhere.

While this terrible attack happened thousands of miles away, and we are safe for now, I can't help but think that if these same terrorists wanted to attack us, they could. I also think that gaming properties can be a target one day. And I believe it is my duty and responsibility as a security professional to share my concerns with others. So I decided to scrap the training article, and let you know what I think and what I think should be done.

## ***Why our gaming properties are unprepared to protect our employees and guests***

As I watched the carnage unfold on TV yesterday, it was apparent to me that if one or more people attacked one of our casinos in the same way, we are unprepared to protect our employees and guests from harm or lead them in effective escape.

I realize that it is not our security department's duty to fight terrorists. It should not be. But if you watched what happened that terrible day, one thing stood out; it took time for police and other emergency personnel to respond, engage the terrorists, and stop the killing.

It will take time for our local law enforcement and emergency personnel to respond to our properties. During that time (five to seven minutes, at least), people may be dying. We must prepare to survive on our own until help arrives. I believe that we should do our utmost to protect our employees and guests. Ensuring your employees know what to do is key to that protection and can save lives.

There are a number of things that can and should be done. I encourage you to obtain advice from professionals that specialize in emergency planning and response to assist you. But there are things that you can do today to prepare your company for a critical event.

***We must be prepared to lead our employees and guests to safety or shelter them in place. To do so, consider the following:***

- Pull out your Disaster/Emergency plan and read it. Each executive, manager, and supervisor should have a copy, as well as each department. (If you don't have one, you need one).
- Update the plan. Many of these plans haven't been updated since they were created. Many were written before workplace violence, active shooter, or terrorism were the issues that they are today.
- Ensure that those assigned duties and responsibilities within the plan (usually executives and other key individuals) know what those duties and responsibilities are, and that they're able to execute them.
- Regularly train security, surveillance and other critical personnel for their duties and responsibilities in the event of an emergency. Security/Surveillance must be prepared!
- Identify evacuation routes and staging areas for employees, guests, and emergency personnel. Make sure people know where to go and how to get out.
- Identify and prepare secure (locked from the inside) areas where employees and guests can shelter in place and stop attackers from getting in.
- Practice your plan. Your Emergency Response Team (all of them) should conduct, at least quarterly, tabletop exercises to discuss, plan, and practice their response to various emergency scenarios. The better prepared this team is, the better and more effective your response will be.
- Train each of your employees to properly evacuate their areas and lead others, including guests, to safety. (Remember, our guests don't know where to go and must be assisted).
- Appoint employees in each area to lead the employees and guests in evacuation or taking shelter.
- Regularly drill personnel in what should be done in an emergency event. There are ways to do this without disrupting business to a large extent. Personally, I think our guests like to see that we are doing our best to protect them and feel safer.

Start today!

In closing, I wouldn't bring this up to you if I didn't think it was necessary, and that some of us may need it in the future. Please take the time to see where you stand in terms of your response to an emergency event and get ready.