



**BLUE STAR SECURITY**

Chicago's Finest Protection

# ACTIVE SHOOTER CRISIS PLAN

*Everything Your Organization Needs To Know*

 1011 E. Touhy Avenue, Suite 345 Des Plaines, IL 60018

 [bss@bluestarsecurityltd.com](mailto:bss@bluestarsecurityltd.com)

 [bluestarsecurityltd.com](http://bluestarsecurityltd.com)

 708-669-7470

© 2018 Blue Star Security, Ltd.

License #122.001177 (Licensed Security Contractor Agency)

License #117.001722 (Licensed Private Detective Agency)



# BLUE STAR SECURITY

Chicago's Finest Protection



## ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES ARE INCREASING.

These episodes are financially, physically and emotionally disastrous to the organizations that are targeted. The key to reducing the damage caused to both human lives and financial loss is preparation. Advanced in-depth preparation and detailed planning could prevent your organization from being targeted or reduce the impact if an attack occurs.

The average response time of law enforcement to active shooter events is approximately 3 minutes (much faster than the average for standard 911 calls). This leaves the targeted organization, on average, 3 minutes to defend and protect potential victims.

How quickly and efficiently an organization responds during those 180 seconds is critical. How an organization plans, organizes, prepares, trains and practices in the preceding weeks, months and years is critical. A proactive security plan, protocols, physical design, monitoring equipment, mindset, and training used by the organization can have a significant impact on how its members survive the attack.



## BLUE STAR SECURITY AREAS OF EXPERTISE



Professional Security Assessments



Employment Screening



Student & Employee Protection



Evacuation Management



Theft and Loss Protection



Making Clear, Facility-wide Announcements



Integrated Electronic Security Solutions



Emergency Planning for Fires & Attacks



Managing Access Authorizations



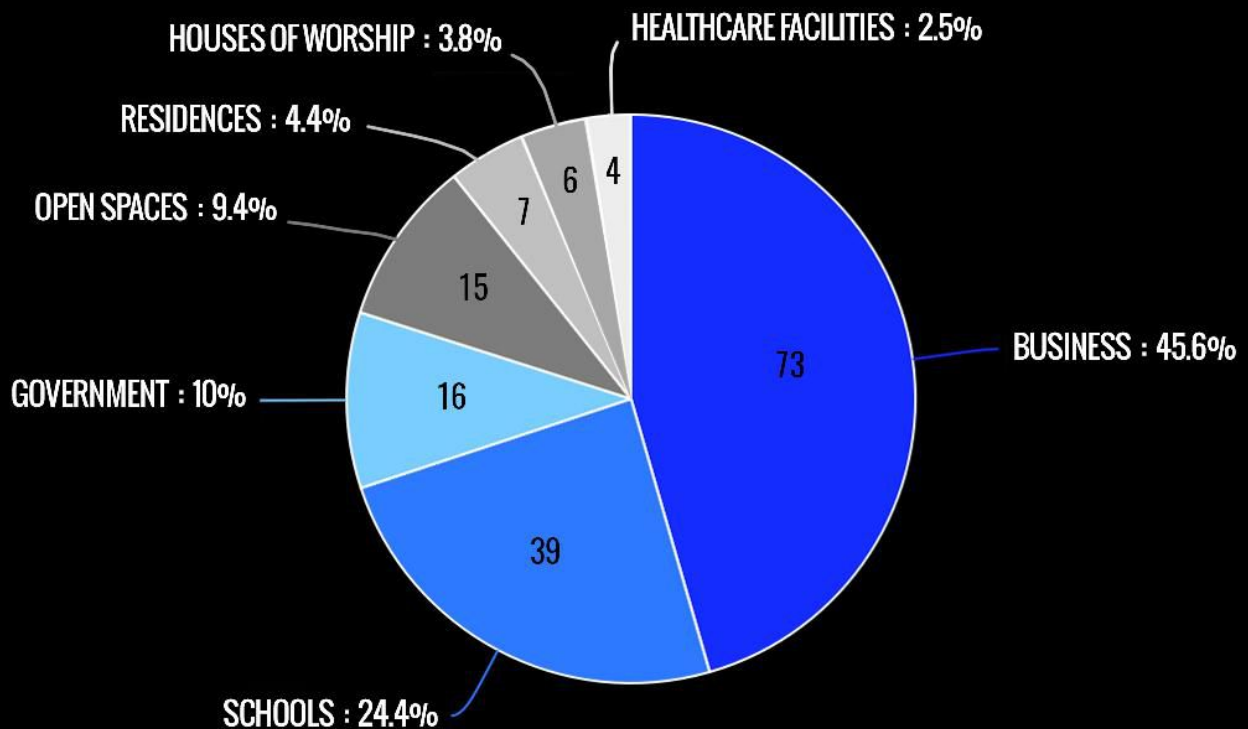
Responding to Emergencies, Fires & Attacks



# WHO IS AT RISK?

There is currently no way to predict where an active shooter event may happen. The three most common places they occur are businesses (45%), schools (25%), and government facilities (10%). However, studies have shown that they tend to focus on soft targets vulnerable targets are locations in which there is little to no security, easy access to the location, and dense groups of people.

Studies have shown that majority of active shooter incidents throughout the last decade have occurred in locations with insufficient security where the active shooter had no fear of deadly force.



Source: FBI, a Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States between 2000 - 2013

According to a study done by the FBI, active shooter events are trending up in recent years with a yearly average of 16.4 events. This same study showed that in 61% of the cases there was some connection between the shooter and the targeted location.

One hundred percent of these events are planned in advance and at least a third of them involve precise preparation. It is important to note that spontaneous active shooters do not exist. Post-event investigations have discovered the point by point strategy used by the shooters. In some cases this includes up to a year of meticulous research involving surveillance, weapons preparation and internet research of other active shooters and police response scenarios.





# THE SHOOTER IS GOING TO BE PREPARED. WILL YOU BE READY?

## What can you do to prepare my organization?

The key to increasing your or your organization's chances of survival in one of these events is dedicated preparation and a proactive security approach. We know the shooter has planned every one of these episodes. The shooter must take into account the degree to which the intended location is protected.

There is 61% chance that the active shooter has a connection to the targeted location. He or she would likely be familiar with whatever safety and security protocols are in place. At first glance this may seem like a disadvantage to the organization, while in fact it's an advantage because it shows that the target will be more difficult to attack. This discourages an active shooter.



The fear of going to jail or being shot can detract shooters from their planned attack and studies show that 40% of active shooters take their own lives during the act.

***The best active shooter plan any organization can have is the one that dissuades the shooter from ever attempting an attack because the target organization has taken the necessary steps to prepare for it.***



## **WHAT SHOULD MY ACTIVE SHOOTER PLAN LOOK LIKE?**

**The best plan for an organization is a unified and multifaceted one that accounts for mental and physical training and practice, on-going communications, site protection and lightening fast responses to take during an event.**

### **Mental Preparation**

Leadership is the key to preparation and response. The leader of the organization must acknowledge that this threat exists and be willing to take on the role of preparing the organization. This leadership role is vital because many employees may prefer to ignore the risks and remain in a state of unprepared ignorance.

Leaders have an obligation to protect their organizations. It is critical that they are comfortable discussing potential threats. It is only then that real progress be made in implementing the active shooter protection plan. Studies has show when we are faced with unexpected life-threatening situations, the unprepared person is very likely to fall into denial and freeze. This has been observed when studying videos of violent crimes.

It has been observed that, witnesses and victims will stand and watch robberies, violent assaults and even shootouts between the police and suspects without taking any safety measures for themselves. This state of denial is quite natural for the untrained person as it takes a while for their brain to make sense of the sudden violence and the dangerous situation they are facing.

The problem with non-acceptance is that is often causes a person to freeze. We have heard the terminology "flight or fight" response. With people, we find that it expands to include fight, flight or freeze. In an active shooter event, both fight and flight would be appropriate responses, but freezing could be a fatal response None the less freezing is often the natural response that results from denial.



# SO HOW DO YOU AVOID DENIAL?

**The first step is acknowledging that a threat exists.** The second is to familiarize yourself and your organization with what an active shooter event would look, sound and feel like. If you familiarize yourself with what an event looks, sounds and feels like, It is possible to recognize when an actual event is occurring and react appropriately.

The next step is mental preparation. It is vitally important to work through the deliberation period of what to do when threatened. It is during this deliberation period, ***that we must work through one of two processes: reflective response or reflexive response.***

**A reflective response is the process of reflecting upon a problem in order to come up with a solution.**

Given time we can usually come up with a very sound, well-thought-out and appropriate response to almost any threat. However, in a life-threatening event such as an active shooter this is not an option. Therefore, you must rely on a different response process, which is the reflexive response.

**How can you train yourself and others to enact a reflexive response in the direst of moments?**

In a word: preparation. It is similar to a professional athlete who studies film of his opponents in order to be prepared, we must envision what an active shooter event would look like so that when we experience it in real life, we recognize the stimulus and are prepared to react instantly.

It is not unlike a professional fighter who studies his opponent and realizes that he follows his jab with a right cross, he begins to train his reflexive mind to block the cross as soon as he sees the jab. Over a period of time, it becomes a reflex and no longer requires reflection.

This is the type of response that you require for your organization. In the event of an active shooter scenario, the threat must be instantly recognized, and then the response is reflexive. This is vital because seconds matter and during a crisis is not the time to generate a plan. This is why it is necessary to discuss and practice the plan with regularity.

A fire drill is a good example of a precautionary measure you already use to protect your those in your organization. Everyone is instructed how to exit the building in a safe orderly manner should a fire occur and to meet exit goals.





# IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS

***Rapid notification is a key factor in saving people's lives.***

The ideal communications setup for an organization to have the ability to reach “all of your members instantly. This capability is demonstrated in schools that have a public address system that can reach the entire campus, including remote buildings immediately.

Organizations should have the ability to send and receive two-way communications about real-time experiences (e.g. “I hear shots in my hallway,” “We are sheltered in room 202,” “I saw the gunman, he looks like this”). Ideally, this information would be sent through an intercom system and or radio and shared with law enforcement upon notification.

In lieu of such technology, a simpler “echoing” alert can be utilized. When the members of an organization become aware that there is an active shooter, they can then yell “active shooter, active shooter, active shooter”. As other members hear the alert, they then “echo” the warning as they start to enact their safety plan. While this method is basic, it can be very effective in single building organizations.

# SITE HARDENING & PROTECTION

Your building's layout can make it either a prime target or virtually inaccessible. Most organizations want their building to be warm and inviting and do not want the campus to feel like a TSA checkpoint. There are steps that can be taken to harden the site without making it feel that way.

**Checklist organizations should use to “harden” their location**

 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Controlling Access</b>	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Proactive Security Approach</b>
 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Setting up Interior Safety Zones</b>	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Creating Multiple Exit Options.</b>



## Controlling Access

Controlling access is a primary way to ensure that everyone who is entering a building has a legitimate reason to be there. It may not prevent a current member of an organization from an assault but it will slowdown or prevent an outside attacker.

A controlled access building will serve as a deterrent and cause the attacker to choose a different location. The entry location can be controlled by key card, physical keys or a receptionist with a remote access solenoid or other options. If a receptionist or security staff is stationed at the access point, they should be knowledgeable of active shooter protocol and entrusted to set off the alarm.

**The assailant is looking for a dense crowd of people to attack.** If they are unable to access the building's interior, then that decreases the appeal of invading that building. If they were to launch an attack at the entry to the building that will serve as a delay tactic for the rest of the organization.

## Proactive Security Approach

A proactive security strategy is an invaluable asset to an active shooter situation. A majority of organizations have weak security that is not trained sufficiently for active shooter situations or they are powerless to take the necessary action.

A properly trained security team can be one of the most beneficial tools in preventing an assault from happening and can reduce both physical and financial loss.

## Interior Safety Zones

Businesses also need to identify Interior shelters, places within the building that members of the organization could use for protection. An analysis of active shooter events indicated there is no evidence that a previous active shooter has ever breached an interior, locked, standard commercial door (metal frame with solid wood core). Employees who are able to shelter in a closet, office, class, copy room, break room, bathroom or any other room that has a commercial grade locked door and an absence of windows are in a safe place.

Certainly, bullets can go through doors and also through walls. However, the shooter knows that the average police response will be in 3 minutes, which means they will be in a hurry to create a body count prior to the arrival of police. While it is possible to shoot your way through a door, it is a difficult and time-consuming process.

## Multiple Exit Options

Multiple and readily-accessible exit points are helpful because, by far, the safest way to negotiate an active shooter event is to leave the area. Active shooters are methodical and meticulous and choose a location where they can create a lot of casualties. They do not chase individuals who are fleeing from multiple exits. It is imperative that all your employees know where the available exits are, which prevents them from being ambushed.





# PHYSICAL PLAN DURING AN ATTACK

We support the Avoid, Deny, Defend plan. The system should be viewed as a holistic plan and not a linear one. Each step is independent, and the most appropriate one should be applied. It is not necessary to employ the strategies in a sequential order.



## AVOID

Avoiding the confrontation is the top priority



## DENY

Deny access to your location if you are unable to avoid the assailant



## DEFEND

Defend yourself by all means necessary if you find that you are unable to avoid the confrontation or restrict access to your location

## AVOID

Avoiding the confrontation means using all of your presumptive clues to immediately identify that an active shooting is in progress. Things such as gunfire, screaming, mass panic and people fleeing an area are all clues that an attack is underway. This is best opportunity to avoid harm is by leaving the area as quickly as possible. There can be delays because potential victims are afraid to look foolish or embarrass themselves. It is necessary to save those people by showing them what to do. You can run away yelling “active shooter” and they will follow. Remember, the less prepared employees will always follow a leader. This is where knowing escape exits and alternate safety routes is vital.

## DENY

Deny means to deny access to your location if you are not able to leave the area. This is the portion of the plan that relies heavily on the selected interior shelters. Every member of the organization should be able to identify a primary and secondary interior shelter in case they find themselves in a position where they cannot avoid the confrontation. This is also critical for the more vulnerable employees who may be mobility impaired.

**Remember:** Interior shelters don't have to be fortresses, just a room with a commercial grade door with a lock. Once in the safe shelter, the occupants should barricade the door with as many items as they can find. They can use desks, copiers, chairs, tables, books, filing cabinets, break room appliances or any other heavy items. These would help slow down an attacker if the door were to be breached or if he or she has the keys or swipe card.



Anything that can slow an attacker down will save precious seconds for the first responders who will be coming to neutralize the assailant. Organizations often ask: What can stop a bullet, and does it help if I hide behind something?

Bullets can cause damage in two ways, speed and mass. It is possible for makeshift barricades to slow the bullets and help to break them apart. To be clear: hiding behind a wooden desk is not considered fool proof protection from a bullet. However, if a person sheltering in a locked room could find a wooden desk to hide behind, that could potentially make them just a little safer.

## DEFEND

Defend means to defend yourself by any means possible. This is the most appropriate response if you are close to the assailant. You must recognize immediately that the attacker is attempting to kill you, therefore you must fight with all of the strength, anger and ferocity that you can mobilize. You do not need to be a highly trained fighter to be effective.

The attacker has purposely chosen a target location that he or she believes to be “soft”. They do not pick a location anticipating a counter attack. By launching an unexpected counter attack, you send the assailant into fight, flee, or freeze mode.

Research has shown that approximately 20% of would-be assailants are subdued by their intended victims. In order to defend yourself, you must be mentally prepared to take the appropriate action. Using a pack mentality and assaulting the active shooter in a group is also very effective.

## Now is the time To take actions to Prepare and Protect Your Organization

You have the ability to prepare your organization against the threat of an active shooter. It all starts with taking the necessary steps to educate and train your employees. This vitally important decision will lead your organization through the mental and physical training it needs to prevail and win against an active shooter.

You can start by creating a plan and implementing all the recommendations outlined for you in this document. You and your employees will need to practice and train to achieve the mindset necessary to respond effectively to an active shooter scenario.. This is the best way to ensure your employees are able to protect themselves from the crippling stress and unproductive panic of an attack. If your employees are armed with knowledge, confidence and a well-crafted tested plan, they are in the best position to protect themselves and their fellow employees from harm.

