

Introduction

IAHSS experts offered seven steps that leaders can take to better prepare their institutions for an active shooter:

Credit: Marty Stempniak

<http://www.hhnmag.com/articles/7993-steps-to-prepare-your-hospital-for-an-active-shooter>

Steps

- 1. Assess risks and vulnerabilities:** Those can include performing annual risk assessments, determining potential vulnerabilities, developing emergency plans and forming teams to assess potential threats.
- 2. Prevention and response:** Understand what actions it would take to keep a threat at bay, and your ability to perform them, and to stabilize the situation while transitioning to recovery. Who is part of your crisis response team if a situation snowballs?
- 3. Reducing workplace violence:** Train for whatever potential incidents may arise, and then press forward with even harder challenges. Work in concert with security and emergency management, and gain leadership support early in the process.
- 4. Plan a mock drill exercise and training:** Such as demonstrating your ability to manage casualties, practicing your response to the media, and putting in place an employee support plan.
- 5. Collaborate with outside law enforcement:** Understand the availability of external responders who may assist in an emergency, and ensure that they have given input into your planning process.
- 6. Communication and crisis awareness:** Hospitals must use common terms for first responders to avoid confusion, and test their incident command system as frequently as possible. IAHSS experts also urged hospitals to use the three-step response of running/e-escape if possible, hiding if not, and fighting the attacker only as a last resort.
- 7. Recovery and debriefing:** This last step would include preparing to speak with the media, compiling "after action" reports, staying in constant communication with staff and patients, and determining which spaces should stay closed and for how long

Profile of an Active Shooter

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area, typically through the use of firearms.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

- Victims are selected at random
- The event is unpredictable and evolves quickly

Profile of an Active Shooter (cont)

- Law enforcement is usually required to end an active shooter situation

Coping with An Active Shooter Situation

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door
- Attempt to take the active shooter down as a last resort

How to Respond When Shooter is Active

1. EVACUATE

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Leave your belongings behind
- Keep your hands visible

2. HIDE OUT

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view
- Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager

3. TAKE ACTION

- As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
- Act with physical aggression and throw items at the active shooter

How to Respond When Police Arrive

- Remain calm and follow instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating