Gunman In the Workplace

Active shooters pose a legitimate threat to employers — between 2000 and 2018, 277 active shooter scenarios took place in the U.S., with the vast majority of them occurring in the workplace, according to data from the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). But these events make up a small portion of the overall workplace violence employers face.

Given the frequency with which active shooter scenarios play out in workplaces, employers must assess the impact such threats could have on employees and business operations. The company compliance officer, safety officer, and other relevant administrators should all be involved in the development, implementation, and management of a policy that educates and trains staff for such an event. In general, every employee should be encouraged to report any suspicious activity.

The Department of Homeland Security recommends the following activities to prepare for and survive an active shooter event.

**EDUCATE AND TRAIN**

* Provide staff with active shooter training.
* If an employee sees something, they should be encouraged to say something.
* Link your business with local services to receive local emergency alerts.
* Provide ways for employees to be more aware of their environment and any possible dangers.

**MAKE A PLAN**

* Make a plan with administrators and make sure every employee knows what to do if confronted with an active shooter.
* Wherever you, go look for the two nearest exits, have an escape path in mind and identify places you could hide if necessary.
* Understand the plans for individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs.

**DURING AN EVENT**

**RUN and escape if possible.**

* Getting away from the shooter or shooters is the top priority.
* Leave your belongings behind and get away.
* Help others escape, if possible, but evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
* Warn and prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
* Call 9-1-1 when you are safe and describe the shooter, location and weapons.

**HIDE if escape is not possible.**

* Get out of the shooter’s view and stay very quiet.
* Silence all electronic devices and make sure they won’t vibrate.
* Lock and block doors, close blinds and turn off lights.
* Don’t hide in groups. Spread out along walls or hide separately to make it more difficult for the shooter.
* Try to communicate with police silently. Use text message or social media to tag your location or put a sign in a window.
* Stay in place until law enforcement gives you the all clear.
* Your hiding place should be out of the shooter's view and provide protection if shots are fired in your direction.

**FIGHT as an absolute last resort.**

* Commit to your actions and act as aggressively as possible against the shooter.
* Recruit others to ambush the shooter with makeshift weapons like chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors, books, etc.
* Be prepared to cause severe or lethal injury to the shooter.
* Throw items and improvise weapons to distract and disarm the shooter.

**AFTER THE SHOOTING EVENT**

* Keep hands visible and empty when approaching the police.
* Know that law enforcement’s first task is to end the incident and they may have to pass injured along the way.
* Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns or handguns and may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation.
* Officers will shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.
* Follow law enforcement instructions and evacuate in the direction they come from unless otherwise instructed.
* Take care of yourself first, and then you may be able to help the wounded before first responders arrive.
* If the injured are in immediate danger, help get them to safety.
* While you wait for first responders to arrive, provide first aid. Apply direct pressure to wounded areas and use tourniquets if you have been trained to do so.
* Turn wounded people onto their sides if they are unconscious and keep them warm.
* Consider seeking professional help for you and your family to cope with the long-term effects of the trauma.