



Active Shooter Awareness for the 2013 Holiday Season

22 November 2013

(U//FOUO) New Jersey Regional Operations Intelligence Center (NJ ROIC) Intelligence & Analysis Threat Unit ~ IAU201311-2386

Introduction

(U//FOUO) One of the most serious threats facing New Jersey and the entire U.S. Homeland continues to be that of the active shooter, regardless of motivation, who by the very nature of their associated tactics, techniques, and procedures, pose a serious challenge to security personnel based on their ability to operate independently, making them extremely difficult to detect and disrupt before conducting an attack.

(U//FOUO) There have been numerous, recent examples of this threat nationally and internationally, including the active shooter incident this month at the Garden State Plaza Mall in Paramus (Bergen Co.), New Jersey which garnered national attention. The persistent nature of this threat and the expectation that it will continue to rank as the most likely scenario public safety officials will have to contend with in the foreseeable future, highlights the need for law enforcement and private sector security personnel to share information and best practices to better prevent and respond to similar, future incidents.

(U//FOUO) In light of the recent spate of active shooter events, and with the traditional holiday shopping season about to begin, the NJ Regional Operations Intelligence Center, in conjunction with the NJ Office of Emergency Management, the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the Bergen County Prosecutors Office and the Paramus Police Department, provides the following report on the active shooter threat to provide law enforcement and private sector security personnel with information which can assist public safety planners with developing best practices going forward in dealing with this issue, both in prevention and response.

Overview of the Active Shooter Threat

(U//FOUO) The most significant potential threat facing the U.S. Homeland is that posed by a lone offender or homegrown violent extremist (HVE). For the purposes of this report, the focus will be strictly on the modus operandi of these attacks (active shooter), as opposed to the motivation. Active shooters typically conduct small, simple, and relatively inexpensive plots with short operational cycles, improving their operational security and reducing the opportunities for law enforcement to detect the plot.

(U//FOUO) Recent examples of active shooter incidents in the U.S. include:

- On September 16, 2013, Aaron Alexis shot and killed 12 people and wounded four at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., before he was killed by law enforcement. The Navy Yard Shooting is considered one of the deadliest military installation shootings since the November 2009 Fort Hood shooting.

- On November 1, 2013, a shooting occurred at the Los Angeles International Airport. Paul Anthony Ciancia, age 23, a former New Jersey resident, has been accused of killing a Transportation Security Administration officer and injuring several other people with a rifle.
- On November 4, 2013, Richard Shoop, age 20, entered the Garden State Plaza mall in Paramus, New Jersey, shortly before closing time wearing black clothing and a motorcycle helmet. He fired random shots with an automatic rifle in the mall before taking his own life. No one else was injured.

(U/FOUO) Other notable, historical active shooter situations at commercial facilities and shopping malls include:

- **December 2012:** A masked gunman, wearing camouflage, opened fire at the Clackamas Town Center in Portland, Oregon, killing two people and wounding another before taking his own life.
- **October 2012:** A man shot and killed his wife and two others at a spa at a shopping mall in Brookfield, Wisconsin, where his wife worked. He then killed himself.
- **July 2012:** A man killed 12 and wounded 58 during screening of "The Dark Knight Rises" at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado before surrendering to police.
- **June 2012:** One person was killed and seven others injured in a shooting at the Eaton Centre in Toronto. Police said the suspect and two of the victims were members of the same gang.
- **April 2011:** A man fired more than 100 rounds from three guns in a suburban Dutch shopping mall, killing six people before turning the weapon on himself.
- **November 2011:** A man killed two and wounded a police officer before he was shot to death by police at his home in Arundel Mills Mall, Hanover, Maryland.
- **January 2011:** A man exchanged gunfire with police at Chandler Fashion Center in suburban Phoenix, sending shoppers fleeing and prompting a mall lockdown as the suspect barricaded himself in a fast food restaurant. There were no injuries.
- **June 2010:** A gunman shot and killed four people and wounded three others at a restaurant inside a Miami-area mall before killing himself.
- **December 2009:** A lone gunman dressed in black killed four people in the Sello shopping mall in Espoo, Finland, before returning home and taking his own life.

Common Vulnerabilities of Commercial Facilities

(U/FOUO) As evidenced by the information above, commercial facilities, to include shopping malls, are attractive targets for active shooter actors. This is largely due to the inherent vulnerabilities which make these facilities challenging to protect. Some common vulnerabilities of commercial facilities, to include shopping malls, include:

- Unrestricted public access with a large number of access points.
- Unrestricted access to peripheral areas, such as parking lots.
- Access by suppliers, vendors, and maintenance workers to nonpublic areas.
- Limited security force.
- Building designs that are not security oriented and have multiple locations to place explosives or hazardous agents.¹

¹ DHS Infrastructure Protection Report Series: Shopping Malls

Potential Indicators of Attack Planning

(U//FOUO) Historically, active shooter threat actors do not engage in substantial, long term, or detailed planning, which is a key factor in why they are extremely difficult to detect and disrupt, often there is some kind of pre-operational activity, rudimentary as it may be. Possible indicators of pre-operational surveillance or attack planning include:

- Unusual interest in sensitive information about security measures, personnel, entry points, peak days/hours of operation, and access controls such as alarms or locks
- Engaging in overtly suspicious actions to provoke and observe responses by public safety personnel
- Discreet use of cameras or video recorders, sketching, or note-taking consistent with surveillance
- Observation of, or questions about facility air conditioning, heating, and ventilation systems
- Repeated visits by the same subjects, including attempts to disguise appearance from visit to visit
- Attempted or unauthorized access to rooftops or other sensitive areas
- Observation of or unusual questions about security measures, such as staffing, barriers, restricted areas, cameras, and intrusion detection systems
- Multiple false alarms or fictitious emergency calls to the same locations or similar venues
- Unusual interest in speaking with building maintenance personnel
- Observation of security reaction drills or procedures
- Attention to or avoidance of surveillance cameras
- Garments not appropriate for weather/seasons

(U//FOUO) Each indicator may be by itself, lawful conduct or behavior and may constitute the exercise of rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. There also may be an innocent explanation for conduct that appears suspicious. For this reason, no single indicator should be the sole basis for law enforcement action. The totality of behavioral indicators and other relevant circumstances should be evaluated when considering any law enforcement response or action.

Recommendations / Best Practices

(U//FOUO) The following is an executive summary of recommendations and best practices regarding the prevention of and response to active shooter incidents. This summary is a combination of standing best practices in this area and points which were taken from a recent after-action discussion facilitated by the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and the Paramus Police Department regarding the planning and response to the Garden State Plaza Mall active shooter incident. This summary is not intended to be an all inclusive list, but rather a summary of key points for consideration.

(U//FOUO) Prevention:

- Law enforcement, Fire, EMS, and private security planners should meet to discuss priorities and a plan of action. A Contingency Action Plan (CAP) should be in place to address proper emergency reporting procedures, site assessments, and emergency management.
- Law enforcement, Fire, EMS, and private security planners should exercise and train regularly on responding to an active shooter scenario.
- Communications should be established in advance that can be utilized during training. Clear police communication are necessary for effective operations, training should address any radio issues or interference.
- Law enforcement should engage in outreach efforts with security planners and employees on recognizing threats and suspicious activity; as well as proper reporting procedures.

- Private sector partners should incorporate security awareness and appropriate response procedures into employee training programs.
- Install closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems and lighting to cover key areas.
- CCTV monitoring stations must be located in secure areas of respective facilities to ensure their effectiveness during potential attack situations.
- Train security personnel in suspicious activity or pre-operational detection. While historically, these threat actors do not engage in substantial pre-operational planning, which is a key factor in why they are extremely difficult to detect and disrupt, often there is some kind of pre-operational activity, rudimentary as it may be.
- If surveillance is detected, security personnel should collect potentially useful information on the potential threat actor(s) targets, associates, and vehicles. By observing what aspects of the facility the suspect seems focused on, security personnel may be able to collect information related to attack type or method.

(U//FOUO) Response:

- Responding law enforcement and public safety personnel should utilize proper Incident Command System (ICS) to coordinate and assure that all assets are accounted for.
- First arriving vehicles should position themselves in a safe location, but also in areas that do not block key ingress and egress locations that may hinder any additional first responders.
- Immediately after contact and rescue teams are deployed, a command post should be established. All staging, command, triage, and treatment areas should be in a safe location outside of any possible threats.
- A communications plan should be established where common radio frequencies and modes of communication are identified to assist with timely and accurate information being relayed to Incident Command.
- Responding law enforcement should always take into account the possibility of secondary devices or additional threats.
- Need for a Public Information Officer (PIO) to relay accurate and timely information.
- Establish an intelligence / situational analysis unit within the ICS structure to share situational information, while also developing intelligence to support the investigation and/or response.
- Each county should notify the NJ ROIC Intelligence Watch and Warning Unit of an active shooter or any other critical incident as soon as possible. This will expedite the organized and efficient response of critical assets to those incidents which require extensive law enforcement / first responder support.

Addendum: OHSP Comprehensive Guide on Active Shooter Best Practices

(U//FOUO) The following is a comprehensive and in-depth guide to Active Shooter event best practices written by the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security in conjunction with various mall partners across New Jersey. This information is intended to inform the active shooter prevention and response planning efforts for both public safety and private sector security partners in New Jersey.

What preparations should your organization have in place to handle an Active Shooter situation?**Establish Prior to Incident:**Plans, procedures, and protocols:

- Emergency evacuation plan
- Locations needed for response – e.g., rally location for evacuees, command post, and staging areas for responders
- Shelter-in-place plan and procedures
- Mass notification procedures
- Emergency reporting procedures and training
- Lockdown procedures (For those who can't evacuate.)
- Traffic management plan
- Checklists provided to each work station, providing emergency instructions to employees

Collaboration with law enforcement:

- Invite local law enforcement agencies to tour the site and become familiar with the layout of the buildings and any vulnerabilities or potential hazardous material stored onsite.
- Develop a "go kit" for first responders and organizational managers that includes site maps, building floor plans, master keys, and access cards.

Facility Immediate Actions and Considerations:

Are facility emergency plans and procedures in place for this type of incident?

- Has the facility trained employees to react to such an incident? How will visitors or the general public know what actions to take?

Report incident, according to emergency reporting policy.

- What is the reporting policy? Should employees call security first, or 9-1-1?
- In some cases, it may be appropriate to call 9-1-1 first.
- In companies with security offices, the policy may be to report the incident first to security, who then calls 9-1-1. This can enable security to more effectively assist responders.
- Will calls made to 9-1-1 from landlines within the building(s) immediately forward to security? Do personnel answering phones have the authority to act on the information or the knowledge of how to pass on the information to the appropriate people?

In an open facility with the public present, 9-1-1 is likely to be called first. In this instance, how will security be notified and does security have a direct line to the police department?

- Ensure information reported to 9-1-1 throughout the duration of the incident is routed to the Incident Command post.

What decisions and actions should you consider now that police have been notified?**Facility Actions and Considerations:**

Activate emergency action plan.

- Initiate lockdown/evacuation procedures.
- Notify decision makers. (Who are they?)

What decisions and actions should you consider now that police/fire are enroute?

Alert the site security supervisor to be available to answer questions posed by responders about the site and buildings, including any hazardous areas.

- If the security director is off-duty, he/she may also be helpful in answering questions, either via phone or should report on site to direct operations and act as a liaison to responders.

Use technology to gain situational awareness and prepare to assist responders.

- Closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems can help identify the location and identity of the shooter, as well as the approximate number of employees or visitors in the general area of the incident.
- If the shooter stole an employee identification card, such as an active radio frequency identification (RFID) card, track its progress through the building's access management system. However, this action can only be completed once the company identifies which badge was stolen.

Begin to prepare for the arrival of law enforcement.

- Ready the “go kit” to provide it to the responding units.
- Gather additional information to enhance instructions to employees and aid law enforcement response, i.e., the shooter’s description and current location, type of weapon(s), amount of ammunition, and whether the shooter is carrying a backpack or package.
- Law enforcement will want to know the location of the command post, where to establish the safety perimeter (and if plume modeling needs to be completed in anticipation of a possible chemical release).

Attempt to identify victims and initiate assistance, but only if it is safe to do so.

Concerns and Questions:

Has the company pre-identified staging and evacuation locations?

- Do employees and visitors know how to reach the evacuation location? (What route/backup routes to take?)

Have employees been trained on emergency reporting procedures?

- Checklists at each workstation can be helpful in ensuring the appropriate information is provided to the 9-1-1 operator or security.
- Training of employees on emergency reporting should include utilizing plain English and no slang, particularly when describing the location of the incident.

A controlled response in an open, publicly accessible property will be difficult to implement.

- It will be difficult to control access without a secure perimeter.
- The ability for the company to communicate with those onsite is limited, unless the property has a public address system.
- Staging areas for evacuation are unlikely to be known by public visitors. (There should be a plan in place that employees should be aware of.)
- Employees should be trained to assist visitors with responding, either sheltering in place or evacuating to a rally location.

Security should have pre-scripted announcement for the public address (PA) system. (What actions do you take now that the announcement has been made? Key considerations.)

How does the type of site—open to the public or controlled access—impact the announcement and response?

- Response at public properties may be unpredictable and chaotic due to the public’s lack of training on procedures.
- Controlled facilities can rely on standard operating procedures for emergencies, including those for alarms and visitor escorts.

What directions should be provided?

- Does the company emergency plan dictate the use of coded announcements?
- If coded words are used, follow them with specific response instructions using clear, straightforward language.
- Broadcast the description of the shooter to enable identification throughout the facility.
- Notify all on the property, then use security personnel to issue a warning for others to remain away from the property.

How would a property-wide announcement influence the active shooter’s action?

Keep in mind that the shooter could easily blend in or flee with the crowd.

Has the shooter conducted reconnaissance on the property to gain an understanding about emergency procedures and the best location to injure the highest number of people?

If the shooter stole an identification card, unless the card has been deactivated, he may still have access to buildings/secure areas despite the initiation of lockdown procedures.

Security and 9-1-1 operators are overwhelmed with phone calls. (What are the key questions or concerns at this point?)

Work with the police department to coordinate and control access to the facility, particularly for first responders.

- In an open property, this will require additional resources to ensure clear lanes are available for response vehicles while managing the arrival of the interested public and media, as well as fleeing witnesses.

Will communications between security guards become fractured because they are performing multiple duties while awaiting the arrival of responders?

- Have communication protocols been established and drilled prior to the incident?

Are enough personnel available and trained to assist the security guards—e.g., by reviewing and monitoring CCTV feeds, walking the perimeter to identify other suspicious activity, and answering calls to the main company phone number?

Utilize additional personnel, including security guards, on the property due to the shift change.

Implement the media management plan to control media access to the property.

- While this is likely a lower priority at this early stage in the incident, a pre-identified staging area away from the incident site will help ensure media does not interfere with arriving response units.

Anticipate the arrival of or calls from concerned family and friends, as well as concerned citizens from the local community.

How will information about the incident released via social media, including photos and video, affect the response?

Police and first responders arrive.

(What are the key decisions you need to make?

What questions do you need to ask as the emergency responders arrive?)

Responding units will establish inner and outer perimeters with staging areas for responders.

- The inner perimeter is established for tactical purposes. Responding units will be directed to this location. The outer perimeter will be established for the command post. Media staging area will be even further away.
- If a chemical release is expected or possible, the exact location of the staging areas will be dependent on the weather. A location up wind from the incident site would be chosen.

Property security guards or management will assist law enforcement.

- Make available master keys and maps, if they haven't already been provided to responding units.
- Engineer may be able to provide tools for breaching doors and fences, if responding units do not have tools at the ready.
- Answer questions about the property and give directions to the incident site.
- Law enforcement may request that personnel ride in the responding vehicle to provide directions to the incident site. This is a risk calculation made by law enforcement, based on safety of the situation and the need to quickly respond.

Does the property and/or local jurisdiction (i.e., local law enforcement or public works department) have a traffic management plan to implement, in order to divert traffic away from the incident site? What personnel are needed to implement the plan?

Will the local public safety agency be quickly overwhelmed by the immediate response needs? Can mutual aid agreements be activated to help alleviate the strain on resources?

How many jurisdictions are responding to the incident? Depending on the size and location of the event, expect multiple jurisdictions and anticipate that they have not coordinated in the past.

- Evaluate the communications capabilities among responding jurisdictions and the facility.
- Anticipate the need to educate responding units on the property layout.
- Ensure law enforcement and property security are utilizing the Incident Command System to effectively conduct a joint response with minimal confusion over roles and responsibilities.

Assess the need for additional announcements based on the fluid situation.

- Some incidents may dictate the need to provide specific instructions to those on the property to either continue to shelter-in-place or evacuate.
- Other incidents may dictate the need to not broadcast further details, for fear that the shooter will gain additional knowledge to inflict more damage, such as waiting for the target-rich environment provided

by an evacuation.

- Announcements should not indicate when law enforcement arrives, even though this may calm nerves that help has arrived. This information would take away law enforcement's element of surprise, which is a tactical tool for response.
- Repeated announcements (about every 30 minutes) can help maintain calm, provide additional instructions, and request that witnesses call security if the situation changes in their location.
- An all-clear announcement should be made when the situation is deemed appropriate.

Do not evacuate the incident site yet, as the movement of fleeing evacuees will affect the response by SWAT. Keep media offsite and control communications.

- Inform news organizations of the staging area location; do not invite them into the facility.
- Implement a pre-established agreement to utilize an off-duty law enforcement officer to control the staging area.
- Implement the company's media management plan and follow corporate policies about information release.

Police response shifts crisis to tactical phase.

(Now that law enforcement is onsite at the facility, how do you coordinate with them?)

Is the shooter now on the move? In which direction is he headed? Is he attempting to blend in and flee with the crowd?

In which direction are the people fleeing?

Do they know where the staging area is located and how to access it?

Are employees trained on how to respond to law enforcement commands, e.g., keep hands up and visible?

Will those fleeing create a target-rich environment for the shooter to injure additional victims?

Is the shooter a former employee or does he otherwise have knowledge about the site to inflict damage?

Property security guards or management will continue to assist law enforcement.

- Provide maps and floor plans to additional responding units.
- Deploy the company's crisis management team to the command center.
- Provide employee lists to law enforcement.
- Access CCTV and help law enforcement understand the area and equipment shown on the screen.
- Capture a photo of the shooter from the security camera feeds and provide to law enforcement.
- Link the facility's security communication system to law enforcement radios.

Law enforcement is likely to ask the following:

- How many people are located in the area of the incident?
- What processes operate on the site and are there hazardous materials?

Employees may help support the directions given by law enforcement. This could be included in employee training. It could also enable employees to assist the public in responding appropriately and controlling chaos.

An accurate accounting of employees and visitors will become more difficult if they leave the property.

Reports indicate that the shooter is heading to the control room.

(What particular concerns do you have at this point?)

Once the shooter reaches the control room:

- Will he have access to the CCTV system and be able to track arriving response units?
- Does he have knowledge of the control room's operations to cause harm to processes?

Maintain contact with the control room. Direct employees to barricade the door, cover the windows, turn off the lights, and initiate shutdown processes.

All those sheltering should remain close to the ground, in order to remain out of the likely line of fire.

Police notify security that shooter has been killed and continue search.

(Is the threat over? What needs to be done now?)

Initiate a room-by-room search for other threats – i.e., additional shooters, secondary dangers, an improvised explosive device, or damaged equipment.

- Ensure law enforcement can access buildings and rooms.
- Utilize personnel with knowledge of the property, such as maintenance or operations personnel, to assist law enforcement in understanding what is unusual.

Identify and search the shooter's vehicle.

Identify the location of and attend to the needs of victims.

Police notify company officials # of dead, # of injured, and allow EMS access.

(What priorities does the site emergency coordinator have now?

Suggestions for a "To Do" list?)

Activate the employee assistance program.

Begin employee and visitor accountability.

- Request that employees and visitors contact their family members to report their status.

Use the employee hotline, the company website, and mass texts and e-mails to continue sharing information and notify employees when to return to the property to retrieve their belongings or return to work.

Also notify off-duty staff about when to report to work.

Engage pre-identified site personnel to aid in identifying deceased victims and tracking the injured to the hospital to begin family notification.

Human resources personnel may be best because of their familiarity with employees. However, assess whether identified personnel are emotionally able to perform this function.

Determine who is responsible for family notifications: law enforcement, company, or coroner?

- Some State/local laws dictate that the coroner must perform family notification.

Give media information as soon as possible. Misinformation will prevail and propagate via social media networks in the absence of facts.

Initiate the investigation by interviewing and debriefing witnesses, and processing and preserving the crime scene and evidence.

- Work with law enforcement to understand how long the scene will likely be a crime scene. Halted operations will have an economic impact on the company's bottom line.

Reestablish the security of the facility by deploying additional security guards or officers.

Plan for bringing systems back online.

Company officials are told that the injured are being taken to hospitals and police need help identifying injured.

(How do company officials assist authorities at this point?)

- Engage pre-identified site personnel to aid in identifying deceased victims and tracking the injured to the hospital to begin family notification.

- When feasible use the company photo database, and cross reference with the access card system logs.

- Human resources personnel may be best because of their familiarity with employees.

Assess whether identified personnel are emotionally able to identify victims.

Continue to implement the employee assistance program to provide crisis support.

- This may be provided in-house or through a contracted service, but should be arranged in advance of an incident.

- Employees and their families may need crisis support from the company's employee assistance program. Fear might cause families to discourage employees from returning to work.

Are employees that perform safety-sensitive jobs emotionally able to perform their duties?

- Are there employees on other shifts who can replace these employees? Are enough trained individuals available to perform critical operations?

Consider the emotional needs of responding law enforcement as well.

Identities of deceased are provided to company officials.

(What needs of the employees are you considering at this point?)

Implement the casualty action plan, if the company has one, to manage the following:

- Victim identification
- Family notification
- Arrangement of benefits
- Communication to employees on what support they can expect

How does the company conduct family notification if the next of kin is not local to the incident site?

- Company CEOs, managers, and executives may opt to travel to personally notify next of kin. If there are multiple victims, these personnel may need to split up for travel.

- Take measures to restore faith in the company.
 - Contact customers and vendors to mitigate impacts from halted operations.
 - Liaise with community leaders to discuss increased security measures.

Continue to communicate with employees.

- Provide instructions for returning to work.
- Update with accurate information to dispel rumors about the incident, response, and current security on the property.
- Continue to offer counseling through the employee assistance program.

***Company releases official media statement and is notified that site is a crime scene indefinitely.
(Are there any final issues that need to be considered in the Assessment Phase?)***

How long will the site remain an active crime scene?

Who is the designated spokesperson for media inquiries?

Does this person have the proper training to manage the media?

What mechanisms should the company utilize to continue to communicate with employees and their families?

Post-Event Considerations

A few days following the incident, conduct crisis interventions and stress debriefings for employees and visitors.

Law enforcement should conduct debriefings in order to share concerns and alleviate stress from the situation.

Temporarily increase security at the property.

Contract with an outside security company or an off-duty law enforcement officer.

Communicate to employees and the community that the increase in security is temporary.

Suspicious Activity Reporting

(U//FOUO) Any suspicious activity with a possible nexus to terrorism in New Jersey should be reported immediately following existing protocols specific to respective counties. Activity can also be reported to CT Watch located at the ROIC by dialing 2-1-1 or (866) 4SAFENJ (866-472-3365) or Tips@NJHomelandSecurity.gov.

Contact Information

(U//FOUO) Any agency with information or comments/questions about this document should contact the NJ ROIC Intelligence & Analysis Unit at (609) 963-6900, ext. 6243, or njroicanalysis@gw.njsp.org.