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Active Shooter Response Plan for Higher Education

Using technology to prevent school shootings and protect lives

Mitigating and preventing active shooter incidents

Educational institutions face a unique set of challenges when managing growing threats like severe weather events, active shooter incidents, and cyberattacks. Critical events and disasters have become more frequent, prompting many schools to review their security and safety programs, especially when mitigating and preventing active shooter incidents.

While the likelihood of experiencing an active shooter incident is low, incidents have unfortunately grown in recent years. A 2019 study determined that between 2007-2018, there were 26 mass shootings on university campuses in the United States, and 73% of the 75 college campus shootings since 1968, have happened in the last 18 years alone. Active shooter incidents can have a serious impact on students, faculty, staff, and the community.

There are several safeguards educational facilities put in place to protect from active shooter incidents, such as the addition of security personnel on-site, school resource officers, mental and emotional health professionals, and the availability of educational resources. However, advancements in technology are crucial to minimize incidents, secure infrastructure, accelerate response times, and share situational awareness.

A phased approach to protecting lives and institutions

Mitigating Impact

- Create a Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) or a Security Vulnerability Analysis (SVA) to review systems, infrastructure, and building design.

- **Consider these questions:**
  1. Are responders familiar with the campus and campus floor plans?
  2. What types of access control do buildings have on campus?
  3. Is there a full-time security presence?
  4. Is a notification system in place to immediately notify the community?

Preparedness

- Build relationships with various stakeholders through training and exercises to prepare students, faculty, staff, and response partners prior to an incident.

- Identify gaps when practicing emergency operations plans through various scenarios.

- Implement corrective actions accordingly.

Response

01 **Detect the active shooter:** Maintain visibility around the perimeter via video surveillance and officers. If a 911 call is made, public safety answering points will be the first to know it is an active shooter situation.

02 **Alert impacted people:** Create a communications plan and develop templates prior to an incident to share situational awareness to the impacted people, reducing human error. Include various methods of communication in your planning.

03 **Enable resources to respond:** Integrate systems and processes to help accelerate response time. Collaborate with partners to allow access to floor plans.

04 **Control the environment:** First responders will physically secure the perimeter throughout the event, but digital perimeter security will ensure anyone coming toward the impacted area can receive an alert notification to provide awareness and share reunification information.

05 **Resolve the incident:** Ensure life safety and eliminate the threat quickly. Communicating with those impacted and the community will provide situational awareness.

Recovery policies and procedures

The last step in the phased approach is recovery. While it may be the most time-consuming, short-term and long-term recovery efforts are vital to rebuilding after an active shooter situation, especially on a school campus.

Short-term recovery will begin with the reunification process. This includes tending to the health and safety of those immediately impacted by the incident.

Long-term recovery will focus on rebuilding the community and institution, which can take months or even years. Review action items and plans, and be sure to document lessons learned from previous events or similar incidents that may have happened outside of your institution. Discuss the type of actions and response needed if something similar happened at your school.

How technology can help

Advancements in technology can help keep educational institutions safe by integrating systems and automating processes through a single common operating picture. Having a unified view of your environment can be difficult with disparate systems putting educators, staff, and students at risk.

When automating actions such as activating response teams or emergency operation plans, response times from first responders will be accelerated reducing time spent manually dealing with an active shooter incident. To keep students, faculty, and staff safe, ensure that the appropriate processes are taken and expand your reach so that more people receive your message about life safety. Getting the right information to the right people at the right time will help lead people to protection.

Active shooter incidents are unpredictable and evolve quickly, creating a lasting effect on students, faculty, staff and the community. In 51 cases studied by the FBI, the median police response time was three minutes, but 14 of those cases took five minutes or longer. With the vast spacing and the dozens of buildings that form a typical college campus, forming an active shooter response may be the most difficult challenge facing higher education institutions. However, it is not an impossible feat. We now have the technology to protect students and staff better than ever before. Saving minutes, or even seconds, from the response time could save countless lives in an active shooter incident.

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About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) is a global software company that provides enterprise software applications that automate and accelerate organizations' operational response to critical events in order to Keep People Safe and Organizations Running™.

Everbridge serves 8 of the 10 largest U.S. cities, 9 of the 10 largest U.S.-based investment banks, 47 of the 50 busiest North American airports, and 9 of the 10 largest U.S.-based health care providers. Everbridge is based in Boston with additional offices in 25 cities around the globe.

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