

Case Study: Property Specific Active Shooter Program

Geographic Location: United States

Industry Sector: Security

Client Type: Hotel Casino

Background Information

Rauch Security was appointed by the client to facilitate the development of an Active Shooter Program for the client's property. To ensure the delivery of an unbiased comprehensive program, an integrated multi-disciplined and multicultural project team was established. Rauch oversaw the management of the various resources and professionals in order to deliver on the client's expectations.

The active shooter threat is a difficult risk to predict and prevent and unfortunately, scenes involving active shooters have become too familiar.

A wide variety of resources and experience are available to draw from such as AST programs offered by DHS, FBI, local law enforcement and private consultants. However, no one individual or consultant has the broad based requisite knowledge required to develop a comprehensive plan and therefore a well-managed team approach must be used.

While it is impossible to secure a facility from all perceived threats, it is possible through proper planning and training, and a collective effort by all stakeholders such as consultants, operations, safety, security, legal, local law enforcement and first responders to develop a comprehensive property specific program designed to mitigate the risks associated not only with an event but also after event consequences such as legal actions, counseling, business continuity and public perceptions.

Issues and Challenges

The risk for violence is difficult to predict and almost impossible to eliminate. The active shooter incident will likely be the level of incident that lingers long into an organization's history.

When violence erupts in a facility, the outcome and events of the scenario are unpredictable. Injury or death of building occupants, lawsuits, property damage, and diminished trust in the property by guests, visitors and employees and the community are just a few of the possible consequences.

Competing viewpoints of internal stakeholders such as operations, security, legal and finance, guests and employees of differing cultures, beliefs and behaviors and internal security personnel with significant variations in training and finally, the need to protect the property from bad publicity, all conspire to create unique challenges when developing a plan for security and potential crisis.

The fear of bad publicity lends to the difficulty in educating and convincing a client that defeating an active shooter requires both defensive and offensive procedures. Many clients rely heavily on passive security measures and decline to acknowledge that the best passive security measures will eventually fail to eliminate the danger and therefore immediate and efficient lethal force is required.

Diplomatically overcoming personalities, incorrect perceptions and competing interests together with educating and convincing internal security executives and other internal stakeholders that a broad-based team approach, liaising with other internal departments, consultants, local law enforcement and first responders is critical to the program's success.

Solutions and Recommendations

The fundamental element of response to an event few have experienced, but which carries significant potential is based on planning and training, therefore the program shall first identify and utilize available external and internal expertise and resources to develop a property specific program which helps participants review organizational aspects of planning and training to increase survivability of guests, visitors and employees in an active shooter event.

This program shall provide instruction on ways the property can reduce the potential and minimize the impact of violent situations specifically involving an active shooter incident and shall provide statistics, a review of the benefits of training and exercise, and, liabilities and costs associated with the active shooter program.

The program shall provide direction in developing policies and procedures together with understanding and meeting legal and regulatory requirements associated with activation of the active shooter plan, crisis communication and specific staff actions that can help result in an improved response.

The program shall assist with important elements of planning such as developing plans to interact with law enforcement, conduct facility risk and security assessments to determine the property's vulnerability to an active shooter.

The program shall consider and plan that that tactical teams and responders should not stop to render aid to casualties they encounter and subsequently that the care and extraction of casualties from the scene of an active shooter are of secondary importance until the threat is neutralized,



stopping the violence that is creating the casualties. Further, that utilizing specially trained medical personnel to treat and evacuate victims during the event can substantially increase survival rates.

As part of the post incident response, the program shall include critical steps in recovery such as: accounting for all individuals; determination of a method for notification of families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties; crisis communications; assessment of psychological state of employees and referral to health care specialist; and; analyzing the event to create an After Action Report and Corrective Action Plan.

The program shall plan for post incident investigation to be undertaken by both internal resources as well as external regulating and licensing agencies.

The property's Active Shooter Program's protocols, plans and policy development process and training in support of an emergency action plan will be vigorously reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Risk Factors and Assessment

Falling into the negligent mindset that a specific property won't be a target, that active shooter incidents are impulsive acts by irrational people, or falling into a state of complacency due to lack of an event over some period of time, and subsequently eliminating or significantly scaling back a program's effectiveness are ever present dangers.

The property specific Active Shooter Program requires a top down commitment to ensure that the right resources are allocated to develop a long-term and sustainable program with protocols to effectively carry out incident management; to secure training resources; physical security measures; and; other items essential to successful prevention and intervention efforts on behalf of the organization in whole.

Project Successes

With full commitment and support by all of the client's internal stakeholders, Rauch Security successfully managed its domestic and international partners and the client in the development and delivery of a comprehensive property specific Active Shooter Program.