

# At Issue

A RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER FOR  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



## CampusSecurity CampusSecurity

By: **Stephen Cerro, Sr.**, Risk Control Specialist,  
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## Some Basics You Need To Do Now!

The mass school shootings we have seen recently, especially the Sandy Hook disaster in Newtown, CT, have not only prompted an unprecedented national discussion on gun related violence, but have also spurred a flurry of activity among schools and colleges to tighten up security. Add this reaction to our recent experience with shootings at other public facilities and with other shootings that have taken place in areas close to all of these "soft targets," and you can see that the crescendo may have been reached with Newtown.

Annually, over 30,000 gun deaths occur in the U.S.; 12,000 of these are homicides. Shooting incidents at schools for the last three years were: seven in 2012, five in 2011 and three in 2010. The trend is increasing. College campus shootings in this three-year period totaled five separate incidents.

Discussions are occurring everywhere from the national and state level to communities, schools and families. What is presented here is information you can use today to help prevent,

or at least slow down, the pace of a potential shooting incident.

We have concentrated on what can be done in a relatively short time for little cost and what can be effective at slowing down or stopping an intruder or person with criminal intent from causing tragedy at your college.

### PLANNING

Most shooters plan before they act, and you should, too. You've heard it before, "a good offense is the best defense." This is true and is even more important when we talk about saving lives.

Initially, you will need to develop, discuss and disseminate your Emergency Plan. Your plan should consist of a continual process of **mitigation** (i.e., activities or actions designed to prevent or reduce loss from a disaster), **preparing** for emergencies (through the development of

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plans and capabilities for effective disaster response), then **responding** to (i.e., immediate reaction — anticipation of the incident through its actual occurrence) and **recovering** from those emergencies (i.e., restoration of critical campus functions and management of reconstruction).

In general, emergency plans initially involve a risk assessment of what incidents have affected your college in the past, such as lockdowns, tornadoes, and wildfires or nearby highway hazardous materials spills. Higher education institutions have varied geographical locations and often are large, open and accessible; so it is important to take that into account as well. Emergency planning also includes a list of other incidents that could affect college operations and asks that you rate the likelihood of these incidents occurring.

As mentioned, our focus within this document is, primarily, on the active shooter and effective security measures we recommend you take or that you should consider. The activity you take to plan for, train and control this hazard will also help you plan, respond and recover better from all other hazards that may have impact on your college operations and campus community.

Once you have your emergency plan in place you will want to have biannual testing of your emergency response and evacuation procedures. Communicate the procedures so everyone in the campus community will know what you plan on doing in a shooter incident and who or what office will be responsible for each step along the way.

In addition, we recommend that all students, staff and faculty be automatically enrolled in the campus mass notification system. Voluntary enrollment or opting out is not recommended. There should be a designated verification person who notifies the campus once they determine that the emergency situation actually exists. Students and employees should be directed to the safe locations. Residence halls should be immediately secured.

We strongly recommend that your college involve the local emergency responders (e.g., police, fire, emergency medical) at the outset of this planning. They can provide input on what communications should consist of and what would help them respond more quickly. They can audit your campus (i.e., a security site assessment) for such things as barriers or obstacles to access, who is responsible for notifications, adequate lighting, fencing and landscaping recommendations, identification of buildings, numbering of building doors

and classrooms, security camera placement, coordination, access control and other items.

It is also a good idea to review what health and education mitigation activities you provide — like mental health services, education and outreach programs. Such resources can help students deal more effectively with stress and other issues, and they can be a communicative route for expressing security concerns about a person's behavior.

It will help to review other college emergency plans, survey your staff about emergency management practices, review security reports (e.g., Clery reports) and visit other colleges to see what they actually have in place. You will also want to become very familiar with and follow the National Incident Management System ([www.fema.gov/nims](http://www.fema.gov/nims)).

### ACCESS CONTROL

Now, let's talk about making colleges more physically secure. It's generally called, "Access Control." Many access control measures you should consider implementing are not difficult and some will be relatively easy to accomplish. Nonetheless, some of these changes will likely require your college to begin to make moderate or major culture changes that will affect students, parents, teachers, staff, the general public, vendors and contractors. You'll find a comprehensive checklist of specific actions you can take to better control access at the end of this article.

### BEYOND ACCESS CONTROL

Experience has shown that **communications is the first thing to fail** — before an incident, during and after. We strongly recommend a communication protocol. What is the procedure for reporting an emergency? When is information released? How is information provided? Who provides the information? Furthermore, in a lockdown situation, 911 lines may become clogged and alternative lines or communications will need to be considered. Redundancy and interoperability of systems are important.

### BEFORE AN INCIDENT

- Encourage open communications among educators and students, where educators take a genuine interest in all their students and demonstrate this on a daily basis.
- Colleges need to reexamine their efforts (and preferably do this at least annually) to combat bullying, hazing and stalking of students.
- Education is needed for students, faculty, staff and parents to identify the warning signs of a person with possible behavioral issues or someone demonstrating suspicious behavior.
- Parents, staff and students should be encouraged to inform administrators about



individuals who might pose a threat as occasionally happens with disputes, home violence, disagreements among staff and students, etc.

- De-emphasize and dramatically limit access to entertainment that contains a significant amount or type of graphic violence, violent role models and extremism in forms that could result in severe injury.
- Students and staff should be attuned to recognizing and reporting suspicious activities or persons on campus or within buildings. [*“If you see something, say something.”*]

## DURING AN INCIDENT

If staff, faculty, a student or others recognize something is suspicious, they need to immediately notify campus security. If the incident is happening or about to happen, the emergency notification system needs to be activated. The emergency notification system can be one or all of the following:

- Emergency call buttons activated by the main office staff or other person at a location so equipped that send an alert through the mass notification system (e.g., cell phone text and/or alerts, e-mail, IM, etc.) as well as to local law enforcement, simultaneously.
- Intercom system announcement.
- Alarm system activation.
- Two-way radio system emergency signal.
- Cell or landline phone call system activating a telephone tree.

Verification of the intruder needs to be completed before an alert is given. A designated department (such as Security) should determine when to activate the emergency plan. It is expected that the college/university will go into immediate lockdown at the point of mass alert.

A person designated as the Incident Commander should then implement the procedures of the emergency plan. [*S/he transfers this duty to law enforcement upon their arrival.*]

Law enforcement (i.e., first responders) should be notified immediately. The Incident Commander should provide a description and location of the intruder/shooter. The subject should be kept in view until law enforcement arrives. A building site map and keys may need to be given to these first responders.

Notify the college/university president of the status and actions taken as soon as possible.

Do not allow staff or students to enter or leave buildings until the authorities have determined that it is safe to do so.

You will need to manage the phone calls and parents that will rush to campus, although it is

likely that law enforcement will be securing the area before most parents get there.

Make sure that you have a phone number, website or hotline where parents can get updated information. Text messages, e-mails and even radio announcements are other ways to communicate to parents.

In some cases, staff has been successful in requesting the shooter to stop and/or leave, especially when they talk to the shooter in a calm, courteous and confident manner.



## AFTER AN INCIDENT

Eventually, you will need to deal with the media and bystanders so you will need to make yourself available. It's preferred to have a designated Public Information Officer provide updates and information at an off-site location.

The president will need to be updated regarding any significant changes.

Rumors will need to be addressed.

Students, faculty and staff may need psychological healing procedures to help them deal with the trauma.

Meetings need to be held to inform your staff and to discuss what went right, what went wrong and what can be improved upon.

We hope this information will help you begin developing or refining an effective Emergency Plan for potential shooter incidents on your campus. It's always a good time to shore up your efforts to control the campus environment, and be ready to take decisive action if and when an active shooter appears.

## ActionList: A basic list of actions you can take to maintain better control of the campus environment:

- 1.) We recommend that individuals should only be allowed entry into any one building at a single designated (main) entrance. This entrance should be clearly and visibly marked. Except for this one single point of entry, all other exterior doors should be locked so that entry from the outside can only be accomplished when a person has an authorized electronic card or key.
- 2.) The designated public open entrances to such buildings should be monitored by a security camera or, if feasible, a security or trained staff person.
- 3.) All exterior residence hall doors should be locked at all times and can only be entered with a key or electronic key card. Students should, of course, lock their dorm room door when they leave.
- 4.) We recommend strict key control measures throughout campus.
- 5.) If your building locks are not all electronic and/or you cannot lock all of the exterior doors with one security button, then we recommend that each building have a designated building manager. This person's job during a shooter emergency alert/lockdown is to lock all of the exterior doors in their assigned building. In this way, maintenance and/or security don't have to run around trying to lock all of the building doors throughout campus.
- 6.) All exterior door connecting and locking mechanisms should be of high quality and construction. Faceplates should be installed over latches. These devices should be examined on a monthly basis for any damage. Also check for and eliminate the use of door stops to prop doors open. Hinge pins should be on the inside of exterior doors.
- 7.) Consider keeping classroom door latches in the locked position when the room is occupied. The instructor can then quickly pull the door closed in a lockdown without exposure to a shooter in the hall.
- 8.) Security cameras should be installed at all campus building entrances, dorm entrances and hallways, parking lots, daycare buildings and playgrounds, if any, and areas of concern or where vendors deliver goods and supplies. This is your basic camera location effort. As time goes on, we encourage you to add additional camera locations to enhance coverage.
- 9.) All paths of egress and main egress corridors as well as stairwells, stairs, and exits should be kept free and clear of obstructions at all times. Main egress corridors should be a minimum of six feet wide along the entire corridor.
- 10.) Any main building power panels or switches should be located on the inside of buildings in restricted rooms (like mechanical or electrical rooms).
- 11.) All faculty and staff should be trained in the importance of access control and emergency preparedness.
- 12.) Clearly identify/name campus buildings so that emergency responders, students and staff can quickly find their way. Reflective signage is preferred.
- 13.) Entrance doors and each school classroom should be numbered logically and sequentially on the exterior window or adjacent to a window {12 in. high and 1 to 2 in. wide; main entrance door is #1 and remaining doors are numbered clockwise around the building}.
- 14.) Regularly inspect all street-level windows for condition. Room windows or other means of secondary escape should be in good condition and not obstructed.
- 15.) Campus-wide lighting should be assessed to help identify dark areas, lights in need of repair or areas where lighting should be improved.
- 16.) Buildings not being used at night should be in consideration for an "all-lights-off" policy and/or burglar alarms.
- 17.) Unoccupied buildings, rooms and spaces should be locked.
- 18.) Mechanical, electrical, air handling, sprinkler and boiler rooms should have restricted access.
- 19.) Also, consider more perimeter fencing or hedges along perimeter areas. The more fencing you have the fewer issues you will have and if you add signage to the fencing stating that "Premises are under 24-hour surveillance," that may help deter someone with criminal intent.
- 20.) Strategically place signs (i.e., stickers next to doors) at entrances stating that weapons are not allowed in campus buildings or on campus grounds.
- 21.) Contractors and vendors should be monitored by a designated staff person and/or security camera(s) while on premises.
- 22.) Trim shrubbery and trees to eliminate hiding places and provide clear lines of sight. Tree branches should be trimmed so that they are at least 7 feet off the ground. Shrubs should be trimmed so that they are no higher than 3 feet or if by walkways no higher than 18 inches.



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## ActionList: A basic list of actions you can take to maintain better control of the campus environment:

- 23.) Move trash containers away from exterior doors to eliminate hiding places and provide clear lines of sight.
- 24.) Prevent access to windows and roofs by trimming trees back from buildings and by removing or relocating objects that could be used as climbing devices. Ensure that downspouts, light posts and other building features are not scalable.
- 25.) Some buildings may require removable bollards, curbs or gates to help keep vehicles away. Consider keeping vehicles at least 200 feet away from stadium bleachers, auditoriums, gymnasiums, swimming pools, dining halls and residence halls and other areas where large numbers of people may be present.
- 26.) Secure roof hatches, operable skylights, rooftop equipment doors and access panels. Block off or remove fixed ladders.
- 27.) Fresh air intakes should be at least 12 feet off the ground, configured and/or screened to prevent unauthorized entry.
- 28.) Ensure that fire hydrants are free and clear and accessible at all times.
- 29.) Make immediate repairs to exterior damaged areas of college buildings and interior areas to prevent the spread of vandalism.
- 30.) Clearly mark and separate visitor parking.
- 31.) Place traffic calming devices — stop signs, speed bumps, pavement markings — in lots and campus roadways. Refer to: [www.trafficcalming.org](http://www.trafficcalming.org)
- 32.) Clearly direct visitors to the main office with signs placed throughout the campus.
- 33.) Consider panic alarms at buildings with reception or administrative staff and other key locations.
- 34.) Use caller ID on all administrative, security and residence hall phones, if any.
- 35.) Needle storage and medications at Nurse's Stations or other locations should be in locked storage. Consider having the locked storage also monitored by security camera(s).
- 36.) Sporting events and public use of college buildings should incorporate the same security procedures and precautions. This includes such measures as assigning monitors at all entry points to control access within buildings and having local police presence for all larger events or activities (e.g., 1,000+ persons).
- 37.) Schedule lockdown drills two to five times per year. Conduct regular training and exercises (Table Top, Functional, and/or Full-Scale Exercises.)

### References:

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, Clery Act, The Handbook for Campus Safety & Security Reporting, Security On Campus ([www.securityoncampus.org](http://www.securityoncampus.org)), FEMA ([www.fema.org/nims](http://www.fema.org/nims)), International Fire Code, NFPA Life Safety Code 101, U.S. Secret Service-National Threat Assessment Center, CNN – In School Shootings, Patterns & Warning Signs  
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## Common Questions and Answers

### ABOUT SAFETY DURING INDOOR ACTIVITIES AND SEVERE WEATHER ON CAMPUS

By: David Bloodgood, Risk Control Specialist, Wright Specialty Insurance

**Q:** Our college is known for its high quality productions of musicals and other performances which require elaborate sets on stage. What should we be looking out for to assure the safety of those working on performing arts productions?

**A:** While designing and building sets and working in preparation for the production is exciting and rewarding, equal attention must be paid to working safely. The effort should be led by someone with clear supervisory authority. Plan the job carefully from set design, materials selection and

manpower considerations to construction and installation. Make plans for the possible rental and safe use of scaffolding if elevated platforms or set pieces are to be built. A review of safety rules should occur before construction begins. Insistence on using proper personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times should be made clear. Be sure the workspace remains uncluttered, keeping it free from accumulating scraps, idle tools and power cords, etc. Keep construction materials organized. Be certain access to doors, stairs, fire extinguishers and electrical panels are kept clear of obstructions.



## COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CAMPUS SAFETY (continued)

In addition, prohibit the application of graffiti to backstage walls and ceiling. The Department of Labor forbids students from working at an elevation greater than six feet. All currently existing graffiti should be removed to discourage further application.

**Q:** The fitness center at our university has been renovated and expanded. The number of students using the fitness center has grown as a result of adding all the new equipment. What is the best way to manage the fitness center from a health and safety standpoint, now that there are so many more users?

**A:** A number of things come to mind to promote the safe use of your fitness center. First, a set of rules must be posted conspicuously on the wall. These rules should require that supervision be present when the fitness center is in use and that all weights must be neatly racked after use. Warm-up/stretching signs and illustrations demonstrating the proper use of equipment must also be posted. Disinfecting spray and/or wipes should be readily available and frequently used. Any torn cushions on weight benches should be replaced, because they can no longer be properly disinfected. If non-student adults or staff use the fitness center, require a waiver and release to guard your institution against liability.



**Q:** The last two years have produced destructive storms which dealt serious blows to many campuses. What are the main components of weather related emergency planning for colleges and universities?

**A:** Violent thunderstorms and hazardous winter weather events occur in many regions of the U.S. Colleges and universities should have updated Severe Weather Emergency Plans and a "Severe Weather Coordinator" who is responsible for the development and implementation of the plan. A Deputy Severe Weather Coordinator should be named in the event of an absence. Your campus safety committee is a good place to work out many details of the plan. Your method of acquiring severe weather information, such as the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, must be established, as well as the means you will use to communicate with professors/instructors, administrative staff and students. Include a plan for back-up communications that would work during a power outage. Identify Severe Weather Safety Zones in all campus buildings including residence halls. Make students, faculty, staff and visitors aware of the most vulnerable areas such as entrances, windows and window walls. Small interior rooms such as restrooms and windowless interior hallways formed by load bearing walls generally offer the best protection. Areas with large spanning roofs must be evacuated due to the potential for collapse. Upper floors must be evacuated to the lowest level(s) of the building. Be sure the plan makes provision for all campus activities that take place outside the classroom. Conducting drills twice yearly will assure preparedness when moments count. Providing Winter Weather Safety Training to students and staff can help them understand the danger and more capably execute their roles in an emergency.



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