5 Planning Priorities for Active Threats in the Workplace

What have you done to prepare your employees for workplace violence?

It’s an uncomfortable question, but one that has become even more relevant in the past couple of years, particularly after the horrific, December 2015 mass shooting and attempted bombing at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California and the tragic, June 2016 terrorist attack inside the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

Merely broaching the subject of threat situations can bring an unexpectedly emotional response for some employees. But there are resources you can offer and actions you can take to equip your staff with the knowledge and support necessary to feel empowered, while also protecting your business interests. Here are some actions currently underway or in the works at the County of San Diego that you may want to consider for your organization:

Establish safety and security as a priority in your workplace and create buy-in. Start with leader’s intent. Engage upper management and make active threat preparation a priority. The County of San Diego’s Chief Administrative Officer recently enacted a policy that will require the formation of security committees for every County facility. Those committees will meet to discuss physical improvements, training needs and security gaps at each building. Members will come up with Security Action Plans with specific goals and timelines and then track the progress made. Talk with your employees about workplace violence and active threat situations to promote awareness. Learn more about suspicious behavior that may be terror-related by watching a great video produced by the County of San Diego: “Eight Signs of Terrorism,” available at ReadySanDiego.org/terrorism. And please feel free to share it!

Assess your capabilities to respond and identify gaps. Are you able to quickly notify your employees that someone with a gun has entered your facility? Do you have policies that promote security and are those policies universally followed? Do employees know what to do if they receive an alert and warning message? Do employees know how and where to report a threatening incident in the workplace?

Offer training and resources. Many law enforcement and risk management professionals offer in-person active threat training. And many online resources are available that can be easily shared with your team. Good examples are the “Run, Hide, Fight” video created by the City of Houston’s Office of Homeland Security, and the Department of Homeland Security’s “Active Shooters, How to Respond” booklet and Active Shooter Pocket Card.

Conduct drills. Exercises take time and effort. But few investments yield the level of preparedness you’ll get from an active threat drill. When employees are able to apply the knowledge they’ve learned in training (run, hide, fight), your team will be better prepared for an actual event. Your planning should always include considerations for individuals with disabilities. Recommendations for able-bodied individuals may not be appropriate for every member of your team. Also, consider involving your local law enforcement agency and inviting their participation. - Continued on next page
Plan for Recovery. As with all emergencies, it’s important to think now about how you’ll recover from an active threat situation. Following the mass shooting in San Bernardino, that County completely renovated the work space of the employees who were so severely impacted. How will you notify and communicate with your employees following an attack, to ensure they have access to information? Have you designated an alternate facility if your office space becomes a crime scene? Which support and services would you offer your employees and their families? In the aftermath of an attack, many survivors will be out of work on leave. How will your business survive with significantly fewer personnel?

Thinking about the unthinkable is not pleasant. However, we can’t afford to be paralyzed by fear or denial. By preparing for active threats in the workplace, you’re potentially saving lives – and that’s a bottom line you can’t put a price tag on.

Message from Holly Crawford (continued from Page 1)

ReadySanDiego Business Alliance Employee Tips

Make Pets Part of Your Disaster Plan

From CountyNewsCenter.com

Could you and your family evacuate in 15 minutes or less? Just as you prepare your family for a disaster, the same can be done for your furry family members—dogs, cats and other animals both large and small.

The County Department of Animal Services recommends that you prepare and practice a disaster plan with all of your family members and assemble emergency supplies ahead of time. Household pet necessities include crates or other carriers, a supply of food and water, medicines, a copy of current veterinary records, and several recent photographs of your four-legged friend.

Make sure your pet is wearing a collar with identification and an emergency contact. Having an ID on your animals may help reunite you in the event that you are separated. Another safeguard is microchipping in case your pet loses its collar. Microchipping is available for dogs, cats and rabbits at least 8 weeks of age at all three of Animal Services’ shelters on Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m. for a one-time fee of $10.

See the full list of pet emergency kit supplies and planning tips on the County of San Diego’s Animal Services website: www.sddac.com.

With these simple preparations, you and your furry family members can be ready for the unexpected including wildfires, earthquakes, flooding or other emergencies.

In addition, Animal Services has emergency preparedness recommendations for livestock owners. Moving horses and other large animals takes time and practice. Being prepared is the best plan.
PROFILE OF AN ACTIVE SHooter

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines an Active Shooter as an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER IS IN YOUR VICINITY

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation.

RUN—If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

• Have an escape route and plan in mind
• Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
• Leave your belongings behind
• Help others escape, if possible
• Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
• Keep your hands visible
• Follow the instructions of any police officers
• Do not attempt to move wounded people
• Call 911 when you are safe

HIDE—If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

Your hiding place should:

• Be out of the active shooter’s view
• Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
• Not trap you or restrict your options for movement
• Lock the door
• Blockade the door with heavy furniture
• Silence your cell phone and/or pager
• Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
• Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
• Remain quiet

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

• Remain calm
• Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter’s location
• If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

FIGHT—As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

• Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
• Throwing items and improvising weapons
• Yelling
• Committing to your actions
In San Diego County, wildfires are our biggest disaster risk, and nearly all of them are human-caused.

So what can we do to stop sparking fires? Especially as we head into peak fire season, in our fifth year of drought and with an abundance of dried grasses and brush? And as we get dry, strong winds that can push fires towards communities?

To answer those questions, San Diego County Fire Authority and CAL FIRE Capt. Kendal Bortisser discussed the top causes of fires in the County areas last year and to date this year.

In cases in which the investigator was able to determine a cause, most wildfires this year and last were caused by vehicles.

Catalytic converters often ignite fires, Bortisser said. Sometimes a catalytic converter, which is located under a vehicle’s engine, spits out hot materials that can cause fires without the driver even realizing it. The driver inadvertently may be starting various fires as he or she continues along a roadway.

Other times, drivers may decide they want to pull over on the side of the road or drive into a field to sightsee or make a phone call, but if there is brush or grass under the car, it can catch fire from a catalytic converter, Bortisser said. He advises motorists to be very careful of where they are driving to be sure they don’t accidentally start a fire under their vehicle.

Bortisser recommends that when drivers have to pull over, they do so on paved surfaces whenever possible, rather than off the road where brush or trees can ignite. If a car does catch fire, exit it as quickly as possible in a safe area away from traffic.

The next step should be to call 911 to report the fire, he said.

Bortisser recommends that drivers carry a fire extinguisher in their vehicle in case of an engine or brush fire, and, if they have one, they can try to extinguish the fire on their own. If the car fire overwhelms the extinguisher, the extinguisher can at least start to control the fire until firefighters arrive on scene, he said.

There are many additional steps that we can take to prepare ourselves, families and homes for wildfires and emergencies. Heading into the heart of the fire season serves as a last-minute reminder for everyone to take steps to lessen that risk around our home and community. It is a chance to make sure we all have an emergency plan that everyone in the family is familiar with, an evacuation bag to grab if you have less than 15 minutes to go, and enough emergency supplies for you and each person (and pet) in your household to survive on your own for at least three days.

“You can prepare for fires by maintaining good defensible space around your home, creating a family disaster plan, and registering for the region’s mass notification system called AlertSanDiego,” said Holly Crawford, director of the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services. “During a fast moving wildfire you may have to evacuate your home with little to no advance warning. Planning and preparing both your family and your home could be lifesaving.”

To learn more about personal emergency preparedness visit readysandiego.org.
A swarm of seismic activity in September on the southernmost end of the San Andreas Fault had scientists on alert for a larger quake. Fortunately, the threat did not take form, but it was a reminder that we live in earthquake country and that a rupture on a fault line is unpredictable.

The best way to survive and reduce your chances for injury, should a significant earthquake rattle the region, is to know what to do before an earthquake strikes. Every member of your family should be prepared for an earthquake. Learn the key steps to take by visiting ReadySanDiego.org: Drop, Cover, and Hold On, and practice at least once a year as part of the Great California ShakeOut drill so the reaction becomes automatic. A quick, practiced response can help in the stressful and frightening seconds after a quake hits.

The Great ShakeOut earthquake drill will take place Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m. The annual event, held each third Thursday of October, promotes earthquake preparedness. Participants take part in the mass earthquake drill wherever they are: at home, work, school or in the community. An earthquake drill can also be planned for any day and time of the year if that time and day isn’t convenient. The main point is to help families, individuals and organizations prepare to survive.

Residents, businesses, schools and other organizations can participate simply by going to the ShakeOut.org website and registering. So far, more than 9.7 million people have registered in California and more than 940,000 have registered in San Diego County. Globally, 18 million are registered for ShakeOut.

During an earthquake, the most important thing to do is to protect your head from items that might fall in the shaking. Drop, Cover and Hold on under a sturdy table or desk. If you are not near a table or desk, drop to the ground and move away from any hanging fixtures, windows, glass, or furniture that could topple over and cover your head with your hands. For tips on what to do if you are outside or in a moving car, visit earthquakecountry.org.

Before an earthquake, hold your own drill at home with your family or organize one in your office. Remember, your participation in the drill doesn’t absolutely have to take place exactly at 10:20 a.m. on Oct. 20. It can be done before customers enter the building or after closing—that still counts. If taking part in the drill would be too disruptive to your office, look around your workspace and figure out where the safest places would be to take shelter in the event of an earthquake.

Visit ShakeOut.org for information on how to hold a drill for schools, businesses and homes, and to acquire posters, audio and video resources, and specific safety recommendations for people with disabilities or other access and functional needs.

Prepare your home too. Check for hazards, such as items that could fall from above. The goal is to secure breakables with wax or putty or rearrange them on a lower shelf; and to secure tall bookcases, televisions, wall art, or hanging mirrors with straps or special hanging hardware to prevent them from falling. All of this equipment can be found at most home improvement stores. - Continued on next page
Register to Get Earthquake Ready and Survive (continued from page 5)

Create a personalized family disaster plan and emergency kit. Be sure to consider medications, and special dietary needs for family members such as seniors, infants and pets, when creating your kit. You can find a list of emergency supplies on ReadySanDiego.org or in Spanish at ListoSanDiego.org. These items should be stored in case of a major disaster, including wildfires, that requires you to survive without assistance for a minimum of three days.

After an earthquake, it is important to be ready to seek cover again in the event of an aftershock. Check yourself and others for injuries. Assuming there are none, walk around the home or building and make sure there are no fires which can sometimes ignite after an earthquake from ruptured gas lines. While walking around, be sure to sniff for gas as well. If the odor of gas is detected, the main gas line must be turned off. Once the gas line is off, only utility crews are allowed to turn it back on. If possible, check on your neighbors.

To learn more about how to prepare for an earthquake, visit ReadySanDiego.org or ListoSanDiego.org and click on the earthquake symbol, or visit ShakeOut.org.

OES Plans Winter Weather Workshop on Oct. 31

The San Diego County Office of Emergency Services plans to hold its annual Winter Weather Workshop Oct. 31. The event is intended to provide an overview of anticipated weather patterns for the coming months, as well as preparedness and response efforts for any potential adverse weather and other winter-related topics.

Invited speakers include Alex Tardy from the National Weather Service, Rand Allan from County Flood Control, Teresa Penunuri from the San Diego County Water Authority, Tony Ariosta from the County's Department of Public Works, John Sandmeyer from the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Anne Hutton from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cori Calvert from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Salomon Miranda from the California Department of Water Resources.

Seating for this event is extremely limited. If you are interested in attending, please email Cory Osth at Cory.Osth@sdcounty.ca.gov, who will confirm whether seating is still available.

OES to Conduct Emergency Exercise for Business Community in 2017

The County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services, in conjunction with the San Diego Chapter of the Association of Contingency Planners, will conduct an emergency exercise in the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The exercise is slated for January 2017.

Members of the business community will be invited to participate in the exercise, which will provide an overview of how an EOC is organized and run, based on national, state, and local guidelines and best practices. Participants will then staff the EOC, serving in the various roles to respond to a disaster scenario.

The exercise will be designed to not only show how the EOC operates, but to foster discussion on how individual businesses would respond, and how the public and private sectors can work together in times of disaster.

The event is still in the early planning stages, but will likely last 3-4 hours with the scenario unfolding as the exercise moves along, forcing participants to address a variety of potential issues.

An official invitation will be sent out as we get closer to the actual event, but interested individuals can reserve a spot in the exercise by reaching out to Michael Davis at michael.davis@sdcounty.ca.gov.
Office of Emergency Services Hosts Open House

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) on Sept. 22 hosted an Open House for more than 100 people, including many from the ReadySanDiego Business Alliance. The event included a tour of the recently remodeled Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Attendees got a behind-the-scenes look at how the EOC runs during a disaster, the latest technologies used to help keep the region safe, the roles that EOC staff play in coordinating a regional response to emergencies, and efforts to keep the business community and public informed.

Upgrades to the facility include:

- Digital video systems
- Ergonomic sit-stand desks
- New EOC video wall
- Optical fiber data connections
- New Voice over Internet Phone (VoIP) service
- New audio system
OES Welcomes New Emergency Services Coordinator Cory Osth

Cory Osth joined the County of San Diego as an Emergency Services Coordinator in June 2016. His responsibilities include coordinating updates, revisions, and interoperability of all response and recovery plans, including the county’s Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan.

Cory also serves as the Lifelines Coordinator. In this role, he heads the effort to identify the interdependencies among the various lifeline sectors (electric power, water, wastewater, fuel, natural gas and communications). He coordinates with these sectors to help residents know the status of restoration and increase the speed of service restoration.

In addition, Cory serves as a liaison and the OES representative to a myriad of other groups, including the Water Agencies Emergency Collaborative, winter weather stakeholders and the National Weather Service, various city and county departments, the cities of Oceanside and Vista, the eastern part of our county’s unincorporated area, 2-1-1, the American Red Cross, and San Diego International Airport.

Previously, Cory planned and managed the operations and medical, and safety programs for large scale athletic events in cities across the US. Cory is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a minor in Management Information Systems (MIS).

OES Welcomes New Public Outreach Specialist Candace Hadley

Candace Hadley joined the County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services (OES) team as a Public Outreach Specialist in February 2016. Candace coordinates the overall development of public outreach campaigns and County initiatives which promote disaster preparedness in the community. Candace is also responsible for translating public outreach materials into Spanish, developing English and Spanish social media content, administering Alert and Warning Technology, administering WebEOC accounts, and coordinating the Emergency Spanish County Translation Team.

During emergencies, Candace translates messages into Spanish and serves as the main Partner Relay Unit leader within the Emergency Operations Center. The Partner Relay is a County effort to promote dissemination of emergency messages to non-English speaking communities.

With more than nine years of customer service and marketing experience, Candace is passionate about building relationships with community members and staff to drive projects forward. She looks forward to ensuring that residents and businesses know what steps they should take in order to prepare for disasters.

Candace graduated from San Diego State University in 2015 with a Bachelor’s degree in International Security and Conflict Resolution and Spanish Language. Candace served as an intern at OES in 2015. She also lived and attended school in Baja California Sur, Mexico for more than five years.