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# ORGANIZATIONAL SECURITY

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JUNE 2018

## **Overview**

School shootings, stabbings, and other terrorist attacks are on the news almost daily. According to the FBI there have been 250 active shooter incidents in the U.S. from 2000 to 2017, resulting in 2,217 casualties.<sup>1</sup> The FBI terrorism news page lists incidents that range from chemical weapons to sending resources to terrorist networks.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Bomb Data Center Explosive Incident Report states that the Bomb Arson Tracking System reported 912 explosive incidents in 2014.<sup>3</sup>



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Every organization is unique in its security needs. Some businesses are small and have single facilities. Some are corporations with multiple offices spread over a large geographical area. With proper training and safety precautions, organizations can minimize the damage caused by an attack or possibly prevent an attack.

Security is a broad term incorporating multiple aspects of a security plan. Your organization needs to review crucial elements such as perimeter security, points of entry, security personnel, command center, and training.

### **Preparation is Key**

Is your organization prepared for an act of terrorism? Homeland Security advises, “The time to figure how to deal with an attack is not while it’s happening.” Homeland Security also recommends that organizations become “active participants” in their own security.”<sup>4</sup>

- What is your organization doing to prepare itself?
- What procedures have you put in place?
- How do you minimize your risk?
- What will be your response when an attack happens?

### **Perimeter Security**

Your first line of defense is your perimeter. The perimeter is a barrier to keep anyone from entering your building or campus without authorization. One of the most important parts of a perimeter is that there should be only a few points of entry. Each point needs to be supervised by a trained security guard. Having multiple points of entry that are unsupervised allow individuals to walk in unchecked.

### **Cameras**

Cameras provide an effective way to monitor large areas at once.

Cameras should be tied to a central monitoring point and have footage saved on different servers for a minimum of 90 days.

All points of entry and most internal corridors should be monitored.

**Identification Badges**

All large organizations such as corporations and schools should have identification badges. This will allow security guards to identify people and to control access to secure areas of buildings and campuses. Offices and buildings should have doors that are unlocked from the outside only with an active identification badge. Doors should lock immediately after being closed but should be able to be opened in case of an emergency.

If an employee is fired, or a student is suspended or expelled, their identification badges/access should be taken away or deactivated immediately to ensure they are not allowed on campus.

An assailant does not need to be inside a building to inflict damage. The Boston and Oklahoma City bombings<sup>5,6</sup> are examples of these. For organizations that have parking lots or are located along streets, cameras should be installed and monitored focused on these specific areas. If possible, vehicles should be searched before being allowed onto the organization's property.

**Metal Detectors**

Metal detectors can be an asset if used properly. They can also be a wasted expense if security guards and school resource officers do not have adequate training on how to use metal detectors effectively.

There are multiple types of metal detectors. Be sure your organization understands the difference and chooses the most beneficial equipment to keep your people and facilities secure.

**Communication**

Common communication systems such as cell phones may not work during an event. Organizations should have multiple communication methods and protocols in place to ensure seamless communication during and after an incident.

For organizations that have a large group of buildings or have multiple offices, you need to have coordinated communication plans.

## Social Media

Social media needs to be monitored regularly. In some instances, most recently in the Parkland Shooting incident,<sup>7</sup> the individual posted numerous posts about his intentions prior to the incident.

Having security personnel monitor social media using keywords such as attack, shooting, bombing, mass casualty and your organization's name is necessary.

## School-specific Suggestions

Students may attend a school in a different county or parish, which presents the problems of who is monitoring that student and who is responsible for questioning that student. Answering these questions prior to an incident or emergency is essential to rapid response.

Schools may want to have a central locking mechanism that a principal or other school administrator has access to. This would allow doors to be locked or unlocked as needed during or after an event.

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**If an individual has mentioned your organization and threatening words, please alert local law enforcement as well as the FBI. Be sure to document these posts and send them to the local authorities as well.**

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School resource officers need to have proper training beyond a law enforcement academy. Scot Peterson, the Parkland, Florida, officer, did not take expected actions during the school shooting.

- What actions does your organization expect?
- What type of training is necessary to ensure a proper response?

**Take steps today to ensure personnel is prepared to respond!**

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### **Business Continuity**

All organizations need a plan on what to do immediately after an incident and how to get back to work. This plan should include alternate work location(s), coordinated communications plan, and how to conduct business operations until normalcy returns.

### **Return to Work**

Counselors and mental health service providers are typically included in most return-to-work plans. Regular and timely communication with employees, staff, students, and parents will ensure that the school or office will be operational as soon as possible.

Additionally, there may be a need for a coordinated approach to building repair and cleanup. These may take extended time to complete, requiring both short and long-term options.

### **Balancing Cost and Protection Measures**

Funding may limit what measures your organization implements now and in the future. Working with organization leaders to understand budget constraints and to identify priority projects will help protect your people and your facilities.

## REFERENCES

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