

Are we able to provide a safe and secure environment?

Michael J. Fagel, PhD., CEM March 2018

Where will it happen next?

Not if, but, when again?

Schools, campuses, houses of worship, recreational sites, transportation hubs, retail facilities, those thoughts ring out day after day. Replay in your mind's eye the horrific images of:

- Columbine High School
- Virginia Tech
- Northern Illinois University (Valentine's Day)
- Aurora Colorado movie theater
- Sandy Hook Elementary School
- Umpqua Community College
- Pulse Orlando Night Club
- Las Vegas Strip
- Navy Yard
- LAX
- Ft. Lauderdale
- Ft. Hood
- San Bernardino
- Dallas
- Sutherland Springs, TX
- Parkland, FL High School (Valentine's Day)
- CMU-Michigan
- ???

I would hope that this is the end of this list, but I know it isn't.

I've responded to the Northern Illinois University Shooting in 2008, and can still, to this day, see the anguished look of those at the scene. Oklahoma City Bombing, World Trade Center attacks where I was deployed, the look was different (but is it), but the feelings are the same.... Why?

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We have watched with horror the increasingly more frequent news of violence at establishments we once thought “safe” from wanton violence.

One must just scan the news to see that no place is immune from any type of random act that injures or kills innocent people. Be it a school, university, movie theater, retail mall, office building; let’s look at a few basic elements.

It’s Culture! A culture of mitigation, planning, practice.

Awareness

Security

Safety

Threat

Vulnerability

Natural Surveillance and access control measures are key elements in safety of any facility. We realize that “open access” areas, such as shopping, places of worship, healthcare facilities, malls and the like are less likely to be openly “secured” in a conventional way.

Look at perimeters, surveillance and appropriately trained security/ law enforcement presence. Monitored cameras, external lighting, parking lot controls as well MAY be effective tools for the prevention of these types of events. Look at the lessons learned from previous events and compile ways to mitigate the elements and items of concern.

Access control must be thought about in a way to still allow “authorized access”, and you must, cooperatively, determine what is entailed in your facilities ultimate use and needs. Are they students, staff, visitors, retail customers, service personnel, and or other people that will be utilizing your facility?

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Look towards efficient ways to control the doors at each location and allow for funneling people in as few areas as you can. Secure and make sure that the areas of concern are addressed by a multi-discipline or cross-functional team that can explore and understand the interdependencies at ALL the areas. We must look at threats, vulnerabilities and consequences across all lines and areas of concern.

Vehicle access, perimeter control, parking up close to the building are all areas of concern as well. Locks, keys, ingress & egress are all factors.



Utilize best practices to accommodate those that need “front door” access to follow Federal and state access rules, BUT, be aware, that these areas must be monitored, as the assailant can also utilize these spaces for their close in surveillance and damage to your facility and injury to your staff. This IS a double-edged sword but must be adequately addressed.

Adequate lighting, fencing and other access operations must be undertaken to control those areas that have minimal traffic, or are more susceptible to being utilized for un-controlled access to the site.

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Surveillance security systems are often looked at as a “forensic tool” (after the event has occurred), BUT, if utilized appropriately, may act as a deterrent to the casual observer or to the assailant. These are just a few of the many measures you may need to look at, as you do your due diligence.

The key to any successful program is Preparedness, planning and training for the eventuality. ***NO facility is immune, house of worship, school, mall, office, campus, factory, entertainment, sporting, retail setting are all key targets in today's ever-changing society.***

Thoughtful and probing research into PAST events, at facilities such as yours are a KEY factor in learning from past events, and the preparedness that you participate in with your stakeholders is the KEY to a successful program. There are NO shortcuts to emergency planning, and success is measured in prevention and deterrence of these types of events.



Emergency and incident plans that engages the **WHOLE** organization are also a key and important element in the safety and security of your site.

Domestic, international or criminal elements that wish to cause harm to your site are being followed by those that wish to cause the greatest harm to the largest population.

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Remember that the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995 was caused by a domestic perpetrator, and that World Trade Center Attacks in 1995 and 2001 were caused by international elements.

Your facility may be a target from any of the above sources, or somewhere in between. And, it may be an insider attack, from a disgruntled employee, former student or person that may have a grievance with the organization, someone upset at the school board, the council, the CEO?



Mental Health is one key factor that must NEVER be swept “under the rug”. We have decimated our mental health programs over the last decades due to “budget cuts”, but should we have?

Stigma and socialization are all factors that help to perpetuate the concerns of obtaining appropriate assistance and outreach.

We have the ANTI - Socialization of our community with social media, which, in and of itself, influences many behaviors that are anti-social.



We don't talk anymore, we text and do not have conversations, we “message”. We are missing the “sense of family” we once had.

Social networks, 24-hour news and gaming, our minds never get a chance to take a break and shut down. Anxiety, stress and internal, external factors just help to enhance the turbulence.

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My university students are NOT allowed to text or type in class. It's a shock, but, we must break the cycle of people NOT TALKING with each other. It is not purely "their problem." It's OUR problem that we must work together to solve.

Be prepared, have a plan, practice it and look at critical inter-dependencies and evaluate YOUR response planning.

Also, engage with all the stakeholders in YOUR community that will play a part in the response and recovery operations for your site. DO not do this alone, as the response will be from many agencies, REACH out and engage them BEFORE the event happens.

Engage with local response officials, Police, Fire, EMS, Public Health, School Boards, Sheriff's Offices, State and Regional Fusion Centers all are useful tools in this area for your support. I have trained staff at over 45 of the 78 fusion centers nationwide. Fusion center operations offer up to the date intelligence and awareness products that are utilized statewide and regionally. Your own state has fusion centers that can assist. Use these resources to assist you in your organizational efforts to identify, mitigate, and prepare for the next event. Be it day to day, or crisis, plan, be prepared and develop partnerships now, before the crisis happens.

Preparation, Planning and Practice are the key to survival in any incident. We can no longer say.... "It's their problem". It is OURS. We must engage across all lines and remember to look, learn, communicate.



It's not us against "them", its all of US together.

Let's start this journey forward today, as a team, for the good of our community, our world!

Mike

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EMERGENCY PLANNING CHECKLIST

1. Emergency Planning
2. Fire Rescue
3. Law Enforcement
4. School Board
5. Facility Managers
6. Mental Health
7. Security
8. Management
9. Facilities
10. Elected & Appointed officials
11. Collaboration
12. Coordination
13. Communication
14. All Hazard Threat-Risk-Vulnerability assessment



DON'T FORGET

15. Legal
16. Marketing
17. Transportation
18. Utilities
19. ALL Public Safety Agencies (Police- Fire- EMS- Public Works-Public Health)
20. Transportation Systems
21. Practice the plan through Exercises and table top drills
22. Improve the plan after the exercises.
23. Implement changes
24. Plan, Prepare, Practice

NOTE, this list is NOT all inclusive, but a starting point for you to create your list

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Mike Fagel has served in public safety and corporate risk management for nearly 4 decades. His career spans law enforcement, Fire-Rescue, EMS, Corporate Risk & Occupational Safety and Emergency Management. He has served as an elected and appointed public official. He is an award-winning author of "Crisis management & Emergency Planning" Selected as the ASIS Book of the year. He has published 6 other textbooks, with his latest, "Soft Targets & Crisis Management" that was nominated for book of the year. Fagel teaches at the Illinois Institute of Technology-IIT Stuart School of Business in their Master of Public Administration Program, Northern Illinois University, as well as the National Center for Biomedical Research & Training at LSU, Eastern Kentucky University and Aurora University. He supports DHS in numerous contractor and support roles in training and education of the nation's first response, public health, intelligence and academic communities. He has been deployed to the Oklahoma City Bombing, World Trade Center Attacks, Hurricane Sandy as well as other national and international crisis events. Fagel is a member of the ASIS School Safety & Security Council. The opinions expressed are those of the author alone, and not that of any federal, state or local agency.

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