

School Violence Preparedness

Lines of Business: Workers' Compensation, General Liability

Risk Control Strategy / Key Issues: To provide education professionals with the elements to provide a safe and secure working and learning environment.

Suggested Program Elements:

1. Policy Statement:

- Assign responsibilities
- Assign accountability
- Detail zero tolerance policy to threats and violence

2. Violence Prevention:

- Establish early warning signs of violent behavior in minors
- Descriptions of effective prevention practices
- Develop intervention strategies
- Have legal review of responses to warning signs and violent behavior

3. Forming a Violence/Threat Prevention and Response Team:

- Designated core group to ensure the plan is implemented
- Written crisis intervention manual
- Rapid response
- Crisis training for teachers and staff
- Use of force training for key personnel
- Use reasonable approaches and strategies based on experience
- Give copy of plan to police, fire, and ambulance services

4. Local Law Enforcement:

- Establish agency contact points
- Identify internal personnel contacts
- Provide tours of facilities

5. Searches:

- Have a clear policy and publish it
- Search randomly and let it be known
- Use search as a deterrent, not just in specific cases
- Do not allow police searches without probable cause or warrants

6. Bomb Threats:

- Use caller ID, trace call
- Do not accept blocked calls
- Have and use red flag at phone
- Do not use phone after receiving call, trace of cell phone calls
- Establish a search your area policy

- Look for pattern callers - who is out of school, what school is target
- Establish evacuation protocols

7. Contingency Plan for Tragedy Aftermath:

- Evacuation procedures and protection of students
- Decision tree - Do we or don't we evacuate?
- Identification of safe areas
- An effective communication system with a back-up
- Automatic process for securing immediate external support
- Each school and key staff member to have a copy
- Several appointed persons can activate
- Establish psychological assistance for children and staff

Web Site Links:

- Department Of Education Web Site
<http://www.ed.gov/>
- Department of Justice
<http://www.usdoj.gov>

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Criminal Juvenile Profile - School Shootings / Mass Murder

- Race - Caucasian
- Age - Same as their class
- Socio-economic group - Middle and upper middle class
- Father Figure - Weak
- Education and Intelligence Level - Above average, college bound
- Physical Appearance - Typical male, no athlete
- Mental Health - Received counseling, receiving medication, or has been treated (very smart, can manipulate their medications, such as Ritalin – takes for test, not for date)
- Relationships - Teased, outcast, insulted, considered “weird”, seeks own kind.
- If labeled weird, becomes self-prophecy -- Starts doing weird stuff
- Tools of the Trade - acquire guns and make bombs when required for *mission*. Not gun hobbyists
- Issues around boy / girl break-ups
- Forseeability - Others will know of the plan (Legal term: A reasonable person could have seen this happening.)
- Chosen targets - All are guilty
- Timing - Planned to occur during normal school hours
- Crime Scene - At the school where “wrongs” occurred. Fixation on school. Happens in turf area they know.
- Motivation - Revenge
- Computers - Well versed on the Internet, computers and gaming
- Security problem with computers - i.e., downloading information on bomb making a printout at the school
- Law enforcement history - Never heard of them, and if so, it is on a minor property crime, probably practicing for the event. They know how the laws work.
- Modus Operandi - A great deal of planning, timetables, cleans off the computer before they do it. No effort goes into planning escape. Show fatalistic tendencies.
- Other notables:
- There is a triggering event.
- Cold, like a serial killer. No emotion to victim. No emotional ties. They later will describe the crime like a video game with pop-up targets. No connection that the targets are humans.

Crisis Procedure Checklist

- Assess life-safety issues immediately
- Call security
- Call 911 - ambulance, police, and fire
- Provide immediate emergency medical care
- Call superintendent
- Convene crisis team to assess situation
- Implement the crisis response procedures
- Evaluate need for additional resources such as fire, police, transport, medical, etc.
- Alert school staff
- Activate crisis communication and verification procedure
- Decision to evacuate or seek safe havens; avoid dismissing students to unknown care or danger - maintain control
- Adjust bell schedule
- Advise information systems to prevent confusion and misinformation
- Contact district's public information officer and selected community agencies
- Implement post-crisis procedures.