

Active Shooter

The recent terror attack in Kenya, as well as escalating criminal gang related wars within Australia, have prompted a renewed interest in Active Shooter Procedures by those businesses utilising a risk-based approach to Emergency Management.

While Australia has not experienced these events with the same frequency as other parts of the world, our history is dotted with a number of such events including that which occurred in Port Arthur. The sad reality is that the likelihood of such events recurring in Australia is almost certain.



Historical examples show that shooters commonly target places of mass gathering such as shopping centres, sporting & entertainment venues, schools, tourist attractions, hotels, transportation hubs and business precincts. These attacks also receive extensive media coverage. Shooter motivations can include political or religious views, mental health or substance abuse issues. These situations differ from other forms of Workplace Intrusion such as armed robbery, as the primary motivation is not theft or protest but rather a maximisation of casualties with little concern for self-preservation.

An Active Shooter incident is a dynamic, rapidly unfolding and potentially catastrophic event. A carefully planned and rehearsed response is the key to minimising the impact of this ever-present danger on the health and well-being of those persons involved.

This response should consider the implementation of measures to:

- Contain the situation;
- Minimise targets;
- Develop situational awareness;
- Communicate information to law enforcement;
- Evacuate persons from the incident area (where this can safely be achieved).
- Lockdown those areas unable to be safely evacuated.



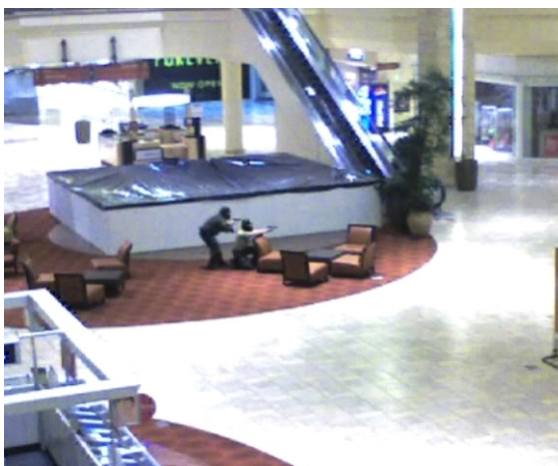
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It is unlikely that there will be a Police presence at the commencement of the event, so an effective means of collating and communicating vital intelligence is an essential part of any planned response. A detailed understanding of Police priorities is also essential to the formation of a realistic and robust emergency plan. If the plan is to be effective, it will require a coordinated response from all tenants and their staff.



Members of the public visiting places of mass gathering have an expectation that should such an incident occur, they will receive clear and specific directions from trained staff. Due to the media scrutiny such incidents gather, it is essential that procedures be based on proven response strategies developed by Emergency Management professionals. As a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) under the harmonised work health and safety legislation, Property Owners, Managers and Employers have a legislative duty (Division 4, Part 3.2) to identify




possible emergency situations and to implement, maintain and test procedures to ensure the safety of persons who may be impacted by the emergency. Given the tragic events that have occurred overseas and the recent development and issuing of the document 'Active Shooter Guidelines for Places of Mass Gathering 2013 in Australia', such an event has been recognised as a legitimate risk that should be planned for.

PRENSA has developed specialised training and planning tools to assist your business to prepare for, and respond to an Active Shooter incident. Contact us today for more information.

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