

Planning & Response Considerations for Mass Shooting Incidents

- This PDF is a variety of slides from my 4-hour Multi-Agency **“Mass Shootings Planning & Response Course”** May 2008 version.
- I developed this PDF after numerous requests for additional information on Mass Shootings especially from Fire, EMS and Emergency Management agencies.
- Reminder this a small representation of 40 slides from a class of over 190 slides.
- There is a variety of information here from different sources for different agencies!

Planning & Response Considerations for Mass Shooting Incidents

- Please feel free to use this file as a resource as you construct your own training materials for a specific audiences. Just please give credit where credit is due.
- Please remember that the information should only be used as a guide and you should still use your local guidelines and procedures.
- Reminder this information is constantly being reviewed and updated.
- Thank you and be safe! If you have any questions or comments please contact me at fdtac@yahoo.com

Planning & Response Considerations for Mass Shooting Incidents



Introduction

- A rapid, safe and successful response requires preparation.
- The likelihood of a mass shooting incident is low, BUT school and public safety officials must prepare for these situations.
- Recent mass shootings and active shooting events inside the US and outside the US have demonstrated the need to prepare local, regional, state, federal and military resources to plan for and respond to these events.

Course Goal

To prepare first responders, emergency management, school system and other officials with some basic tools and information needed to develop or assess a multi-agency mass shooting plan.



Course Note

- **COURSE IS A NOT A “TACTICS” COURSE.**
- The guidelines and procedures discussed in the presentation should not replace common sense and experience. It is impossible to plan for every situation.
- New “best practices”, lessons learned and training become available on an on-going basis. These plans should be updated on a regular basis.

Course Content



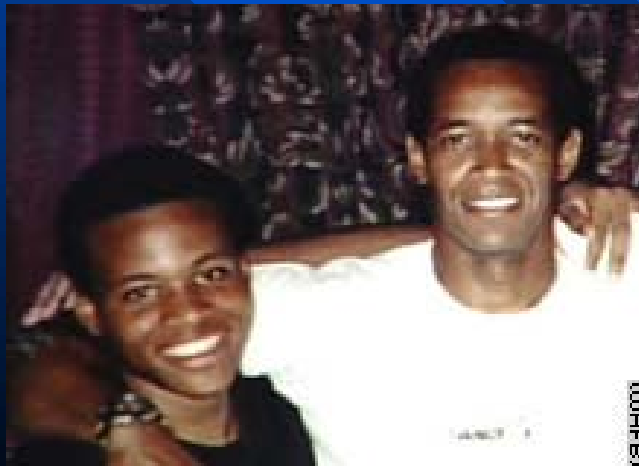
- Threat Groups/Individuals
- Pre-Incident Planning
- Multi-Agency Training
- OPSEC (Operations Security)
- Improvised Explosive Devices
- Response Operations
- Planning Resources

Threat Groups

- It appears that the “bad guys” (criminals and terrorists) are more determined, violent and heavily armed than ever before.
- Crisis situations such as terrorist events, criminal attacks, active shooters and threats/hoaxes are occurring with alarming frequency.
- No two incidents are the same. Factors ranging from the shooters motive, their weapons, knowledge of the location and number of staff, security and visitors can all influence the outcome of an incident.

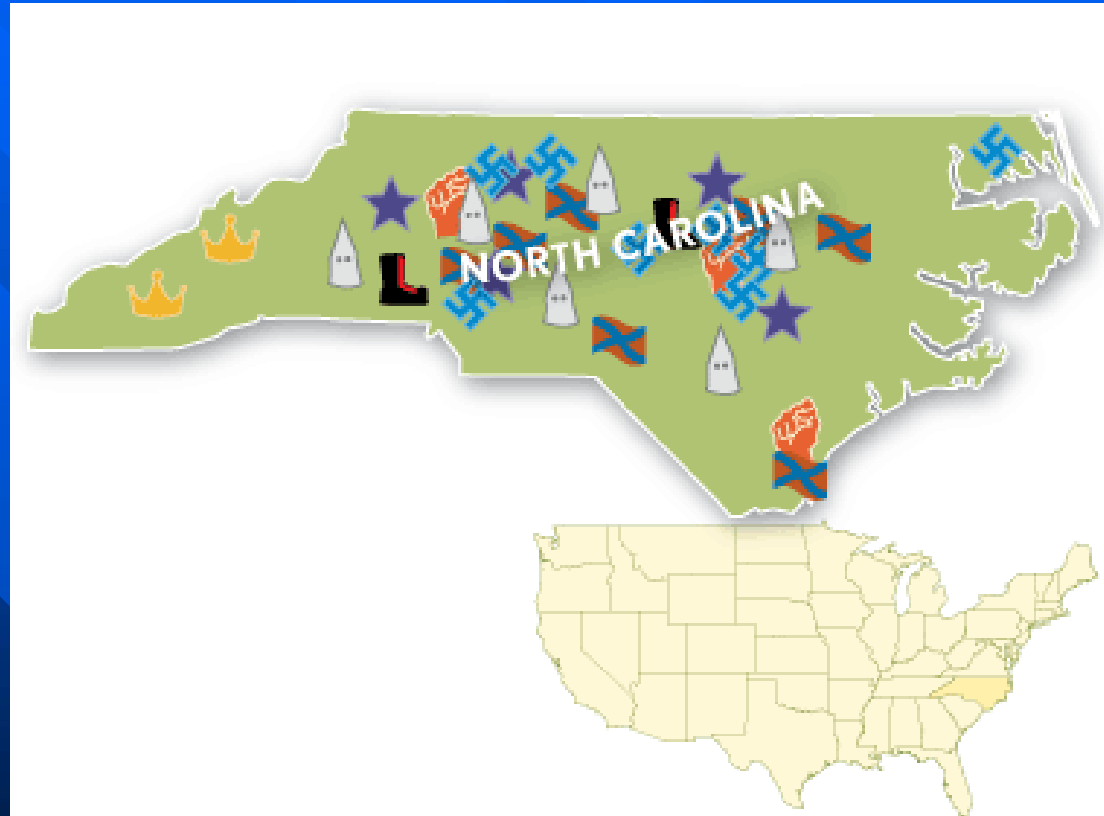
Threat Groups

- Many of these types of events **CANNOT** be peacefully resolved or negotiated.
- It must also be recognized that there are serious domestic and international threat groups and individuals that are willing and able use weapons against the public and first responders.



Threat Groups

- One important note to remember is that there are active hate groups and extremists located in all 50 states.
- First response agencies may find themselves increasingly being exposed to these types of situations.



Threat Assessments

- Some mass shooting events begin with a warning or threats.
- Threats can be an alarming behavior, statements, actions or physical items (weapons, plans, “death lists” or notes).
- The threat assessment process is based on several factors such as behavior, history, intent and capability.
- FBI statistics show that in 81% of school violence incidents, there was “leakage,” or other persons who had knowledge that something was going to occur.

Planning



Pre-Incident Planning

- Many organizations have historically regarded safety and security as a **low priority** rather than an **important** school/business **function** and **responsibility**.
- This sense of security and complacency has been shattered by recent events including numerous mass shooting incidents and terrorist events around the world.

Pre-Incident Planning

- **Critical agencies meet:**
 - Law Enforcement Agency
 - Fire Department
 - Emergency Medical Services
 - School System
 - Emergency Management
- **Target Identification (Identify top 5 or 10 locations):**
 - Elementary Schools
 - High Schools
 - Colleges/Universities
 - High Profile Businesses
 - Large Crowds/Venues

Assign an officer to each if possible to assist/liaison.

Pre-Incident Planning

- Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, Emergency Management, School System and other officials all share some of the same priorities during a mass-shooting event. (*Life Safety and Incident Stabilization*).
- Planning and interagency cooperation for a mass shootings or any “critical incident” type of event should be paramount.
- Mass shootings can and do occur in urban, suburban and rural settings.
- As with all emergency management planning efforts a multi-agency tabletop or functional exercise should be conducted to test your planning and training efforts.

**FIRST RESPONDERS SHOULD NOT
ATTEMPT TO MOVE, HANDLE OR
DISARM A CONFIRMED OR
SUSPECTED IED; THIS IS A JOB
FOR SPECIALLY TRAINED
PERSONNEL.**



Response Issues

“Every community faces the possibility that an incident involving wanton violence, mass casualties, or incendiary and explosive devices...
....fire and EMS agencies need to plan nontraditional strategies and tactics...”

Wanton Violence at Columbine High School

U.S. Fire Administration, USFA-TR-128

Response Issues

- Pre-planning is critical!
- First arriving units have a drastic effect on the progress of the incident. Must quickly and safely conduct “windshield survey”.
- Fire and EMS should remain in staging area until the scene is secured by law enforcement when possible.

Unified Command: Action Items

- Establish a command post after contact and rescue teams have been deployed.
- Communicate with LE contact and rescue teams.
- Deploy responding LE officers (inner and outer perimeter; relief personnel).
- Deploy medical and fire first responders.
- Designate staging area for arriving units and equipment.
- Contain and protect spectators, families, media.

Response Issues

- Incident scenes spread over a large area may need to be quickly divided into smaller branches/divisions.
- Responders may initially run into victims fleeing the incident. Responding vehicles may attract victims.
- Information should be gathered from these individuals and should be directed to safe areas using verbal commands or PA systems.

Response Issues

- **Immediate interagency cooperation / Unified Command is essential!**
- Key school/college staff should also have a basic understanding of the Incident Command System and Unified Command.
- Clear communications (personal and radio) are necessary for effective operations.
- Access to helicopters for overhead assessments is a plus when possible.



What May Occur Upon Arrival/Entry

- Victims Hiding, Running, Confused, Frightened.



Response Issues Intelligence Gathering

- Witnesses can be excellent sources of information:
 - Describe the suspect.
 - Location of the suspect.
 - Type and number of weapons used.
 - Number of people are injured.
 - Each piece of information is critical!

Response Considerations

- Noise-Fire Alarms.
- Fire, Smoke, Sprinkler Systems On.
- Possible Explosive Devices.
- Limited Radio Traffic (Test Your Radios Inside of your Schools and Malls).
- Dead Children & Adults, Carnage.
- Keep Focused on Your Mission!

Response Issues

- These situations could become a hostage event.
- Events most likely to occur during business/school hours.
- Young students may not understand instructions and may hide from responders.

Response Issues

- Notify all key agencies supporting entities as soon as possible (Emergency Management, Hospitals, etc.)
- Plan on large and immediate media response. **Think OPSEC when it comes to live video!**
- Plan on large and immediate parents, family and friends response to the incident scene.



Response Issues

- Fire and EMS personnel should wear helmets and clearly marked Fire or EMS jackets.
- If there is any doubt that a responder is not seen as a firefighter or EMS responders should wear a road vest or t-shirt with highly visible lettering.
- This can apply to other staff such as Emergency Management, School Officials, Management, etc.
- Body armor should be obtained for those responding into the "impact" area when possible.

Response Issues

- Fire alarms and sprinkler systems may be initiated adding additional confusion and noise to the situation.
- Windows should be observed for signs of attackers, victims, safe areas, etc.
- Responders may have friends or family among the victims, wounded or dead.

Response Issues

EMS Response Issues

- Tactical medics may be the only staff allowed in the “warm” and “hot” zone to provide care.
- EMS may need to utilize “scoop and scoot” and “load and go” from the incident.
- Casualty collection points (CCP) may be established in safe areas inside a facility or outside a location.
- EMS may need to implement disaster procedures such as triage tags, casualty collection points and field treatment areas for minor injuries.

Entry by EMS and Fire When Suspect Is Confined

- Only enter the scene if it is confirmed that all suspects are confined or neutralized! This depends on local guidelines and procedures.
- Only a small number of fire and/or EMS personnel should enter under these circumstances.
- Additional law enforcement officers should ensure safe passage.
- The healthy civilians can help evacuate and assist the walking wounded.

Scene Assistance



- **Local Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** should be activated as soon as possible for long term response, recovery, management, investigative and support efforts.
- **Joint Information Center (JIC)** should be established involving all key agencies and players to manage the local and national media efforts.

Scene Assistance

- Prepare for VIP visits after an incident.



Scene Assistance

- Family Assistance Centers (FAC) may need to be established near the site and other remote locations.
- Helpline phone numbers should be initiated.
- CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) efforts should be considered for all responders.



FIRST RESPONDER CRITICAL INCIDENT GUIDE



AUGUST VERNON

*New First
Responder Incident
Field Guide from
Red Hat Publishing
Available Fall of
2008*

www.redhatpub.com

Public Safety Sensitive

CONCLUSION

- This presentation is intended for information only and to spur further discussion and planning within agencies.



A French class in Holden Hall takes cover - Chase Damiano

CONCLUSION

- Please remember to follow local guidelines and procedures.
- Each community should have a plan in place to address these types of events.
- The more our public safety agencies prepare, the better they are prepared to respond to and effectively manage any type of situation that might arise. The community has entrusted us with their safety.... **SO LETS PREPARE NOW!**

Thank you & be safe!



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