

California Hospital Association - Hospital Preparedness Program Planning & Training for an Active Shooter Event Executive Summary

The California Hospital Association's Hospital Preparedness Program has developed a course for the active shooter incident. A course by and for hospitals which helps participants review organizational aspects of planning and training to increase survivability of patients, visitors and staff in an active shooter event.

When violence erupts in a healthcare facility, the outcome and events of the scenario are unpredictable. Injury or death of building occupants, lawsuits, property damage, and diminished trust in the facility by patient, staff and the community are just a few of the possible consequences. The risk for violence is difficult to predict and almost impossible to eliminate. This course provides instruction on ways hospital staff can reduce potential and minimize the impact of violent situations specifically involving an active shooter incident.

The CHA HPP course provides direction in developing policies and procedures for activation of the active shooter plan, crisis communication and specific staff actions that can help result in an improved response. This course assists with important elements of planning such as developing plans to interact with law enforcement, conduct facility risk and security assessments to determine the hospital's vulnerability to an active shooter. In addition it assists in providing a means to understand and meet legal and regulatory requirements for Workplace Violence such as: CalOSHA, CMS and The Joint Commission. The course continues by providing statistics, a review of the benefits of training and exercise, and, liabilities and costs associated with active shooter post incident investigations.

As part of the post incident response, the course includes critical steps in recovery such as: accounting for all individuals; determination of a method for notification of families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties; crisis communications; assessment of psychological state of employees and referral to health care specialist; and; analyzing the event to create an After Action Report and Corrective Action Plan.

The fundamental element of response to an event few have experienced, but which carries significant potential is based on planning and training. While the human factors of an incident may be quite unpredictable, experts cite planning and training as two key requirements for consideration at the organizational level.

For those facilities sustaining an active shooter incident, post incident investigation will be undertaken by regulating and licensing agencies. The facility's plans and policy development process will be vigorously reviewed. Investigations will focus on protocols and training in support of an emergency action plan which includes, but is not limited to: Workplace Violence Policy, Targeted Violence Policy, Assaulted or Battered Employee Policy, No Weapons Policy, Access Control/Visitor Policy, LOCKDOWN, and Person with a Weapon / Active Shooter Policies.

The active shooter incident will likely be the level of incident that lingers long into an organization's history. The Facility Active Shooter Plan requires a top down commitment to ensure the right resources are allocated to develop workplace violence prevention and appropriate illness/injury intervention programs. Programs with protocol to effectively carry out incident management; to secure training resources; physical security measures; and; other items essential to successful prevention and intervention efforts on behalf of the organization in whole.