

RESEARCH BRIEF

Active Shooter Safety Protocol

Business Affairs Forum

Gelsey Mehl

Research Associate

Rebecca Stefaniak

Research Manager

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Due to increased awareness about campus safety and interest from community members, administrators at profiled institutions are currently expanding active shooter safety protocol. To design emergency procedures, contacts recruit representatives across multiple departments, including university police, emergency management, environmental health, student affairs, and human resources. Active shooter protocol includes responses from university and local law enforcement, communication plans, and trainings for faculty, staff, and students.

Active shooter safety protocol coordinates emergency responses for institutional and regional law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical response (EMS) teams. Administrators reference guidelines from federal, state, and other external agencies (e.g., Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, or ALERRT). Campus law enforcement also attend trainings at Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), and police chiefs invite external agencies to campus to lead trainings. Furthermore, contacts recommend involving external first responders (e.g., local police, regional SWAT teams) in emergency planning. In particular, law enforcement, fire, and EMS teams at **Institution A** meet to agree on a "common operational language" for emergencies to promote clear communication across teams (e.g., clarifying definitions of "casualty," "patient," and "victim").

During active shooting incidents, administrators use multiple forms of communication to update community members, including phone calls, emails, text messages, and loudspeaker systems. Repetitive messaging helps to ensure that all community members receive emergency notifications. Profiled institutions employ different strategies to enroll students in emergency notification systems; Institution A automatically registers first-time freshmen for notifications, while students at the Institution B and Institution C must opt in to notification systems. Regardless of enrollment method, contacts report that approximately 80 to 90 percent of students at their institutions receive emergency notifications.

University police departments deliver safety trainings to faculty, staff, and students on a by-request basis. Safety trainings include lectures, tabletop and scenario trainings (i.e., roundtable discussions), self-defense exercises, and full-scale drills. Currently, profiled institutions train community members to follow the federal government's "run, hide, fight" protocol (i.e., the order of actions for civilians to take during shooting incidents). Campus police officers typically lead trainings, although contacts report that individuals outside of law enforcement can also serve as trainers. At Institution B, administrators recruit a diverse group of trainers, including Institution B faculty and local emergency room doctors.

2) Structure of Active Shooter Safety Protocol

Developing Active Shooter Safety Protocol

Administrators Observe Increased Interest in Active Shooter Safety Protocol over the Past Two Years

Contacts at **Institution A** describe the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting as a "watershed moment" which refocused public attention on active shooter incidents. Institutions without emergency response plans began to develop formalized safety protocol. Administrators requested funding to increase campus safety staff and purchase more equipment for campus police departments. In some states (e.g., Washington), Boards of Regents and state governments now encourage university administrators to expand and update emergency response plans and active shooter trainings.

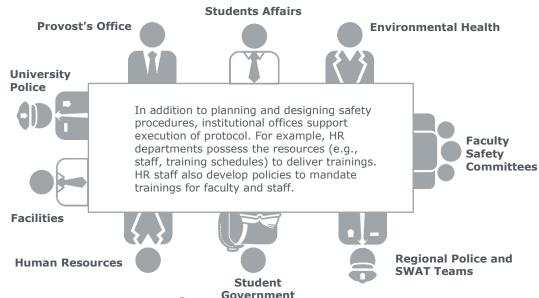
In particular, contacts report an increased desire among campus constituents across the past 12 to 18 months to learn about and prepare for active shooters. Administrators cite the rising frequency of shooting incidents and subsequent media attention as a factor that has encouraged more community members to create, request, and attend active shooter trainings.

Develop Safety Policies in Collaboration with Multiple Campus Departments and External Law Enforcement Officers to Ensure Cohesiveness

Administrators involve representatives across campus departments (e.g., student affairs, university police) to create safety policies. Stakeholders establish protocol and maintain consistency in safety messaging for marketing materials (e.g., safety announcements, posters). Additionally, contacts coordinate with local law enforcement, fire departments, and EMS to design emergency response plans.

Furthermore, administrators reference federal guidelines to establish policies and design safety trainings, particularly the FBI's "run, hide, fight" protocol. Profiled institutions also use **Texas State University**'s Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) framework and the Center for Personal Protection and Safety's training video "Shots Fired: When Lightning Strikes."

Stakeholders Involved in Designing Active Shooter Safety Protocol



Policies and Procedures

Active Shooter Safety Protocol is One of Several Elements of Institutions' Emergency Response Plans

University-wide safety procedures include other policies in addition to active shooter response. For example, at **Institution D**, three policy manuals define all safety procedures: an executive manual, a safety policy manual, and a business policy manual. Contacts at Institution D design new policies based on these preexisting manuals, including polices to respond to active shooters. Administrators may also include active shooter incidents in "all hazard" response plans (i.e., standardized emergency response plans for all types of incidents), such as at the **University of Oregon.**¹

When developing active shooter safety protocol, contacts highlight three primary components to include:

- 1. Law enforcement response, including university, local, and regional departments
- 2. Emergency communication plans
- 3. Trainings for community members (e.g., faculty, staff, students)

For example, **Clark University's** active shooter emergency response plan² outlines the roles and responsibilities of administrators and staff, protocol for law enforcement response, strategies for community members to prepare for and respond to active shootings, and characteristics to identify suspects in active shooter incidents.

Develop Threat-Assessment Teams to Investigate Suspicious Circumstances and Individuals



Campus police departments remind community members to immediately contact police if they encounter or observe suspicious circumstances or individuals. At the **Institution C**, for example, individuals submit reports to threat-assessment teams. Counseling center staff analyze reports, and a "care team" of representatives from various departments (e.g., campus police, university housing, dean of students) reviews reports and determines whether further action is required.

Emphasize Rapid Action from First Responders through Coordination across All Emergency Response Agencies

University police departments at profiled institutions formulate response plans and train officers to properly address active shooter incidents. During a shooting incident, on-call officers respond immediately based on available intelligence. Typically, the first officer to arrive on the scene becomes the default commander (i.e., the first officer) who manages the response and investigation for that incident. First officers receive the level of support from additional teams that aligns with the scale of the emergency. Ultimately, law enforcement officers may use force when necessary to eliminate active shooter threats.

invite federal agencies (e.g., FBI) to conduct trainings. Additionally, staff attend trainings at organizations such as Federal Law Enforcement **Training Centers** (FLETC) and Texas State University's Advanced Law **Enforcement Rapid** Response Training (ALERRT).

Police chiefs also

• At the Institution C, the details of active shooter responses stems from training sessions, rather than official safety guidelines. This allows law enforcement to continually update trainings without the need to amend formal protocol. For example, previous training materials instructed EMS to wait to enter buildings until law enforcement had declared buildings as "clear." Now, EMS may enter buildings alongside a second group of law enforcement officers.

¹ Mary Ellen McIntire, "Many Colleges' New Emergency Plan: Try to Account for Every Possibility," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* last modified October 20, 2015, http://chronicle.com/article/Many-Colleges-New-Emergency/233841?cid=rclink.

² "Active Shooter Emergency Plan," *Clark University*, last modified January 11, 2013, https://www2.clarku.edu/offices/business/emergency/docs/ClarkUniversityActiveShooterProtocol.pdf.

Campus Police Department Response Plan at the Institution C³

First officer (i.e., first Officer travels to location officer to arrive at and responds to active Bystander calls dispatch scene) confirms shooter threat based on center. Active shooter existence of active methods learned in incidents typically shooter on campus trainings. Dispatch generate multiple calls. through discussions with center updates officer witnesses or sound of with information. fired shots. First officer approves Second team of officers activation of emergency arrives at scene, First officer forms initial messaging systems. establishes incident response team Initial messages are command post, and containing up to five nonspecific, such as prepares for arrival of officers to enter building. "Report of shots fired on fire and EMS responders. campus." **Subsequent Response** Dependent on Level of **Shooter Activity Ongoing Response** If officers still hear shots If officers enter building University police chief fired inside the building, and there is no active contacts president and they enter the building shooting, the first team media relations staff and and engage with the begins clearing the oversees incident active shooter. building. command on scene. Law enforcement respond with force if the shooter is still active. Paramedics enter with However, in the event of second team of officers. a hostage situation, officers begin a negotiation process. If necessary (e.g., if the Law enforcement shooter is connected contains threat and with a radical group), updates community with university police contact additional details about external agencies (e.g., the incident. the FBI).

³ The response plan as it appears in this graphic was relayed via phone during a research interview with EAB.

Create a "Common Operational Language" for All First Responders



Police, fire, and EMS officers often use different terms and jargon. For example, these units may assign different meanings across units for terms like "casualty," "patient," and "victim." Similarly, some units may refer to "cleared" or "secured" buildings to mean the same as "safe" buildings. Contacts recommend that these departments attend joint trainings. Joint trainings allow officers to develop a common language for response terminology, which can mitigate confusion while executing emergency response plans.

Faculty, Staff, and Students at Profiled Institutions Adhere to "Run, Hide, Fight" Protocol

During an active shooter incident, contacts communicate to campus constituents to take all possible measures to protect themselves until law enforcement arrives at the scene. Profiled institutions adhere to the federal protocol of "ride, hide, fight" or "run, lock, fight" for civilians. According to these guidelines, community members should first attempt to evacuate buildings, then locate secure hiding places, and engage with active shooters only after exhausting other methods.⁴

Institution C recommends a "shelter-in-place" protocol (i.e., taking refuge indoors) to the campus community. In Institution C's state, K-12 students participate in lockdown drills, so Institution C students are typically familiar with "shelter-in-place" procedures.

Administrators advise faculty, staff, and student employees to direct others (e.g., direct reports, students) while minimizing risk to themselves during an emergency. Contacts also emphasize that groups of individuals should commit to one action plan. For example, if a professor decides that his or her class will practice shelter-in-place, the professor should not allow students to exit the classroom.

Provide Updates and Counseling to the Campus Community in the Aftermath of Shooting Incidents

After the conclusion of initial emergency responses, administrators shift to a recovery phase. Administrators update campus constituents about the effects of the incident and the resources they may access (e.g., counseling). Contacts manage the recovery phase differently for each incident, and the timeline is dependent upon the scale and scope of the incident. Administrators encourage faculty, staff, and students to utilize services at university health centers and, if necessary, meet with counselors and psychologists.

An emergency response plan from the **University of Oregon** outlines a three-step process⁵ to help campuses recover from incidents:

- 1. "Ensure that the campus is safe and secure"
- 2. "Restore campus facilities and grounds"
- 3. "Determine when and how to return to normal campus operations"

^{4 &}quot;Active Shooter: How to Respond," US Department of Homeland Security, https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf.

⁵ "Emergency Operations Plan," *University of* Oregon, last modified November 2013, http://emc.uoregon.edu/sites/emc.uoregon.edu/files/uploads/UOEOP_110613_PUBLIC.pdf

Administrators at **Institution A** are currently evaluating how to develop a comprehensive response plan for long-term recovery following incidents. Specifically, contacts will consider building use (e.g., dormitories, academic buildings) to create plans to accommodate individuals who work or reside in those buildings, should they be temporary displaced after emergencies.

Familiarize Law Enforcement Officers and Community Members with Floor Plans, Particularly Entry and Exit Points

Administrators and campus police educate community members about how to secure and navigate existing buildings during emergencies. Buildings typically contain posters with safety guidelines, although contacts do not believe many community members read these materials prior to an emergency. During trainings, faculty, staff, and students learn how to construct barricades. **Institution C** campus police conduct building assessments and tailor trainings to specific campus buildings (e.g., identify entrances and exits) by request. Environmental health officers at **Institution A** meet with representatives from administrative and academic departments to discuss customized response plans for each building. At **Institution B**, departments designate coordinators to secure buildings during a lockdown.

Strategies to Access and Secure Buildings during Active Shooting



All future construction at the **Institution B** will feature electronic card access for building entry. Police and campus safety officials will have the capability to electronically lock down buildings. While **Institution C** buildings also contain electronic card readers, university police report that the noise of doors clicking open can reveal the positions of first responders to active shooters.



The campus police chief at the **Institution C** encourages officers to survey buildings to learn layouts, particularly during summer when building occupancy is lowest. Administrators have also discussed providing schematic diagrams of campus buildings to university and local law enforcement to ensure they are familiar with building designs.



Law enforcement agents should know all entry and exit points, particularly for buildings that have not yet been upgraded to electronic card systems. Additionally, campus police may consider locating alternative entrances. For example, if universities possess underground tunnel systems for steam pipes, first responders could use these tunnels to enter buildings during emergencies.



Invite local and state law enforcement officers to on-campus trainings to familiarize external agencies with buildings. Typically, on-campus trainings occur in buildings with decreased use over summer. Because external officers have limited familiarity with campus buildings, university police guide responses during emergencies.



Consider Public Safety a Campus Utility

Institution D rebranded the office of public safety as a campus utility to include public safety administrators in discussions related to campus facilities and construction. Now, public safety officials provide input into aspects of physical campuses which can impact safety and emergency response, such as camera and communication systems and locks on doors.

3) Communicating and Implementing Active Shooter Safety Protocol

Communication and Preparation

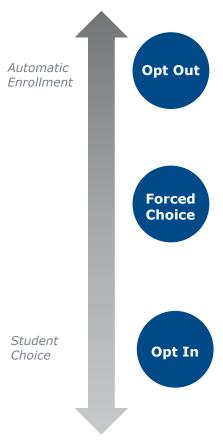
Deliver Updates across Multiple Communication Channels to Reach Entire Campus Community

Contacts recommend that administrators develop primary and secondary communication plans in advance of shooting incidents. Faculty, students, and staff should know in advance which parties are responsible for emergency updates and how they will receive communications (e.g., intercom, text messages) during incidents. Furthermore, administrators provide continual updates during active shooting incidents.

Prewritten messages help text messages comply with character length limits. All profiled institutions maintain text message alert systems for emergencies. Institutions contract with external vendors (e.g., Everbridge, RAVE) to procure messaging technology, but campus police and public safety administrators control the content of messages. Typically, institutions keep a database of prewritten emergency messages (e.g., "Incident at <campus building>. Avoid area until further notice."). Administrators then select the most appropriate messages to send during emergencies.

Additionally, **Institution D** is currently beta-testing the Altiris desktop voiceover system. Institution D administrators chose to implement the "basic" version, which Altiris offers at no cost.

Methods to Enroll Students in Emergency Notification Systems



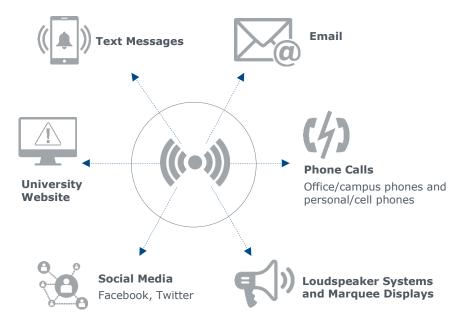
Institution A automatically enrolls first-time freshmen in emergency notification systems. Students can later opt out of receiving messages. However, approximately 90 percent of students remained enrolled in emergency notifications.

When first-time freshmen at **Institution D** initially log into the university's online portal, they are redirected to an Everbridge portal to input their contact information (e.g., cell phone number) and select preferences for method of contact (e.g., call, text). Students may also opt out of notifications. After selecting, students are sent back to the Institution D portal. Contacts report approximately 21,000 registered users on the Everbridge system.

Institution B and **Institution C** students must log into the university portal to "opt in" to text message alerts. Institution C administrators have considered moving to an opt-out system to increase student enrollment in message notification systems. However, approximately 80 to 90 percent of Institution C students currently opt in.

Contacts also advise that administrators broadcast communication across multiple channels. Repetitive messages help to ensure that all community members receive emergency communications.

Emergency Communication Channels at Profiled Institutions



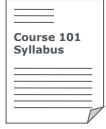
Display Steps for Emergency Protocol on Institutional Websites and throughout Campus Buildings

Profiled institutions include emergency protocol on institutional websites, which typically contain links to federal websites for further guidance on active shooter responses.

Contacts may incorporate active shooter protocol in new hire orientations for faculty and staff. At **Institution B**, designated building coordinators track start dates of new employees and schedule active shooter trainings for those employees.

In response to state mandates, **Institution D** administrators have increased preemptive outreach regarding emergency protocol since December 2015. Administrators placed notifications (e.g., posters) in hallways and classrooms that outlines emergency protocol. In an "all-hazards" approach, materials contain instructions for a variety of potential emergency situations, including active shooters. Contacts also provided faculty with mandatory syllabus language. These actions are interim measures until Institution D redevelops its emergency response protocol and communication plan.

Encourage Faculty to Incorporate Emergency Protocol into Syllabi



Faculty outline emergency procedures, including active shooter incident protocol, in course syllabi. This inclusion allows students to know where to exit classrooms. Additionally, professors can account for all students by designating meeting locations in the case of classroom evacuations.

Active Shooter Trainings

University Police Typically Design and Deliver Active Shooter Trainings

Law enforcement, environmental health and safety, and emergency management offices collaborate to create active shooter trainings. Profiled institutions also employ external training providers, such as the ALICE Training Institute and ALERRT.

While campus police typically lead trainings, contacts recommend that administrators and staff outside of law enforcement also deliver trainings. For example, housing staff (e.g., resident assistants) may attend trainings and then convey information to students who reside in on-campus housing. **Institution B** trainings feature multiple instructors from various offices (e.g., police department, faculty, local hospital) to provide attendees with diverse perspectives.



Student-Instructor Ratio at Trainings

10:1

30 to 40 faculty and staff attend trainings at **Institution B** with approximately one instructor for every 10 attendees. While Institution B has held trainings for up to 100 individuals at once, attendees do not have sufficient space to participate in self-defense trainings in groups over 40.

The **Institution C** police department also delivers active shooter trainings to local public school teachers and hospital workers. Contacts estimate that an additional 3,000 local residents have attended these trainings.

Incorporate Lectures, Instructional Videos, Tabletop Exercises, and Full-Scale Drills to Prepare Community

Profiled institutions provide trainings to faculty and staff, who then guide students during emergencies. Human resources staff at **Institution B** include active shooter trainings in professional development training schedules for faculty and staff. Institution B offers several active shooter trainings each year, typically over winter, spring, and summer breaks.

Types of Active Shooter Training Sessions at Profiled Institutions



Lectures

Instructors, typically campus police officers, deliver lecture-style presentations to groups of faculty, staff, and students on request. Lectures typically conclude with a period for questions and answers.



Scenarios and Tabletop Exercises

Tabletop exercises allow faculty and staff across departments to discuss response plans and clarify what decisions they will need to make during crises. Participants identify areas where they require additional training, and trainers tailor sessions to those requests. At **Institution C**, participants spend up to 4 hours in scenario trainings.



Self-Defense Exercises

Institution B offers a 2-hour training session in self-defense. First, trainers deliver presentations on response techniques, and then participants divide into small groups to practice self-defense and scenarios (e.g., drag-and-carry, how to remove weapons from assailants).



Drills

Institution A is currently developing a full-scale training exercise. Full-scale drills, such as a recent event at Temple University³, may involve actors as mock shooters to simulate active shootings and allow administrators to test their response plans in action.



Training Videos

Trainers typically begin lecturestyle sessions with instructional videos. These videos are also available on institutional websites.

⁶ Gabriel Sandoval, "How Colleges Train for Active Shooters on Campus," The Chronicle of Higher Education, last modified June 9, 2016, http://chronicle.com/article/How-Colleges-Train-for-Active/236750.

University police at **Institution A** have offered active shooter trainings to community groups on a by-request basis for four years. Training sessions are about one to two hours in length, depending on the number of questions audience members ask. Contacts estimate that over 1,700 total individuals attended trainings in August 2015.

"Preparedness and Awareness" Lecture at Institution A



First 10 Minutes

Trainers provide a definition of active shooting incidents. In particular, trainers clarify the difference between an active shooter and a shooting incident (e.g., a murder/suicide).



Remaining Time

Participants ask questions. Common questions from faculty include advice on how to protect themselves and their students during incidents.



Survey Participants to Identify Modifications for Trainings

Institution B conducts pre-class and post-class evaluations of trainings. Evaluations consist of 10 questions that ask participations to rate their confidence in responding to active shooters on a 1-10 scale. Pre-class and post-class assessments contain identical questions to determine how trainings impact participants' learning. Additionally, trainers provide attendees with one-page feedback forms. Contacts report generally positive responses but use feedback to adapt trainings. For example, trainers increased the amount of time they dedicate to exercises and scenario trainings.

Consider Implementing Mandatory Trainings to Deliver Emergency Protocol to All Campus Stakeholders

Currently, profiled institutions offer trainings on a "by request" basis. Administrators share that educating the whole campus population about safety is a challenge. In particular, contacts report challenges in training students because new students enter institutions each year, whereas the population of faculty and staff is more consistent each year.

At **Institution D**, campus police have offered active shooter trainings to requesting campus groups for seven to eight years. As a result, students only receive trainings if they are involved in organizations that request trainings (e.g., Greek life, sports teams). For the upcoming school year, administrators plan to involve more students in live trainings and also consider the implementation of mandatory trainings.



Additional Recommendations to Maintain Safety during Emergencies

- Encourage faculty and staff to attend first-aid trainings
- Explain to faculty their right to self-defend (e.g., when civilians may legally use force against assailants)
- Request that community members not use cell phones during emergencies to leave cell towers open for emergency calls
- Instruct community to only call 911 if they are physically near incidents; dispatch centers may be overwhelmed with calls from individuals not directly in danger

4) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- What policies do contacts enact to respond to active shooters on university campuses?
- How do administrators design new buildings and modify existing buildings to protect against active shooters?
- What are the responsibilities of faculty, staff, and students in the event of an active shooter on campus?
- What policies exist to respond to the aftermath of a shooting incident?
- How do administrators develop active shooter policies? What external parties do administrators consult with to create policies?
- What trainings do contacts provide to students, faculty, and staff in relation to active shooters on campus?
- What types of drills occur at contacted institutions relating to active shooters?
- How do administrators communicate active shooter policies and protocol to students, faculty, and staff?
- During an emergency, how do administrators communicate with individuals across campus?
- How do administrators communicate with off-campus constituents during and after shooting incidents?
- In what ways have active shooter policies evolved or changed over the past ten years?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (http://alerrt.org/)
- National Center for Campus Public Safety (http://www.nccpsafety.org/)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (http://nces.ed.gov/)
- Institutional websites

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed administrators in the campus police, emergency management, and public safety offices at the following institutions.

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Approximate Institutional Enrollment (Undergraduate/Total)	Classification
Institution A	South	23,900 / 28,700	Doctoral Universities (highest research activity)
Institution B	Mountain West	11,700 / 14,000	Doctoral Universities (higher research activity)
Institution C	Mountain West	9,500 / 12,100	Doctoral Universities (higher research activity)
Institution D	Pacific West	23,900 / 28,700	Doctoral Universities (highest research activity)