

# State of Connecticut

Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection

Commission on Fire Prevention and Control



## Model Procedures for Fire Department Response to Hostile Situations

Version 1.0

February 2013

*For Public Safety  
Use Only*

## Table of Contents

Purpose .....	3
Introduction .....	3
Model Baseline Policy .....	4
Model Operational Guidelines .....	4
Incident Priorities .....	4
Response .....	4
Response Modes .....	4
Safety Zones .....	4
Response Issues .....	4
Unified Command.....	5
Incidents with Active Fire .....	6
Appendix A: Active Shooter Profile .....	6
Appendix B: Author and Resources .....	7
Appendix C: Active Shooter JOB Aid Charts.....	8-9
Appendix D: Active Shooter DISPATCH Aid Charts .....	10-12
Appendix C: 9 Questions to ask to help prepare your response.....	13-15

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Connecticut's Fire Service Incident Commanders and first arriving units that respond to a hostile or violent situation or a situation that may become hostile or violent. The primary goal is to minimize the risk to fire/EMS personnel and to provide a common framework on which fire departments may build a local protocol tailored to their specific community.

## **Introduction**

Fire Department (F.D.) responses to hostile and violent situations are becoming more frequent. Such incidents include, but are not limited to, large scale complex incidents such as school shootings, workplace violence, and terrorist activities, as well as smaller scale/less complex incidents such as suicide attempts, single patient shootings and stabbings, domestic violence injuries, and assaults. The goal of this guide is to ensure coordination between agencies resulting in scene control, patient treatment, and evidence preservation while maintaining the safety of all emergency personnel.

One of the most serious and dangerous of these types of incidents is the Active Shooter incident (Appendix A). An active shooting event can occur at any time or any place. During the past several years, there have been active shooter incidents **where we shop** [2007 ... Gunman kills 5 and injures multiple others at a Utah mall], **where we exercise our free speech** [2011 ... Congresswoman Giffords critically shot while meeting with constituents at a market – 6 people killed and 3 others injured], **where we learn** [1999 ... Columbine High School 12 students and 1 teacher killed; 2007... Virginia Tech 32 killed and many others wounded; 2008 Northern Illinois University 5 students killed on campus], **and where we work** [2010 ... Gunman opens fire at Connecticut beer distributor, killing 8 people].

Most recently in 2012; the Newtown, CT elementary school shooting [...26 children and adults killed], the Webster, NY shooting of firefighters at the scene of a working fire [...4 firefighters shot, 2 fatally] and in Hoover, Alabama where firefighters responded to a medical and were shot at by the caller.

These incidents differ greatly from routine incidents due to an increase in safety requirements and the necessity of a unified command structure for incident mitigation and coordination of resources. Though it is the culture and nature of the fire service to go into any situation in order to save the lives of those they serve, hostile and violent situations require a different mindset in order to have a positive influence on the outcome.

The time has come for Fire Departments to evaluate various policies and procedures currently in place. The following model procedure, based on existing practices and sound principles, centers on the safety of fire department personnel, complements the concepts of unified command and mutual aid and generates a standard framework of operating guidelines that all departments will recognize. The role of the Emergency Telecommunicator (Dispatcher) will be critical to the outcome of any Hostile/Violent incident.

Many of the concepts used in this guide are similar to a Hazardous Materials incident response. A Hazardous Materials incident also has unseen dangers, can change rapidly, uses different response modes and requires a need for safety zones.

## **Model Baseline Policy<sup>1</sup>**

During a response to or arrival at a hostile/violent incident, the fire department will maintain a safe work environment for its firefighters and EMS personnel and will provide essential emergency and rescue services, in coordination with law enforcement, to the public as long as the safety of the responders is not endangered by the incident.

## **Model Operational Guidelines**

### ***Incident Priorities***

**As with all responses the following incident priorities will be safely achieved:**

1. Life Safety
2. Incident Stabilization
3. Property Conservation

### ***Response***

**If Fire Responders are aware of a hostile incident, fire units should consider one of two response modes:**

1. Stage for Police Department (P.D.) and wait for the scene to be secured.
2. Respond directly to the confirmed, secured scene and proceed with caution.

In all cases, the first arriving unit or Incident Command (IC) will collect as much information as possible and rapidly communicate that information to responding companies. This may require a windshield survey as an initial scene size-up. The first arriving unit or IC will make the decision of which response mode to use. If possible, the F.D. Incident Commander should monitor the P.D. frequencies being used for the incident.

If F.D. companies respond to an incident of an unknown nature and find themselves in a hostile/violent situation, they will immediately retreat to a safe location. Emergency radio traffic priority should be used. Dispatch should be advised of the need for rapid P.D. response.

**The primary responding agency shall be responsible for establishing command. As soon as possible, a Unified Command should be established (see Unified Command page 5).**

**For larger, more complex incidents, safety zones should be created.** Personnel shall understand that these zones are dynamic and can change as the incident develops.

- **Hot Zone** is an operational (geographic) area, consisting of the immediate incident location with a direct and immediate threat to personal safety or health (not a secure area).
- **Warm Zone** is an operational (geographic) area with a potential threat to personal safety or health. The warm zone typically exists between the hot zones and the cold zones. This zone is established and secured by PD. Rescue Teams may be able to enter and remove patients without providing treatment. Personnel shall wear vests or jackets for easy identification while in the warm zone.
- **Cold Zone** is an operational (geographic) area surrounding the warm zone where first responders can operate with minimal threat to personal safety or health. In this zone personnel can provide treatment to patients.

<sup>1</sup> When developing a specific department policy/procedure, all departments should use the NIMS model for incident command including the use of incident action plans (IAP), which will ensure proper documentation is done as the event occurs, greatly easing the recovery process.

## Fire Department response to Hostile Situations

### ***Response - Issues***

**NO SELF DISPATCH** – A common problem that occurs during unique emergency incidents is F.D. personnel making a decision to Self Dispatch themselves, often in personal or department issued vehicles. Often with the best intentions and nature of the fire service being to go into any situation in order to save lives, these persons become part of the problem rather than the solution. Safety and accountability issues are only some of the problems caused. If not formally requested, do not Self Dispatch.

### ***Unified Command***

Unified Command is the integration of command personnel from each responding agency to a multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency operational event to enhance communication, planning, and logistics for all responding agencies by the utilization of shared resources, knowledge, and expertise.

- Upon announcement of establishment of unified command, all various agency command personnel shall report to the Command Post (CP). The CP shall be established in a safe location, preferably located in the Cold Zone or at a remote location.
- In most cases P.D. should designate this area.
- Expand the **Incident Command Structure** as needed.
  - a. The size and complexity of the organizational structure, obviously, will be determined by the scope of the emergency.
  - b. The only change in using the ICS on a very large incident rather than a small incident is the method of growth of the emergency management organization to meet the increased needs within the Unified Command.
  - c. The determination to expand the organization by the Incident Commander would be done when a determination is made that the existing ICS structure is becoming insufficient.
- Command vehicles may be co-located to facilitate command post operations.
- Other agency representatives (e.g. DOT, School Administration, and Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS)) shall participate in Unified Command as needed.
- The IC shall develop an incident action plan.
- The IC shall designate a command operating channel.
- Designation of a Public Information Officer for the incident.
- Consideration of deploying an Incident Management Team.
- Consideration of a Critical Incident Debriefing Team response for responders.

### ***Incidents with Active Fire***

At hostile or violent incidents the coordination between agencies at the CP, with consideration of scene control, patient treatment, and evidence preservation while continually maintaining the safety of all emergency personnel, will ultimately determine F.D. actions toward extinguishment of active fires, regardless of size.

Incidents with an Active Fire situation should consider the following priorities:

- Active Fires will be allowed to burn until confirmation of a secure scene has occurred.
- Additional Fire Resources should be pre-staged, with consideration of the worst case scenario, should the Active Fire be allowed to burn with exposure and weather considerations.
- An Incident Action Plan should be developed specifically for fire attack.

### **Appendix A: Active Shooter Profile:**

An **active shooter** is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined space or other populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes.

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Active shooters usually will continue to move throughout building or area until stopped by law enforcement, suicide, or other intervention.

## **Appendix B: Author and Resources:**

*State of Connecticut -Model Procedures for Fire Department Response to Hostile Situations* was developed by William M Higgins, Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Administrator

### **The following available resources were used to create this document.:**

1) Department of Homeland Security – Active Shooter Training @

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS907/index.htm>

2) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) @

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/assets/reviewMaterials.pdf>

3) FEMA Guidelines for Haz Mat/WMD Response, Planning and Prevention Training @

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/hmep9-1801.pdf>

4) Fire Chief.com Active Shooter Job Aid @

<http://firechief.com/site-files/firechief.com/files/uploads/2012/07/active-shooter-job-aid.pdf>

### **Other State of Connecticut Model Response Protocols:**

*Model Procedures for Responding to a Package with Suspicion of a Biological Threat, 2012*

*Model Procedures for Response of Emergency Vehicles During Hurricanes and Tropical Storms, 2011*

*Model Procedures for Response to Collapse or Potential Collapse of Buildings, 2011*

Special thanks to personnel from the Connecticut Intelligence Center, Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Connecticut Fire Academy, and Connecticut Department of Public Health for their review and input of this document.

**Comments or Recommendations regarding this document should be sent Bill Higgins at [William.Higgins@ct.gov](mailto:William.Higgins@ct.gov) .**

# Appendix C: Active Shooter JOB Aid:




POST BLAST  
ACTIVE SHOOTER

# 3E

JOB AID

ENTER

EVALUATE

EVACUATE

COMMAND

EXPLOSIVE EVACUATION GUIDELINES			
Threat	Explosive Mass †	Building Evacuation ††	Outdoor Evacuation †††
Pipe bomb (metal or PVC)	5 lbs	70 ft	850 ft
Suicide belt	10 lbs	90 ft	1,080 ft
Suicide vest	20 lbs	110 ft	1,360 ft
Briefcase or backpack	50 lbs	150 ft	1,850 ft
Compact car (in trunk)	500 lbs	320 ft	1,500 ft
Full size car (in trunk)	1000 lbs	400 ft	1,750 ft
Passenger or cargo van	4,000 lbs	640 ft	2,750 ft
Small box van or truck	10,000 lbs	860 ft	3,750 ft
Large box van or water/fuel truck	30,000 lbs	1,240 ft	6,500 ft
semi-trailer	60,000 lbs	1,570 ft	7,000 ft

† Based on the amount of material (TNT equivalent) that could reasonably fit - variations are possible.  
 †† Governed by the ability of an unreinforced building to withstand severe damage or collapse.  
 ††† Governed by the greater fragment throw distance or glass breakage and falling glass hazard distance.



Metro Region  
EMS System

3E Job Aid  
Sponsored by:

- Metropolitan Emergency Services Board
- Minneapolis - Saint Paul Metropolitan Medical Response System




# COMMAND

Co-locate with Law Enforcement, EMS, and FIRE to form Unified Command

Command Objectives:

1. Threat neutralization or containment
2. Mark potential hazards
3. Establish and mark evacuation corridor(s)
4. Establish evacuation teams with force protection
5. Rapid evacuation of the injured

LAW ENFORCEMENT

EMS

FIRE

- First Arriving**
- Scene size-up, initial intel
  - Determine entry team/officer(s)
  - Designate team leader (if not single responder)
  - Enter scene/engage to prevent further life loss
- Arriving Supervisor:**
- Establish contact with team leader
  - Understand/assess situation
  - Assume command
  - Designate command post – maintain contact with team leader
  - Separate Command and Operations as soon as practical
  - Assign resources:
    - Threat neutralization
    - Victim search
  - Determine perimeters (inner and outer)

- First Arriving**
- Scene size-up report to dispatch
  - Communicate evacuation corridors
  - Do NOT co-locate operations and command staff
- Arriving Supervisor**
- Establish contact with the initial EMS/Fire commander
  - Understand/assess situation
  - Assume command
  - Update to scene size up. Request additional resources as appropriate
  - Fire Commander assigns:
    - Operations Division Chief
    - Exterior - apparatus shielding
    - Interior - evacuation team
    - Staging
    - Communications - monitor TAC channels

**ENTER**



**Caution**

- Windshield survey (360 degree 3D) for threats prior to and after arriving (duffel bags/backpacks, vehicles, dumpsters, out of place persons etc.)
- Assess for radiological agent post blast
- While exiting vehicle visually clear a 15 foot safe zone all directions
- After exit from vehicle extend visual sweep 75 feet in all directions - 'z sweep'
- Check staging areas, corridors and victim areas in a similar manner - mark hazards as appropriate
- Notify dispatch/supervisor if a hazard is identified and take appropriate action
- Maintain situational awareness for secondary threats
- Incident specific PPE:
  - Post Blast: dust mask, eye and skin protection
  - Active Shooter - body protection per instructions from incident commander

**Communicate**

- Establish communication with command and advise location of staging
- Report type of event, provide size up: number and severity of injured, hazards, resource needs
- Assure interoperable communication (common talkgroups), request talkgroups and assign as required

**Create**

- Unified command separate from operations
- Formal command post at a safe distance away from scene (initial liaison of agencies may occur close to event)
- Perimeters per law enforcement
- Patient Loading Area - patients into ambulances
- Create **Non - Injured and Walking Wounded Assembly Area**
- **Ambulance Staging**
- Safe cover: angle vehicles in relation to building to protect from a potential secondary device blast wave

**EVALUATE**



**Caution**

- Perpetrator or accomplice may be among victims
- Hazards: Secondary devices, gas, hazmat, electrical, structural, CBRN, fire, or inhaled dusts
- Make visual and physical body sweep of all the victims for weapons and other secondary threats

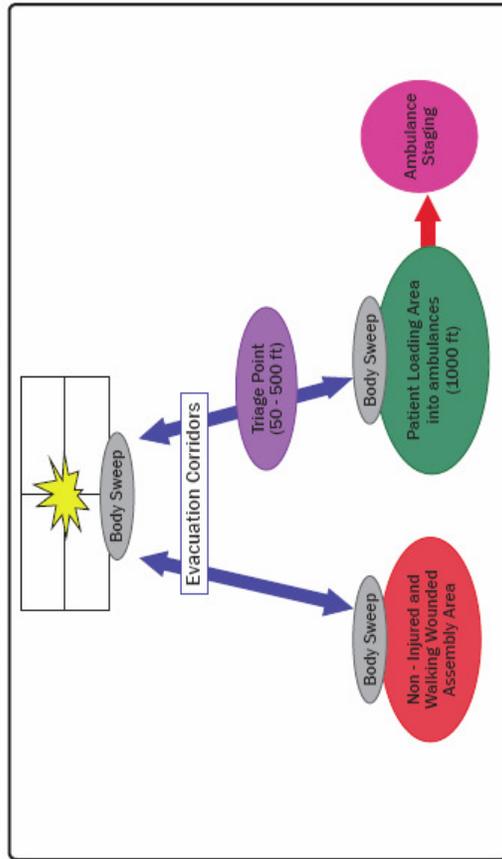
**Care**

- FIRST PRIORITY IS TO REMOVE PATIENTS FROM THE HAZARD AREA**
- Triage in immediate area only vs. entire scene.
  - Triage victims as alive or dead, do not touch or move dead victims (no CPR)
  - Unconscious with amputations or open head injury should be triaged last
  - Penetrating injuries can be small - examine trunk carefully when in a safer area
  - If awaiting **Evacuation Corridor** control hemorrhage with tourniquets or dressings

**EVACUATE**



- Move along most secure entry/exit route
- Mark **Evacuation Corridors** (police tape, spray paint, light sticks)
- Clear scene of non-injured and walking wounded along **Evacuation Corridors** to the **Non - Injured and Walking Wounded Assembly Area**
- Make visual and physical body sweep of all the victims for weapons and other secondary threats
- Request necessary drag/carry equipment for non-ambulatory
- Extricate the living rapidly
- Move patients along **Evacuation Corridors** to Patient Loading Area
- For delays in transport - establish intermediary **Triage Point** for critical interventions (including tourniquets and dressings for active bleeding) - load and go as rapidly as possible
- Request law enforcement to assist with body sweeps and impound personal property before transport



**ENTER**  
Active Shooter



**Concealment and Cover**

- Stay in safe areas out of any lines of potential fire
- Advance from staging as directed by staging supervisor/incident commander
- Consider using large vehicles (i.e. fire trucks) as cover

**Corridor**

- With law enforcement establish location of wounded and determine **Evacuation Corridors**
- Once corridor is secured evacuation team(s) may enter towards wounded with law enforcement cover
- Take in tourniquets and bandages, minimize treatment

**ENTER**  
Post Blast



**Cordon**

- Law enforcement defines secure rescue grid and work zone

**Corridor**

- All movement in and out of scene must follow established **Evacuation Corridors**
- Enter safely/most accessible area first - establish geographic divisions within operations section based on event scope
- Direct non - injured and walking wounded to exit along **Evacuation Corridors** to **Non - Injured and Walking Wounded Assembly Area**
- Follow in the footsteps of others in case of buried hazards

## **Appendix D: Active Shooter DISPATCH Aid:**

# **Active Assailant (Shooter) – Protocol 136**

### **Limited Use License**

By using these materials you (the “User”) agree to the following terms and conditions. The User is granted a non-transferable, non-exclusive, revocable, limited use license to use the following materials for emergency dispatching purposes as is. The User understands that it is solely responsible and liable for its use and reliance on the materials. The User may only use the most current version of these materials as regularly issued by the International/National Academies of Emergency Dispatch (the “IAED”). The User understands it is solely responsible for ensuring it is using the most current version. The User acknowledges and understands that the IAED is the sole and exclusive owner of the copyrights and other intellectual property rights associated with these materials. These materials are protected by United States and International copyright laws and treaties. All rights reserved. The User may not alter or modify the materials in any way and agrees to use them as is. The User may not use these materials commercially or for any monetary gain. The materials may not be incorporated into any third party products, computers, or CADs. The User understands and agrees that this Protocol may not cover all situations that might possibly present themselves during the course of an ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER) incident. In no event shall the IAED (and its affiliates) be liable for damages of any kind associated with the use of or reliance on these materials. There is no requirement to use this Protocol. The decision to implement the Protocol is at the sole discretion of the User agency. Rights not expressly granted to the User are reserved by the IAED.

### **International Academies of Emergency Dispatch HiRISC Policy**

The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch considers any situation necessitating the provision of these instructions to be an extremely High Risk-Inherent Situation Case (HiRISC), and believes that the trained Emergency Dispatcher (certified EMD, EFD, EPD) or their agency, making a good-faith attempt to provide these instructions, should not be held responsible for any bad outcomes. This should not be considered a legal interpretation, but a strong official opinion of the Council of Standards and the Board of Trustees of the IAED.

**136 ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER)**

**KEY QUESTIONS**

1. What **type of weapons** are involved? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. **(Gun)** How many shots have been fired?
  - b. **(Gun)** When was the last time you heard shots fired?
2. How many suspects are involved?
3. Where's the suspect now?
  - a. **(Suspect left/leaving/circulating)** How did s/he leave?
    - i. **(Vehicle)** Obtain the vehicle description. —
    - ii. What **direction** was s/he going?
  - b. Obtain the suspect's description. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Can you safely **evacuate/leave the building/area**?
 

**Yes** \_\_\_\_\_

**No or Unknown** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **(LOCKDOWN)** Where **exactly** are you?
  - a. What's the **best way to get to you**?
  - b. How many people are **with you**?
6. How many people are **in the building/area**?
7. Does the suspect appear to be wearing a **bulletproof vest or body armor**?
8. Did you **see** the suspect **carrying anything**?
  - a. **(Yes)** Describe it to me.
9. Did you **hear** the suspect **saying anything**?
  - a. **(Yes)** What did s/he say?
10. **(Suspect on scene)** Did s/he **arrive in a vehicle**?
  - a. **(Yes)** Obtain the **vehicle description**. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. **(Yes)** Where's the **vehicle** now?
11. Has the suspect **taken any hostages**?
  - a. **(Yes)** How many?
  - b. **(Yes)** Exactly **where** are they?
12. How many people are **injured**? **+**
13. Is there **anything else** you can **tell me**?

**POST-DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS**

- (Evacuation)**
- a. If the **assailant** (attacker) **leaves**, tell me **immediately**.
  - b. **Do not put yourself in any (more) danger**.
- (LOCKDOWN)**
- c. If the **assailant** (attacker) is **nearby**, keep very quiet and stay out of sight.

- S-1 \* Do computer check.
- S-2 \* Follow department policy regarding the notification of department administration, specialty units (SWAT), and bordering agencies.

DLS	* Link to ☎ X-1 unless:	
Stay on the Line	_____	X-2
Urgent Disconnect	_____	X-3
Safety Disconnect	_____	X-4
Evacuation	_____	S-1
LOCKDOWN	_____	S-2

LEVELS	#	DETERMINANT DESCRIPTORS	➔ C E G K M O	CODES
<b>E</b>	1	ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER)		136-E-1

DESCRIPTION ESSENTIALS	Determinant Suffixes	Axioms
<p><b>Weapons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gun (pistol, rifle, shotgun)</li> <li>• Knife (long, short)</li> <li>• Club (bat, tire iron)</li> <li>• Other (glass, bottle, vehicle)</li> <li>• Explosive (bomb)</li> </ul> <p><b>Person(s)</b> (armed suspects first)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Clothing</li> <li>• Age (DOB)</li> <li>• Demeanor (calm, emotional, intoxicated)</li> <li>• Name/Relationship</li> <li>• Address/Phone number</li> <li>• Build/Height/Weight</li> <li>• Hair color/length/style</li> <li>• Other identifiable characteristics (facial hair, accent, tattoos, piercings)</li> <li>• Eye color</li> <li>• Complexion</li> <li>• Hat</li> <li>• Shoes</li> <li>• Jewelry</li> </ul> <p><b>Vehicle (CYMBALS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Color</li> <li>• Year</li> <li>• Make/Model</li> <li>• Body style</li> <li>• Additional (paintwork, damage)</li> <li>• License</li> <li>• State/Province</li> </ul> <p><b>Boat</b> (Vessel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size</li> <li>• Color</li> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Registration number</li> <li>• Type (inboard, outboard, sail, cruiser, speed, racing, pontoon, ship)</li> </ul>	<p>The suffix codes help to delineate the specific type of weapon:</p> <p><b>C</b> = Club  <b>E</b> = Explosive  <b>G</b> = Gun  <b>K</b> = Knife  <b>M</b> = Multiple weapon types  <b>O</b> = Other</p> <p><b>ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER)</b></p> <p>An armed person who has used any type of weapon to inflict deadly physical force on others and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.</p> <p><b>LOCKDOWN</b></p> <p>A response utilized by schools, businesses, or individuals that secures people in a facility or room to minimize their exposure to an ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER).</p> <p><b>Rules</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>ASSAULT</b> situations in which a suspect does not have unrestricted access to additional victims should be handled on Protocol 106.</li> <li>2. <b>Evacuating</b>, if safe to do so, is the best action callers can take to save lives. However, if this is not possible, instructions for callers to go into a <b>LOCKDOWN</b> are critical.</li> <li>3. <b>Hostage situations</b> developing in the course of an <b>ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER)</b> scenario should be handled on Protocol 136.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individuals who are found by an <b>ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER)</b> and cannot get away should be <b>mentally prepared to fight for their lives</b> by using weapons, throwing objects, acting aggressively, and yelling.</li> <li>2. <b>Most victims</b> of the Columbine High School massacre were found in the library where students were <b>unable to evacuate or go into a LOCKDOWN</b>.</li> <li>3. The term “<b>active shooter</b>” is a phrase coined by law enforcement to describe <b>armed assailants who use deadly force</b> on individuals while having <b>unrestricted access</b> to additional victims. These assailants <b>commonly use firearms</b>, hence the term “active shooter”; however, <b>any weapon could be used</b>.</li> </ol> <p><b>NTOA Statement</b></p> <p>NTOA (National Tactical Officers Association) cautions against a change in police response based solely on a time delay of when shots were reportedly last heard. This time delay, by itself, does not negate the need for an immediate response. The perpetrator may be using, or preparing to use, other weapons (knives, IEDs, etc.), or her/his shots may not be audible. If the threat’s location is not known, officers should begin searching or rescue wounded victims. Officers should transition to a hostage/barricade situation, if necessary, based only on the totality of circumstances.</p>

**136 ACTIVE ASSAILANT (SHOOTER)**

## **Appendix D: 9 QUESTIONS to help prepare your Departments response to Hostile Situations:**

These nine questions can help you prepare for your department's response to a violent incident.

**1. Do you use risk/benefit for every call?** *"With incidents where there is a threat of, or actual violence, it must be remembered that a judgment is required to ensure that risks to personnel are not out of proportion to the benefits to be gained from achieving a given task" (Labour Research Department, 2005). Risk Management is not new to the fire service. The balance of perhaps limited potential benefit in light of substantial risk should be foremost in every responder's mind.*

**2. Do you have an effective relationship (both at the 'boss' level and 'street' level) with the law enforcement agencies in your community?** *As noted by the Columbine Review Commission (2001), familiarity of personnel and roles prior to an incident through training and planning exercises provides for better communication and operation during the event. Fire Department personnel should have access to, and use, law enforcement intelligence information in order to preplan response to incidents. This may include information regarding domestic terrorism, gang violence, known or suspected drug factories and/or houses.*

**3. How good is the information you get from your Dispatcher?** *Response to an incident of violence carries significant uncertainties. The ability of the dispatch staff to reduce the uncertainty while increasing the level of information provided is critical. It is also helpful for responders to have the ability to communicate on a specific, shared, common, radio frequency to remove the potential for message*

*corruption as it is passed through another person. Dispatch staff should critically and carefully monitor the operations radio channel of personnel responding to and operating at incidents of violence and perform Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) checks on a prescribed interval.*

**4. Do you allow members to ‘first respond’ directly to the scene?** *Many jurisdictions have response and deployment plans that include the dispatch of individual first responders and/or a single person in a response vehicle. This should be prohibited or at least limited to the extent possible. The ability of a single person to react to an act of violence is limited. It may not even be possible to retreat. Responding and deploying in a group provides added protection, awareness, and visibility.*

**5. Does your law enforcement agency use an incident management system?** *Each agency should strive to ensure that the IMS used in that community is applied as uniformly as possible. Fire departments should take a leadership role in assisting their law enforcement compatriots, particularly at the street or service delivery level, to understand and apply the IMS.*

**6. When responding to a potential violent incident, do you seek out a law enforcement officer when you arrive?** *Fire department personnel should communicate, face to face, directly with the law enforcement component on scene. Direct face-to-face communication, with clear understanding of the hazards, risks associated, potential outcomes, and planned actions on the part of each agency should precede any fire department response into a hazard area.*

**7. Have you told your fire officers/personnel that it is OK to leave the scene if things go ugly?** *If fire department operations have commenced and violence erupts, fire service personnel should consider leaving the scene until the law enforcement component has stabilized the situation.*

**8. Is there a point where we don't respond or limit our response to violent incidents?** *Fire department personnel may not respond into a hazard area due to the potential for additional violence or because the situation is not yet under control. Some responders and organizations fear their community will view this in a negative light. A 2005 Labour Research Department report stated "the key issue here is the extent to which fire crews can make decisions when dealing with an incident and with the confidence that they will be backed up by senior management if criticized by the local community or in the press for leaving a fire to burn or holding back from attending (responding to) an incident." It is imperative for the department leadership to establish relationships with key stakeholders in the community to ensure they understand and support the response protocol.*

**9. What does your uniform look like?** *Uniform insignia, style, and color should be of sufficient difference that fire department personnel would not be mistaken for police officers.*

**NOTES:**