



Active Shooter: The First Minute

When a school, office or even a Naval Reserve Training Center is the target of an active shooter there is little time to think about what actions to take. Training and communications need to be thought out in advance and actions must be instantaneous, based on practice and simple procedures. On Wednesday the FBI released timeline information for the Chattanooga shooting...7 minutes and the shooting at two locations was over. This is not unusual; an [FBI report](#) released in late 2013 explains that active shooter incidents usually are over in a matter of minutes. The report states: “*civilians often had to make life and death decisions, and, therefore, should be engaged in training and discussions on decisions they may face.*” 70% of all shootings are over before police arrive on scene. This means that plans and procedures cannot be written without taking into account the immediate actions of the occupants of a facility. A plan that makes a teacher or an employee in a large building a passive bystander during a lockdown is missing a critical component of the plan. Telling someone to lock themselves in a room and wait misses the opportunity to reduce response time and save lives.

A responding police or medical unit whose situational awareness is limited to what the outside of a building looks like may take too long to engage the shooter or aid victims. Even a minute or two in a parking lot is too long...the time from arrival to entry must be seconds, not minutes. Responding units should be getting real time intelligence before they arrive. A dispatcher or control center can be giving directions such as “*you’re going to enter the door by the cafeteria, south side closest to Jones Blvd, take the hallway to your left and after 100 feet turn right...this is the reported area...we have both medical and security alerts from people in this hallway*”

While this might sound unrealistic that is only the case because many active shooter plans end when the lockdown happens. We are limiting ourselves by using 20th century strategies in the 21st century. There was a time when instant communications by individuals didn’t exist and the best tools for situational awareness were intrusion alarms, cameras and motion detectors. Today everyone carries a powerful mobile computing device that can transmit location, status reports, imagery and location. An alarm telling you a door is open might tell you there is a problem but it can’t tell you what the problem is or if it’s moving, camera coverage is static and expensive. A person with a Smartphone can do all these things plus add context, updates, provide real time tactical intelligence and situational awareness....real time.

We have the ability to put tools in the hands of office workers, teachers, shop keepers, etc. to make this scenario a reality. Using Smartphone technology and an integrated dashboard that displays the floor plan and office or classroom status a control room gets a visual display of this exact situation. [I’m Safe for Schools](#) is a patent pending system designed to make simple actions in the first minute shave minutes off the response time. We are not talking about the response to the parking lot; we are focused on the response to the room or area in crisis.

The first minute needs to transition from “lock down and wait” to “lock down and guide the response.” This involves training and deploying Smartphone tools that provide complete situation awareness for responders before they arrive on the scene.

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