



IAFF Position Statement: Active Shooter Events

The emerging threat of terrorism and asymmetric warfare, specifically small unit “active shooter” and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, is a concern for the fire service. An attack by radicals armed with weapons in public areas, such as schools, shopping malls, churches or any other locations where people congregate is a real threat to a sense of security and daily lives.

An Active Shooter event is an event involving one or more suspects who participate in an ongoing, random, or systematic shooting spree, demonstrating an intent to harm others with the objective of mass murder.

Given the recent spate of what has become known as “active shooter” scenarios unfolding across the nation, fire and law enforcement departments, regardless of size or capacity, must find ways to marshal appropriate and effective responses to these events. Therefore, local jurisdictions should build sufficient public safety resources to deal with active shooter scenarios.

It is imperative that local fire and law enforcement departments have common tactics, common communications capabilities and a common lexicon for seamless, effective operations. Local fire and law enforcement departments should establish standard operating procedures to deal with these unusual, highly volatile, and extraordinarily dangerous scenarios. Standard operating procedures should include at minimum the following objectives.

- 1) Use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in particular the Incident Command System (ICS). In accordance with NIMS guidance, Fire and Law Enforcement Officers should establish a single Command Post (CP) and establish Unified Command (UC).
- 2) Use of nationally accepted standards and operational protocols including the number and type of response personnel, training level, personal protective equipment, operational environment, and scope of practice.
- 3) Use of the Rescue Task Force (RTF) concept for on scene response. An RTF is a set of teams deployed to provide point of wound care to victims where there is an on-going ballistic or explosive threat. These teams treat, stabilize, and remove the injured in a rapid manner, while wearing Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE) and under the protection of a Law Enforcement (Police) Department (PD). An RTF team should include at least one ALS provider.
- 4) Provide appropriate protective gear to personnel exposed to risks. Firefighters will not carry weapons.
- 5) Law Enforcement and Fire Departments should train together. Initial and ongoing training and practice are imperative to successful operations.
- 6) Use of common communications terminology. Fire department personnel must understand common law enforcement terms to such as Cleared, Secured, Cover, Concealment, Hot Zone/Cold Zone and related terms (red, green etc.), and other.