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LESSON LEARNED

Active Shooter Response Operations: Clarifying Lockdown Procedures

SUMMARY

Emergency managers should consider clarifying lockdown procedures for occupants of municipal or private buildings. This will help ensure that occupants do not allow unauthorized individuals into a secured area during an active shooter incident.

DESCRIPTION

The State of Washington Homeland Security Region 3 sponsored and conducted the Courthouse Chaos Active Shooter Drill in conjunction with the Thurston County, Washington, Emergency Management Agency on September 25, 2010, at the Lewis County Law and Justice Center (LCLJC) in Chehalis, Washington. Fifty-three representatives from three local law enforcement agencies and four legal organizations participated in the exercise. The Thurston County Emergency Management Agency conducted the drill to test the county's ability to respond to an active shooter incident at the LCLJC. In addition, the Thurston County Emergency Management Agency wanted to test the ability of LCLJC tenants and response personnel to utilize a variety of emergency messaging technologies during the exercise. The drill included three scenarios in the courthouse: the first involved an individual brandishing a knife, the second simulated an altercation between two men, and the third involved multiple active shooters.

During the active shooter drill, a female accomplice of one of the active shooters requested access to a courthouse shelter after it was locked down. The employees in the shelter were unaware that she was an accomplice of the shooter and believed that she was in danger. As a result, they allowed her to enter the shelter. Once inside, the female accomplice opened the secured shelter for the active shooter. This could have escalated the scenario and put more lives at risk. The after-action report recommends that the circumstances to allow individuals into a shelter after it is locked down be clarified.

Emergency managers should consider clarifying lockdown procedures for occupants of municipal or private buildings. This will help ensure that occupants do not allow unauthorized individuals into a secured area during an active shooter incident.

CITATION

Homeland Security Region 3, Washington. *Courthouse Chaos Active Shooter Drill (CCD) After-Action Report Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)*. 21 Dec 2010.
<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=48533>

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