The updated Cal OES Active Shooter Awareness Guidance

ADA National Network/FEMA Webinar Series
January 12, 2017

L. Vance Taylor
Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs
Vance.Taylor@CalOES.ca.gov
Office: (916) 845-8202

Scott McCartney
Active Shooter Training Coordinator
Scott.McCartney@CalOES.ca.gov
Office: (916) 845-8619

Presentation Outline

**Vance**
- Introduction
- The Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN)
- Project Background
- An Integrated Guidance

**Scott**
- The Active Shooter Awareness Guidance

**Vance**
- Summary
- Conclusion
Cal OES – Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN)

Established in 2008 to identify the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs before, during, and after a disaster.

OAFN integrates disability needs and resources into emergency management systems and offers guidance to emergency managers, planners, service providers.

Inland Regional Center

• On December 2, 2015, terrorists attacked the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California:
  – 2 active shooters attacked;
  – Initial reports indicated it was an attack on individuals with disabilities; and
  – 14 people were killed while 22 more were injured.
Leadership met to address the following:

- Lack of access and functional needs-specific considerations with an active shooter attack
- “Run, Hide, Fight” video is not integrated

A Lack of Integration

Individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs:

- Go to work;
- Shop at malls;
- Stay in hotels; and
- Get together everywhere there is the potential for an active shooter attack.

And yet...
The Cal OES Active Shooter Awareness Workgroup

• To develop guidance that addressed access and functional needs:
  – The Cal OES Active Shooter Awareness Workgroup was created;
  – Partners include the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Law Enforcement, Regional Centers, the California Specialized Training Institute, the Independent Living Centers and emergency managers.

Key Considerations

• In working to develop guidance, there were key considerations:
  – **Audience.** Who was the guidance for?
  – **Scope.** Would we be addressing disability generally or specifically by type?
  – **Level of detail.** Did we want to be broad or prescriptive?
The Role of Law Enforcement

• The guidance needed to strike a balance:
  – **Tactics.** Law Enforcement uses specific tactics when responding to active shooter attacks.
  – **Situational awareness.** The guidance stresses the importance addressing access and functional needs before, during and after response.

Scope

• The guidance informs three audiences:
  – Workforce management;
  – Individuals with disabilities and access or functional needs; and
  – Law enforcement/first responders.
Integration

• Upon completing its process, the agency had to make a decision:
  – Release the guidance as a stand-alone product

  Or...

  – Integrate the new document into the existing Cal OES guidance

An Easy Decision

• Cal OES does not believe in having separate guidance documents:
  – We believe in integration.
  – One team, one fight; one document.
The Finished Product

Profile of an Active Shooter

• It is important to understand:

  – An active shooter is an individual(s) actively engaged in killing people in a confined area;
  – Active shooter situations are unpredictable; and
  – Typically, law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm.
Elements of an Active Shooting

- Individuals threatened by an active shooter (s) have to function with little to no warning:
  - Active shooter environments can push individuals to their limits.
  - Sensory considerations are relevant.
  - Understanding the active shooter environment enables individuals to prepare to act.

Taking Action in an Active Shooter Environment
Run (Evacuate: 1 of 4)

• **The ideal response to an active shooter situation is to evacuate:**
  - Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow;
  - Leave all non-lifesaving belongings behind;
  - Help others escape, (if possible use “buddy system”); and
  - Follow the instructions of law enforcement.

Run (Evacuate: 2 of 4)

• **Workplace management.**
  
  *Managers need to ensure staff is prepared to evacuate and should:*

  - Integrate accommodations for individuals with disabilities or persons with access and functional needs;
  - Establish a “buddy system”; and
  - Ensure everyone is accounted for inside and outside of the workplace at all times.
Run (Evacuate: 3 of 4)

- **Individuals with a disability or access and functional needs.** Individuals with access and functional needs are most aware of their needs and should:
  - Inform management regarding gaps in the organization’s emergency plans;
  - Have an accessible escape route in mind specific to their respective needs.

Run (Evacuate: 4 of 4)

- **Law enforcement/first responders.** Law enforcement’s primary responsibility will be to eliminate the threat. However, they should:
  - Understand that, depending on any one individual’s disability, they may not be able to understand or follow commands;
  - Ask how they can assist during evacuation;
  - Give concrete, plain directions; and
  - Use visual or gestural cues to assist during evacuation.
Hide (1 of 5)

- When evacuating is not possible, individuals should hide for safety. Everyone should consider the following:
  - Hiding places should be out of the active shooter’s view;
  - An ideal hiding place will not restrict an options for movement; and
  - The area should provide protection if shots are fired.

Hide (2 of 5)

- To minimize the chances of being found:
  - Silence cell phones (turn off vibrate);
  - Turn off any source of noise (i.e., computers, radios, televisions, assistive devices);
  - Pull down shades or coverings;
  - Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks); and
  - Remain quiet.
Hide (3 of 5)

- **Workplace management.**
  Management should integrate hiding within their training and:
  - Reiterate that concealment could prevent injury or death;
  - Create "safe rooms"; and
  - Include concealment in emergency preparedness plans.

Hide (4 of 5)

- **Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.** Some may find it hard to hide (e.g. individuals who use wheelchairs):
  - Identify areas to hide at work;
  - Plan with colleagues/"buddies" to help with concealment;
  - Use assistive equipment to secure hiding spots; and
  - Practice self-soothing techniques to remain calm.
Hide (5 of 5)

- Law enforcement/first responders. Need to use direct, plain language to announce when it is safe and consider that:
  - Some individuals may not be able to hear or understand verbal instructions;
  - Some may require assistance to exit their place of hiding;
  - They should always ask individuals if they need assistance before grabbing or moving them; and
  - Individuals should not be separated from their personal care assistant, service animal or assistive device(s).

Fight

- When evacuating or hiding are not options and an individual's life is in imminent danger, the last resort is to disrupt the active shooter(s). This action should be decisive and encompass the following:
  - Improvising weapons (e.g. fire extinguisher);
  - Yelling and throwing items;
  - Fighting within their ability; and
  - Having a “Not Today” attitude (deciding that today is not the day they are going to die).
Fight (continued)

• Workplace management. Management should underscore the importance of thinking creatively and being committed when physically taking action against an active shooter.

• Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need. Individuals should consider using all resources to attack an active shooter (e.g. a power chair to ram an active shooter).

• Law enforcement/first responders. Law enforcement and first responders need to avoid confusing someone taking action against an active shooter with an assailant.

When Law Enforcement Arrives

• Law enforcement’s role is to stop the shooter. Remember:

  – Officers will usually arrive in teams of four and wear tactical gear;
  – They may be armed with rifles, shotguns, etc.; and
  – Officers will shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.
Assisting Law Enforcement

- Individuals can assist law enforcement by doing the following:
  - Putting down all items;
  - If possible, raising their hands and spreading fingers;
  - Keeping hands visible;
  - Avoiding quick movements toward officers; and
  - Avoiding asking officers for help or directions.

Law Enforcement Response

- **Workplace management.** *Management should how law enforcement will respond and indicate that:*
  - There may be loud noises;
  - There may be smoke that irritates the eyes and throat; and
  - Individuals may be pushed to the ground by for their safety.

- **Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.** *Individuals need to understand the importance of:*
  - Remaining calm;
  - Staying put until cleared by law enforcement;
  - Following officers’ instructions; and
  - Using the “Buddy System”
Communicating with Law Enforcement

• Workplace management. Management should communicate emergency plans with law enforcement and:
  – Law enforcement should learn about the disability needs in the community.
  – Management should institute a “roll call” to accounting for staff.

Communicating with Law Enforcement (continued)

• *Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.* All witnesses will be held and interviewed.
• When possible, communicate the following to 911 operators:
  – Description/Location/Number of shooters;
  – Type of weapons being used;
  – Number of potential victims; and
  – AFN-specific needs.
Effective Communication (1 of 6)

When communicating with individuals with a disability or an access or functional needs during active shooter situations, consider the following tips:

- **Blind/Low Vision**
  - Announce your presence;
  - Avoid grabbing or guiding them without permission;
  - Offer your arm; and
  - Advise of any obstacles (i.e. stairs, doorways, narrow passages, ramps, etc.).

Effective Communication (2 of 6)

- **Cognitive Disabilities. Signs of elevated stress:**
  - Fleeting eye contact;
  - Repetitive or self-stimulation behaviors;
  - Self-injurious behaviors;
  - Non-responsiveness;
  - Aggression;
  - Running away; and
  - Covering ears or screeching.

- **Cognitive Disabilities. To enhance communication:**
  - Make eye contact;
  - Be patient;
  - Speak slowly, use plain and concrete language;
  - Give one-step direction – wait two seconds and repeat;
  - Do not touch; and
  - Model the expected response.
Effective Communication
(3 of 6)

• *Deaf or Hard of Hearing.*
  – Flick lights to get the individual's attention;
  – Establish eye contact with the individual, not with the interpreter;
  – Use facial expressions as visual cues; and
  – Offer pencil/paper for written communication.

Effective Communication
(4 of 6)

• *Mental/Behavioral Health.*
  – Speak slowly and calmly;
  – Be straightforward, clear and brief;
  – Ask or state one command at a time; and
  – Have a forward leaning body position to show interest.
**Physical Disabilities**
- Ask how you can help before assisting;
- Ask the individual if he/she is able to stand or walk with or without the use of a mobility device; and
- Sit or kneel to speak to the person at eye level.

**Pregnant Women**
- Be as calming as possible as expectant mothers may become anxious during emergencies;
- Provide reassurance of assistance and meeting identified needs; and
- Provide fluids once she has arrived to a safe location.
Conclusion

• Integration
  – Cal OES is committed to promoting the safety and security of the whole community;
  – We fail or we succeed, but we do it together;
  – Download, read and use the guidance at: http://www.caloes.ca.gov/Cal-OES-Divisions/Access-Functional-Needs

Questions?

L. Vance Taylor
Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs
Vance.Taylor@CalOES.ca.gov
Office: (916) 845-8202

Scott McCartney
Active Shooter Training Coordinator
Scott.McCartney@CalOES.ca.gov
Office: (916) 845-8619