

XpertHR Offers Advice to Prepare for an Active Shooter Event in Workplace

HR Executives Can Play a Key Role in Implementing Policies, Procedures

NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ (June 17, 2016) – Active shooter events are devastating and unpredictable, said Melissa Gonzalez Boyce, a legal editor for XpertHR. Unfortunately, the frequency of these incidents has increased, often occurring in a place of business, she said.

“Due to recent events, I believe more organizations are seeing the need for policies to prepare their employees for such an unthinkable event,” Boyce explained. “While it may be an uncomfortable topic, organizations should implement measures to increase employee awareness of and improve the chances of preventing and responding to an active shooter event.”

“HR executives should bring the need for active shooter policies to the table,” said Boyce, who has authored a six-step process for organizations to prepare for the “unthinkable.”

Step 1: Implement a "Zero Tolerance" Workplace Violence Policy

Adopting a "zero tolerance" policy demonstrates an employer's commitment to violence prevention, said Boyce. The best policies define workplace violence and provide illustrative examples of prohibited behaviors and a list of objects considered prohibited weapons. To better enforce zero tolerance, companies also need to develop a process to report suspicious or threatening behaviors, she said.

Step 2: Create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

The effectiveness of any active shooter preparedness program is enhanced with the creation of an emergency action plan, Boyce said. The goal of any effective EAP is to better prepare employees to respond to an emergency, such as an active shooter situation, and help minimize loss of life.

Step 3: Offer Training to Employees

The best way to prepare employees on how to react quickly and effectively in an active shooter situation, as well as give them more peace of mind, Boyce said, is to offer active shooter training.

Step 4: Conduct Active Shooter Drills

Most workplaces have evacuation drills for fires while few have exercises for active shooter events, Boyce said. “Active shooter drills are the best way to prepare employees on how to react quickly and will allow employees to practice getting to escape routes.”

Step 5: Perform a Safety and Security Audit

An employer should perform a comprehensive audit to identify and correct any gaps in security or other safety issues. Boyce recommended that employers seek the input of local law enforcement during such an audit.

Step 6: Develop a Plan to Manage the Aftermath of an Active Shooter Incident

Companies should develop a plan to manage the consequences of an active shooter incident, Boyce said, noting that a key element would call for HR and/or management to conduct post-event assessments and activities in coordination with local law enforcement.

HR executives can be champions for such policies and measures, even though the odds of such an event happening are rare, she said. “They should air on the side of caution and prepare their workforce.”

What’s more, Boyce said, “The failure to prepare the workplace for such a situation may prove devastating.”

For additional resources, including FAQs, policies and a comprehensive [How To](#) document, visit www.xperthr.com

Media inquiries:

Mary Heimstead

mary@stratcommunications.com

715-577-2828