



## THREAT SUPPRESSION, INCORPORATED

THREAT SUPPRESSION®

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**Presentation Title:** *“Active Assailant Command and Control: Beyond the 60-Minutes”*

### **Presentation Description:**

Active shooter events continue to plague the United States. Since 2009, the number of active shooter events in the United States has tripled and the lethality has increased 600 percent. The vast majority of public safety active shooter response training focus on the critical actions to take in the first 60 minutes of the event. These actions primarily focus on threat neutralization and patient care. Very few training courses focus on the aftermath of these events. However, more and more public scrutiny now focuses on the ways that public safety agencies respond after threat neutralization and patient care.

This course examines numerous aspects of active shooter response beyond the basics of tactical response. This course looks at the concept of mass hysteria, uninjured victim care and support, creation of notification and family reunification centers, mass notification, crisis communication, crime scene considerations, elected official involvement, *ad hoc* memorials, permanent memorials, funeral services, and business continuity of operations. This course provides public safety officials with key items to consider during the initial aftermath of an active shooter event.

In the first hour of this course, the presenter will examine lessons learned from more than 50 published after-action reports from major active assailant events in the United States in the last 20 years. Unfortunately, the reports show that responders continue to make the same mistakes repeatedly at each event. The presenter will specifically review several after-action reports of the shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. As the Texas House of Representatives stated in their investigative report, *“We found systemic failures and egregiously poor decision making. The role of incident commander was not performed by anyone, despite the large number of highly trained law enforcement officers on scene and inside the school.”*

The presenter will also discuss numerous command considerations, including marking doors and areas of buildings during law enforcement clears, the “command bus problem”, and the use of “Dirtbox” aircraft. There are components that are critical to the success of witness interview and debrief locations. This course examines case law to see if it is legal to detain a witness for interview. In addition, this course looks at different witness interview best practices, including documentation and repeat interviews. This course also looks at best practice recommendations for creating and managing Notification/Family Reunification Centers. These best practices are based on lessons learned from multiple active shooter events, and recommendations from the United States’ Department of Justice Crime Victim Services Division.

Active shooter events have demonstrated numerous crime scene considerations. In this course, the necessity and distance requirements for cordons will be discussed. In addition, there is a need for secondary crime scene documentation for all personal effects left behind by people fleeing. The instructor will give examples from active shooter events at malls, airports, and hospitals to demonstrate the complexity magnitude of personal effects left behind.

Human nature has taught us that during times of crisis, adults can handle many stressors. One stressor that they cannot handle is the lack of the ability to communicate with loved ones. This lack of communication often launches adults in full panic mode. This lack of communication also leads to a mass influx of worried family members that respond to the scene or to area hospitals. Approximately 30% of all 9-1-1 calls during an active shooter event come from worried family members who are remote from the event location. Research by the National Transportation Safety Board has found that for every passenger there are eight people who are intimately worried and concern about the wellbeing of that passenger.

There are many considerations involving the location of the shooting after the event. After many significant active shooter events, the locations have either undergone extensive renovations or were demolished. However, there are numerous considerations when deciding what to do with a location after an event. In many cases, the families of the decedents and the families of the survivors will have conflicting requests for the location.

Active shooter events have created lasting psychological damage. Universally, every location that had an event said they were grossly unprepared for the immediate response of trained crisis mental health counselors. In addition, the psychological damage can last for years, with some locations, such as Virginia Tech, establishing a permanent Office of Victim Recovery and Support. Numerous missteps by public safety commanders and local government officials have resulted in significantly more psychological damage than necessary. In some events, the survivors have stated local government officials caused more psychological damage than the event itself.

Sentinel active shooter events also spawn truthers and hoaxers. Truthers believe an event happened, but do not believe the official explanation. Hoaxers do not believe an event ever happened. In nearly all cases, hoaxers believe the events were staged by the federal government to further a political agenda. This course will teach commanders and government officials how to curtail the truther and hoaxer movement. In many cases, well intended actions by government officials simply fed into the truther and hoaxer movement. In all cases, the victim's families were relentlessly pursued and harassed by truthers and hoaxers.

Active shooter events cause economic disasters. After the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech, the university had to pay more than \$40 million for safety and security upgrades, lawsuit payouts, renovations, legal expenses, survivors care, and much more. The City of Orlando paid more than \$25 million just for the investigation of the Pulse Nightclub shooting. The medical bills for the Pulse Nightclub victims are estimated to exceed \$390 million. The total cost of the Pulse Nightclub shooting is estimated to cost \$1 billion. The medical bills for the Route 91 shooting in Las Vegas are estimated to exceed \$600 million. The total cost of the Route 91 shooting is estimated to exceed \$4 billion.

**Presentation Objectives:**

1. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe 13 common mistakes described in numerous active shooter after-action reports.
2. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe the concept of mass hysteria and the influences that this has on active shooter events.
3. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe the differences between a Notification Center, Family Reunification Center, and a Family Assistance Center.
4. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe case law regarding detention of witnesses at crime scenes.
5. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe considerations for decedent notification at active shooter events.
6. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe considerations for *ad hoc* memorial management, funeral services, and permanent memorials.
7. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to discuss the concept that a disaster begets a disaster, and methods to address this phenomenon.
8. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to discuss multiple crime scene considerations.
9. At the conclusion of this program attendees will be able to describe the difference between truthers and hoaxers and ways to help manage the problem.
10. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will learn about various security “solutions” available for sale, and how many of these solutions significantly decrease safety and security.
11. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to discuss lessons learned from the long-term effects of the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, 2016 Pulse Nightclub shooting, 2017 Hollywood International Airport shooting, 2018 Douglas High School shooting, and the 2019 University of North Carolina at Charlotte shooting.

**Resources Needed:**

Classroom, computer, projector, audio

**Time Needed:**

Eight hours to two days