



THREAT SUPPRESSION, INCORPORATED

THREAT SUPPRESSION®

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Response to the Active Assailant in High-Rises and Large Buildings

Executive Summary:

This course examines the operational problems created when an active assailant attacks inside a vertical or unusually complex structure. Distance, elevation, restricted access, unfamiliar building systems, delayed medical access, and competing rescue demands can change the response before public-safety personnel reach the threat. The four-hour program combines high-rise and large-building case studies with a practical framework for response, entry, vertical transit, assault, victim rescue, command, building systems, and tactical emergency medical services. It is designed for public-safety leaders and responders who must turn building-specific vulnerabilities into coordinated operational priorities.

THE CHALLENGE: A high-rise or large building attack expands the problem while compressing the available time. Responders must reach the threat, move vertically or horizontally large distances, manage complex access and building systems, rescue victims, and coordinate command operations in a structure that is often unfamiliar to local personnel.

Course Overview:

Length	Four hours, with additional time available for site-specific discussion or applied planning when requested.
Format	Instructor-led lecture, facilitated discussion, case studies, building-systems analysis, and a five-phase high-rise response framework. Available in person or as a live webinar.
Audience	Law-enforcement supervisors and commanders, SWAT and tactical teams, fire and EMS personnel, TEMS providers, emergency managers, 9-1-1 personnel, public-safety officials, building security, facility managers, military commanders, and government officials. This is not available for the general public.
Class Size	Host-specific and scalable. Final limits depend on room capacity, delivery platform, and the desired level of participant interaction.
Prerequisites	No prior high-rise or large-building response qualification is required. Participants should be familiar with their organization's incident-command, emergency-management, and mutual-aid procedures.
Cost	\$3,500 base price plus instructor travel and lodging. \$2,500 for virtual training.

What Participants Will Learn:

Why High-Rise and Large-Building Events Are Different

High-rise and large-building attacks create response problems that do not exist in a conventional single-site structure. Elevation, distance, limited entry points, complex floor plans, restricted areas, elevators, stairwells, tunnels, skybridges, underground roads, service corridors, maintenance access, and, in some facilities, sensitive compartmented information facilities can delay movement and complicate coordination. The course examines how building geometry and occupancy affect notification, access, search, evacuation, sheltering, victim rescue, and protection of critical operations.

Active Shooter versus Elevated Criminal Sniper

The first operational decision may be determining what kind of threat responders face. In a high-rise active-shooter event, the perpetrator may be moving through the structure, seeking access to additional victims and producing rapidly changing information. In an elevated criminal sniper event, the perpetrator is more likely to operate from a fixed or fortified position and engage victims across distance and cover. Those problems create different priorities for containment, approach, observation, rescue, communications, and command. The course addresses the danger of treating every elevated shooting as the same event.

Case studies include the 1966 University of Texas clock tower attack, the 1982 Detroit Buhl Building attack, the 1993 San Francisco 101 California Street shooting, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the 2017 Route 91 attack, the 2017 Bronx-Lebanon Hospital attack, the 2018 Long Beach senior-housing attack, the 2019 Nairobi attacks, and other large-building events. Participants use those incidents to examine planning, target access, warning time, distance, vertical movement, responder exposure, and the consequences of delayed decisions.

Building Systems, Vertical Movement, and Entry

The response is shaped by the building before responders arrive. The course examines power, elevators, HVAC, fire alarms, alarm mode, stairwells, doors, access control, and vertical transit. It also addresses large-building features such as tunnels, skybridges, underground roads, service areas, maintenance access, and other routes that may help or hinder responders. Participants consider entry, movement, breaching, search marking, communications, and coordination with facility personnel without assuming that a standard ground-level response model will transfer directly.

Response, Assault, and Victim Rescue

The course organizes the counter-response into five connected phases: response, entry, vertical transit, assault, and victim rescue. Participants examine how responders establish command, build a usable operating picture, control doors and stairwells, use shields and ballistic capability, consider armored vehicles and breaching, mark searched areas, manage fire and explosive hazards, and coordinate rescue while the threat may remain active. Tactical options are presented as considerations that must be adapted to the building, threat, agency capabilities, law, and policy.

Tactical Emergency Medical Services and Command

High-rise and large-building events place unusual demands on command, triage, patient extraction, and medical access. The program examines TEMS coordination with law enforcement, fire, EMS, dispatch, emergency management, and facility representatives. Participants consider how distance and vertical movement can delay initial care, how rescue priorities compete with threat containment, and how command must coordinate safe access without creating an additional casualty problem. The course does not prescribe one universal tactical or medical model; it identifies decisions that each jurisdiction must resolve before an event.

Lessons from Major Events and Exercise-Ready Planning

Additional case studies include the 2013 Washington Navy Yard, the 2019 Virginia Municipal Building, the 2020 Terminal 21 attack in Korat, Thailand, and the 2021 FedEx Indianapolis hub shooting. The final discussion translates the lessons into site-specific planning questions: what responders know before arrival, how they reach the threat, how they move vertically, how they rescue victims, how building systems change, and how command and medical operations remain coordinated. The program can support later tabletop, functional, or full-scale exercises.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of the program, participants will be able to:

1. Distinguish an active assailant event from an elevated criminal sniper event and explain why the distinction affects response priorities.
2. Describe characteristics of a criminal sniper attack, including fixed position, distance, cover, fortification, and planning.
3. Identify initial tactical objectives when confronting an elevated or fortified active assailant.
4. Summarize lessons from major high-rise and large-building attacks in the United States and internationally.
5. Explain how building height, distance, vertical geometry, and access constraints can delay threat engagement, rescue, and medical care.
6. Assess how mid-rise, high-rise, skyscraper, and large-building design features affect public-safety operations.
7. Identify the operational challenges created by tunnels, skybridges, underground roads, SCIFs, service corridors, and maintenance access.
8. Explain the response phase, including command establishment, information organization, access control, and coordination with facility personnel.
9. Describe entry considerations involving doors, stairwells, breaching, search movement, marking, and responder exposure.
10. Discuss vertical-transit considerations involving elevators, stairs, distance, equipment, fatigue, communications, and accountability.
11. Describe assault and victim-rescue considerations, including shields, ballistic capability, armored vehicles, fire and explosive hazards, and rescue priorities.
12. Explain how power, elevators, HVAC, fire alarms, and alarm-mode changes can affect response operations.
13. Discuss considerations involving canines, specialized communications tools, UAVs, and other technology or capability options within law and policy.
14. Explain command and coordination requirements among law enforcement, fire, EMS, TEMS, dispatch, emergency management, security, and facility representatives.
15. Describe TEMS considerations for triage, patient extraction, casualty collection, delayed care, and coordination with the assault force.
16. Develop site-specific improvement questions and exercise priorities for a high-rise or large-building active-assailant response.

Host Agency Requirements:

The host organization is responsible for coordinating the course, registering participants, obtaining any applicable continuing-education credit, and providing a suitable classroom or virtual-delivery environment. For in-person delivery, the host should provide a computer, projector or display, reliable audio, and adequate seating for the confirmed attendance. For virtual delivery, the host should provide the meeting platform, participant access, and a point of contact who can manage attendance and technical issues.

Before delivery, the host should identify the target building types, participating disciplines, known high-rise or large-building concerns, and any site-specific priorities suitable for discussion. The lecture does not require a live-fire facility, training weapons, tactical medical equipment, or practical-training props. If the host requests a site visit, tabletop, functional exercise, or other practical component, the facility, staffing, safety, equipment, and attendance requirements will be addressed in a separate course plan before scheduling. The source briefing is identified as UNCLASSIFIED // LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; the host is responsible for confirming applicable handling, distribution, and information-security requirements before delivery.

About Threat Suppression:

Threat Suppression, Incorporated is a research-driven safety, security, and public-safety training and consulting firm founded in 2012. The company is a leading provider of integrated active assailant training for the Department of War, providing more than 165 classes at 45 major installations. The company has invested more than 50,000 hours in internal active assailant research. Threat Suppression serves as a principal member of NFPA 3000 and participates in multiple state and federal ASHE workgroups that shape national active assailant preparedness standards and policy.

The company's leadership has commanded active assailant events and was lead author on the 2021 Oxford High School mass shooting after-action report, one of the most comprehensive analyses of an active assailant incident response. Threat Suppression provides active assailant preparedness, rescue task force training, emergency management support, behavioral threat assessment and management, exercises, after-action reviews, and physical security services to federal agencies, military installations, public safety organizations, healthcare systems, schools, and private organizations. Our work combines operational experience, applied research, and field-tested instruction.

To Schedule or Learn More:

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Email: info@ThreatSuppression.com

Course Page: www.threatsuppression.com/high-rise-active-assailant

Website: www.threatsuppression.com