# **"ACTIVE THREAT" TEMPLATE**

Background Information for departments developing this template for their Building Emergency Plan - Each individual is ultimately responsible for their own safety. In any response to an "active threat" on the WVU campus, the University Police will implement any and all means necessary to neutralize the threat. The University Police Department will utilize all resources both on a proactive and reactive basis to ensure the safety of our campus community; in most cases a response to an "active threat" will involve a coordinated response from multiple law enforcement agencies. Remember, campus emergency preparedness is everyone's concern! A significant number of issues regarding personal safety is included in this template.

The information presented in blue font is considered as optional text. Each building must individually decide whether or not to include this optional information in their "active threat" plan.

### **Law Enforcement Tactics -**

The following text is optional for units to include in their "active threat" preparedness.

Law enforcement priorities during an "active threat" situation have changed since the incidents at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech. Police response tactics, as witnessed during recent events, are to respond to the threat immediately and take such action as is necessary to neutralize the threat as quickly as possible. The safety of all persons involved in an "active threat" incident is of paramount importance, and responding officers will forego assistance to injured parties for the express purpose of meeting and neutralizing the threat, and thereby reducing the overall number of casualties.

#### Introduction:

- 1. Description: An "active threat" is defined as any incident that by its deliberate nature creates an immediate threat or presents an imminent danger to the campus community.
- 2. Types of "active threats":
  - a. Active shooter
  - b. Hostage/barricaded subject
  - c. Sniper
  - d. Suicide/Homicide bomber
  - e. Known or suspected terrorist threat (biological/chemical threat)

#### **Notification Procedures:**

In the event that an "active threat" becomes apparent in any campus location (internal or external) the threat should be reported immediately (as soon as it is safe to do so) through one of the mechanisms that follow:

- 1. Call 9-1-1 (from non-university phone)
- 2. Call 9 9-1-1 (from university phone)

# **Campus notification procedures:**

Following is a list of existing campus systems for notifications to faculty, staff, students and others in the event that an "active threat" would be identified on the WVU campus. The systems listed here represent the primary means that the campus will use to send safety information to the general campus population. Options 1, 2, & 3 may be activated almost simultaneously.

The WVU campus will use the following systems (listed in priority order) to notify campus faculty, staff, students, and parents of an existing "active threat" to WVU.

- Text Messaging ("WVU Alert")
- 2. Email
- 3. Message Boards
- 4. Internet website
- 5. Phone tree

In addition to the above means of communication, the University will also seek to use public mass media (radio and TV) for appropriate announcements to keep the WVU campus informed.

The following text is optional for units to include in their "active threat" preparedness.

Individuals are encouraged to minimize the use of personal cell phones unless it is to report the incident or to assure their personal safety or the safety of others. Mass use of cell phone systems typically result in system overloads and the general failure of the system until traffic diminishes.

# **Departmental notification procedures:**

WVU's College/School/Departments should develop internal notification systems and practice/exercise them routinely at least twice a year. Internal contact lists should be reviewed at least twice a year to be kept current and the unit should assure that contact information contained in their building emergency plan is up to date. The following text is suggested for inclusion in the unit's building emergency plan.

The College/School/Department has established an internal notification system to keep their staff informed on the status of any "active threat". Systems that will be used to inform staff of the initiation of an "active threat" situation include:

- internal phone trees;
- paging systems;
- public address systems;
- bull horns, or;
- air horns.

Note: If a non-traditional form of communication is used as an alert mechanism, each staff person must be trained to respond appropriately and to recognize the alert.

For detailed information on the actual contact list, either include that information here or refer to your BEP. Information on the specifics for implementing these systems needs to be clearly defined to assure that the activation process is understood. Redundancy is recommended to assure that if the person to whom this responsibility has been assigned is absent from work, there is someone else who can fulfill that responsibility and he/she clearly understands the process.

# Notifications to persons occupying public space:

Departments are encouraged to review the areas surrounding their departmental space to include public spaces in their notification procedures. Such areas include classrooms, seminar rooms, conference rooms, lecture rooms, lounges, and restrooms. During an "active threat" situation, there is no guarantee that persons occupying such space will receive a notification that an "active threat" exists. Therefore, departments are encouraged to establish mechanisms to notify persons in these areas (as long as it is safe to do so) of the status of an active threat situation. In buildings where there are multiple departments, the coordination of these procedures will reduce the responsibility on any single department. In this section, the department can include a listing of those spaces and an assignment of responsibility to notify persons who occupy those spaces of an existing "active threat".

The College/School/Department has identified the following public spaces within its area of control. Notifications of an "active threat" situation will be made to persons in these areas as long as it is safe to do so without endangering departmental personnel. These spaces are:

List associated public spaces here.

### **Guidelines for Protection**

The following guidelines are intended to provide information to individuals who have found shelter and/or found themselves engaged in an "active threat" situation. They are intended to improve both individual and group levels of personal safety.

The following text is optional for units to include in their "active threat" preparedness.

"Active threat" situations are very dynamic and they evolve quickly. Individuals need to assess their situation and be prepared to make decisions in a matter of seconds. An "active threat" situation typically does not last for a long period of time unless it evolves into a hostage situation.

# Individual / Group Safety:

- 1. Stay calm and assess the situation; determine the location of the threat if possible;
- 2. Call 9-1-1, or 9-9-1-1 from a campus phone, as soon as it is safe to do so;
- 3. Evacuate the area by a safe route if possible, if not seek an area of safe refuge. If it is known that the threat is of a chemical or biological nature and the decision is made to evacuate, be sure to evacuate to an area that is either uphill (higher ground) or at least in the opposite direction from the prevailing wind. Do not evacuate in the direction that the wind is blowing during such an attack or threat.
- 4. If you must seek a safe refuge, secure all doors and windows as quickly as possible and barricade as many items between you and the threat as possible (i.e. tablet arm chairs, tables, cabinets, etc.).
- 5. Render first aid to injured persons that may be in or near your area. Do this so long as it is safe to do so. Simple first aid includes applying direct pressure to the wound and elevating if possible. (Include other first aid items here)

- 6. Do not attempt to make contact (verbal or physical) with the individual responsible for the threat unless no other option is available.
- 7. If you must have contact with the individual posing the threat, attempt to find some cover (solid objects) to place between you and the individual.

Items 8, 9, & 10 are optional for units to include in their "active threat" preparedness plans.

- 8. Be prepared to combat the subject individually to neutralize the threat if your life is in imminent danger. Active resistance may increase the chance of survival, but this is strictly a personal decision.
- 9. If you are barricaded in a room, identify objects that could be used as missiles or weapons to deter the threat from pursuing you at your location. Examples may be student desks, keys, shoes, belts, books, cell phones, iPods, book bags, laptops, pens, pencils, etc. or any item capable of being launched or used against an attacker. Articles of clothing can be used for protection against a knife-wielding attacker.
- 10. If you are fortunate to be in a group, develop a plan as a group for how you will combat the attacker posing the threat should he/she gain access to your area of refuge. Frequently it is possible to overwhelm an attacker if multiple people resist or attack from different directions at the same time. While this reduces the risk of numerous serious or fatal injuries to the group as a whole, the chances of someone being injured is still present. This is a risk that the group must accept with any plan.
- 11. Once in a secure location, DO NOT open the door for anyone but the Police. DO NOT leave a secure location during an active threat even if you hear the fire alarm. Repeat, DO NOT open the door for anyone but the Police. This includes others seeking refuge, as this may be a ploy by the attacker to gain access.
- 12.DO NOT approach police officers as they attempt to locate and neutralize the threat. During this time, the officers are trained to seek out and respond to the threat, which could include the use of deadly force. They are not able to assist with the evacuation or medical assistance to injured parties. Once the threat has been neutralized, the officers will return immediately to organizing the evacuation of the facility and obtaining or providing emergency medical procedures.

The following text is optional for units to include in their "active threat" preparedness.

13.IMPORTANT: During "active threat" situations, the decision to resist the threat is an individual decision that no one person can make for anyone else. Active resistance may assist with your personal safety, the safety of the group, and increase the chances of survival. There are NO guarantees when offering resistance that NO one will be injured.

#### **Recommended Best Practices**

- 1. Be prepared and aware of your environment! Anticipate the unexpected.
- 2. Incorporate "active threat" preparedness into each department's Building Emergency Plan.
- 3. Practice these emergency operations plans once implemented so each department will have general guidelines on how to react in a crisis.
- 4. Monitor co-workers and others for signs of stress or severe depression. Report any concerns to your supervisor.

Early detection of individuals having personal, family problems or demonstrating odd or threatening behavior is the best method for reducing the likelihood of "active threat" events. The University has resources to assist these persons through the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (304) 293-5590 <a href="http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/fsap/program.htm">http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/fsap/program.htm</a>

or the Carruth Counseling Center (304) 293-4431 http://www.wvu.edu/~cocenter/.