



# Mass Shooting Preparedness: Checklist

As your community's chief elected leader, you have a significant role to play in the event of a mass shooting. This Checklist can help you prepare for it. For more information, consult the Mass Shooting Playbook: A Resource for U.S. Mayors and City Managers.<sup>1</sup>

## Plan crisis communications

- Develop a communication strategy to ensure unified messaging.
  - Review the CDC's Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications (CERC) Manual.<sup>2</sup> If you have limited experience speaking to the national media, consider crisis communications training.
- Assess whether to establish an Emergency Notification System. Develop a policy for its use and request regular testing and operation of the system.

## Ensure law enforcement agencies are prepared

- Establish personal relationships with leaders of potential responding agencies (e.g., police, sheriff, FBI, neighboring city law enforcement agencies). Ensure mutual aid agreements are in place.<sup>3</sup>
- Ensure your law enforcement agency has adequate training, equipment, and funding to effectively respond to a mass shooting. Priorities include: <sup>4</sup>
  - Active Violent Incident (AVI) training for all officers.<sup>5</sup>
  - Training includes tactical emergency casualty care.
  - First responder radio systems are inter-operational.
  - Protocol for self-deploying law enforcement agencies.
- Personally attend a multi-agency law enforcement active shooter drill.

## Prepare to provide victim services

- Meet with representatives of public health agencies, the FBI Victim Services Division, the American Red Cross, and community-based organizations to develop a plan to provide victim and family services. The Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) can refer you to federal funding, training, and other resources.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Playbook, a Tabletop Exercise Template, and other resources are available at [www.UnitedOnGuns.org](http://www.UnitedOnGuns.org).

<sup>2</sup> <https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/manual/index.asp>

<sup>3</sup> See the Mass Shooting Playbook chapter on Legal Considerations for more information.

<sup>4</sup> These recommendations were informed by the DOJ Uvalde Report. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/uvalde>

<sup>5</sup> The gold standard is the federally funded ALERRT program. [www.Alerrt.org](http://www.Alerrt.org).

<sup>6</sup> The National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center is an important resource. <https://nmvrc.org/>

- Ensure your emergency operations plan includes mass casualty events.
- Identify possible locations for “victim notification” and “family assistance” centers, ensure they are scalable, have parking, and can be secured.
- Develop plans for a resiliency center.<sup>7</sup>
- Develop a victims’ fund protocol.

### **Support the needs of your staff and first responders *before* an incident**

- Encourage leaders of first responder agencies to establish peer support programs (including police, fire, EMT, and dispatchers).
- Establish mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities to provide routine city services following the emergency.
- Schedule periodic active shooter drills for city staff, provide medical kits in centralized locations in city buildings, and offer stop-the-bleed training.<sup>8</sup>

### **Put it all together: Schedule a Tabletop Exercise**

- Organize a tabletop exercise with your team, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to discuss roles and plan a unified response.<sup>9</sup>
- Include mental health experts in your preparedness planning and exercises and ensure they have the Psychological First Aid training for crisis response (which is different from “everyday” talk therapy).
- Schedule at least one tabletop focused on a school mass shooting. Meet with school officials to review safety plans, direct them to funding and planning resources, and urge them to schedule drills with law enforcement.<sup>10</sup>
- Familiarize yourself with federal funding available for school safety, mental health services, and community gun violence prevention in your community.<sup>11</sup>

For more information, please contact Sarah C. Peck, [s.peck@phai.org](mailto:s.peck@phai.org) or visit [www.UnitedOnGuns.org](http://www.UnitedOnGuns.org)

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<sup>7</sup> Establishing a resiliency center following a mass shooting to meet the long-term needs of victims is standard practice. Consider creating one *before* a crisis to address the trauma caused by other forms of gun violence.

<sup>8</sup> Stop the Bleed training will save lives. <https://www.stopthebleed.org/training/>

<sup>9</sup> A template you can use to customize for your city is available at [www.UnitedOnGuns.org](http://www.UnitedOnGuns.org).

<sup>10</sup> Resources are available at [www.SchoolSafety.gov](http://www.SchoolSafety.gov).

<sup>11</sup> *The Mayor’s Guide to the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Funding* is available at [www.UnitedOnGuns.org/publications](http://www.UnitedOnGuns.org/publications).