



TPOP + IMA
FIELD GUIDE SERIES

ACTIVE SHOOTER / ACTIVE ASSAILANT PREPAREDNESS

Essential strategies for QSRs and Hotels to protect people, reduce risk and strengthen organizational resilience.



RECOGNIZE EARLY

Spot the signs before they escalate.



PREPARE YOUR PEOPLE

Build plans, train, and strengthen culture.



RESPOND WITH CONFIDENCE

Run, Hide, Fight and more.



PROTECT AND RECOVER

Reduce risk, meet obligations, and strengthen continuity.



**CITY SHIELD
SECURITY
SERVICES**

STRONGER PREPAREDNESS • SAFER OUTCOMES

About This Field Guide

This field guide grew out of a live webinar hosted by IMA and presented by The Power of Preparedness (TPOP), featuring City Shield Security Services. It distills a practical before, during, and after framework for active shooter and active assailant preparedness, tailored to quick-service restaurants and hotels.

■ The Power of Preparedness (TPOP)

A national leader in workplace-violence prevention training, trusted by hospitality and retail brands large and small. Its scenario-based micro-lessons turn readiness into instinct across food service, retail, healthcare, manufacturing, and hospitality — building confidence, not fear.

Learn more at thepowerofpreparedness.com

■ IMA Financial Group (IMA)

A premier insurance and risk-management firm whose hospitality specialists help operators stay ahead of risk — with on-site surveys, response planning, and complimentary training that stop claims before they start.

Learn more at imacorp.com

■ City Shield Security Services

An elite, nationally recognized security consultancy led by Al Shenouda, CPP — a former Detroit police and DHS officer. It delivers threat assessment, active-assailant preparedness, and hands-on training for public-facing operations.

Learn more at cityshieldsecurity.com

THE PANEL



Renee Rhodes

Hospitality Client Risk Advisor, IMA

Focuses on duty of care, OSHA expectations, and how documented preparedness affects liability and insurability for hospitality operators.



Dan Stechow

President & CEO, TPOP — Moderator

Moderated the session and led the recovery and business-continuity discussion. Believes education, creativity, and technology can change behavior at scale.



Al Shenouda, CPP

Managing Partner, City Shield Security Services — Subject Matter Expert

Leads threat assessment and active-assailant preparedness for public-facing operations, and presented the core response framework in this session.



Quinn Green

Risk Control Advisor, IMA

Advises hospitality clients on risk control and opened the session on why preparedness is a business issue for restaurants and hotels.

DISCLAIMER

This field guide is provided for general informational and educational purposes only and does not constitute legal, security, insurance, or professional advice. It summarizes a live panel discussion and reflects the views of the individual panelists, not necessarily those of their organizations. Organizations should consult qualified professionals when developing violence-prevention, safety, or emergency-response policies.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Painful Costs of a Shooting Event

The impact of an active shooter incident reaches far beyond the moment itself.

An active shooter or active assailant incident is among the most serious events a business can face — and quick-service restaurants and hotels are especially exposed. They are open to the public, busy, and often operate late with small or dispersed teams. These events are rare, but preparation measurably improves how they unfold and who survives them.



Cost Category	Business Impact
Life Safety	The first and highest cost — harm to employees, guests, and responders.
Liability & Duty of Care	Foreseeability and reasonable, documented steps drive exposure after an event.
Brand & Guest Confidence	A publicized incident affects guest trust and long-term reputation.
Business Continuity	Closure, investigation, and recovery interrupt operations for weeks.
Insurance & Claims	Readiness affects insurability, premiums, and claims outcomes.
Human Recovery	The emotional toll on people lasts far longer than the incident itself.

PART 1

Why This Matters for QSRs and Hotels

"When you're open to the public, anybody and everybody is welcome — and that means a much larger exposure."

— Quinn Green, IMA

Why This Matters Now

Restaurants and hotels are uniquely exposed, and preparation pays off.



- **Open to the public and busy**
Constant foot traffic, all day.
- **Often open late**
Small or dispersed overnight teams.
- **Guests and employees to protect**
Two populations, one duty.
- **Preparation improves outcomes**
Readiness measurably changes results.

Quick-service restaurants and hotels welcome the public around the clock, which is a strength in business and a challenge in a crisis. Small overnight crews, dispersed guest areas, and constant foot traffic make these environments uniquely exposed. These events are rare, but preparation is what protects people and the business when one occurs.

"You want to make sure your employees are able to go home the same way they came to work. There's a duty on employers to protect both the guest and the employee."

— Quinn Green, IMA

Real-World Events

Tragic events that IMA clients have endured.



- **A dispute over charges**
A guest retrieved a firearm and shot the manager.
- **An unprovoked parking-lot attack**
A guest shot an employee at close range.
- **An employee dispute**
One employee retrieved a firearm and returned to the restaurant.
- **A delivery-driver shooting**
Parties may have had a prior interaction.

These are real incidents endured by hospitality operators — not distant statistics. They share a pattern worth noting: disputes, prior relationships, and grievances that surfaced in or around the business. Preparedness is what changes how events like these unfold.

The Risk Is a Business Issue

The impact reaches far beyond the incident itself.

- **Life safety comes first**
People are the priority, always.
- **Brand and guest confidence**
Reputation is on the line.
- **Liability & duty-of-care exposure**
Reasonable, foreseeable precautions matter.
- **Insurance and continuity implications**
Readiness affects both.

For owners and operators, an incident is both a human tragedy and a serious business event. Beyond the immediate harm, there is exposure to liability, brand damage, and lasting operational disruption. Framing preparedness as protection for people and the business is what moves it up the priority list.

PART 2

Recognizing the Threat Before It Escalates

"Somebody notices this stuff first, and early recognition is the key to survival. It's not enough to recognize it — you've got to let somebody know."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Understanding Violence Types

How the terms differ — and where they overlap.

■ Targeted violence

Premeditated, aimed at a chosen person, group, or place, along an observable pathway.

■ Active shooter

The sudden event in progress, usually with no pattern to victim selection (FBI/DHS).

■ The overlap

Most active shooter attacks are premeditated — a form of targeted violence — though victims are usually random.

■ Active assailant

Broader still: knives, vehicles, and explosives, not only firearms.

Two terms describe this danger from different angles. Targeted violence is a threat-assessment term: the attacker premeditates and selects a target, and moves along an observable pathway before acting — the window in which an attack can be prevented. Active shooter is the FBI and DHS operational term for the event in progress: sudden, and usually with no pattern to victim selection. The two are not opposites — most active shooter attacks are targeted violence planned in advance, even though who is harmed in the moment is often random. Active assailant is broader still, because not every attack uses a firearm.

"Most targeted violence is personal — the attacker harbors a grievance. Someone is fired, then comes back to the workplace to do harm."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Violence Rarely Happens Without Warning

Most attackers move along an observable pathway.



- **Behavior often escalates over time**
The pathway is rarely instant.
- **Warning signs are frequently visible**
There is usually something to see.
- **Someone usually notices first**
Often a frontline employee.
- **Early recognition creates options**
Time is the advantage.

Most people who commit premeditated violence move along a pathway to violence, showing observable behavior before an attack. That means there is almost always something to notice and a chance to intervene. Teaching teams to recognize and report these signs is the most powerful form of prevention.

Warning Signs in Your Environment

What restaurant and hotel teams should notice.



- **Escalating anger or grievances**
Mounting, repeated hostility.
- **Threats or fixation on violence**
Direct or veiled statements.
- **Concerning changes in an employee or guest**
A marked shift from the baseline.
- **Unusual interest in prior attacks or weapons**
Fixation worth noting.

Warning signs can come from employees, former employees, or guests, and include escalating grievances, threats, and marked behavioral changes. No single sign is proof, but a pattern deserves attention. In hospitality settings, staff interact closely with the public, which puts them in a strong position to notice early.

Report and Evaluate Concerns

A concern only helps if it reaches someone who can act on it.



- **Make reporting simple, accessible, and stigma-free**

Low friction, no fear.

- **Decide who reviews a concern**

Involve HR or counsel as needed.

- **Reporting is not accusing**

Raising a concern is not a judgment.

- **Coordinate across locations**

Document and follow up.

Early intervention starts with someone speaking up, so reporting must be easy and free of stigma; employees should know that raising a concern is not the same as accusing someone. Once a concern is raised, someone has to evaluate it and decide the response. Even a small operation should know who reviews concerns and when to involve HR, security, or counsel, and should coordinate across locations so nothing falls through the cracks.

"Give people at least one anonymous way to report — some will only speak up if they can do it anonymously."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

PART 3

Preparedness, Training, and Culture

"People don't plan to fail, but they do fail to plan. Simple awareness-level training increases your survivability exponentially."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Plan Before You Need To

The best decisions are made in advance.



- **A simple emergency plan**

Written, shared, and known.

- **Exits and safe areas mapped**

Known before the moment.

- **Clear roles and authority**

Everyone knows who decides.

- **Coordination with local responders**

Build the plan together.

A written plan gives everyone a shared framework before an incident. For a QSR or hotel, that means knowing exits, safe areas, roles, and who decides, and building the plan with local responders. Planning in calm time is what makes fast action possible under stress.

"Coordinate with your first responders in advance — invite them over, show them the place, get their tips. The first time they meet you shouldn't be in an actual crisis."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Harden the Environment

Small measures buy time and deter.



- **Controlled back-of-house and staff access**

Limit who gets back there.

- **Visibility, lighting, and cameras**

Deter and document.

- **Lockable offices and secure areas**

Places to shelter.

- **Clear, unobstructed exits**

Keep escape routes open.

Physical security works in layers that deter or buy time. In restaurants and hotels, that means controlling staff-only areas, maintaining visibility and lighting, and keeping exits clear — not a fortress, but a posture that supports safe response.

Training and Culture Turn Plans Into Action

People respond the way they have practiced — when leadership makes it stick.



- **Plans fail without training**

Practice reduces hesitation.

- **Everyone knows their role**

No hesitation under stress.

- **Leadership sets and reinforces it**

Culture makes it durable.

- **Run, Hide, Fight is the core framework**

See Part 4.

A plan on paper does not change behavior; training does. Under stress, people fall back on what they have practiced, so familiarity is what reduces hesitation. But training sticks only when it is reinforced as part of the culture: ownership sets the expectation, and repetition turns knowledge into instinct across every unit. A blend — online for reach, drills for judgment — is most durable across many units.

"A culture of preparedness is our lifeline to survive. We train the way we fight, and we fight the way we train."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

PART 4

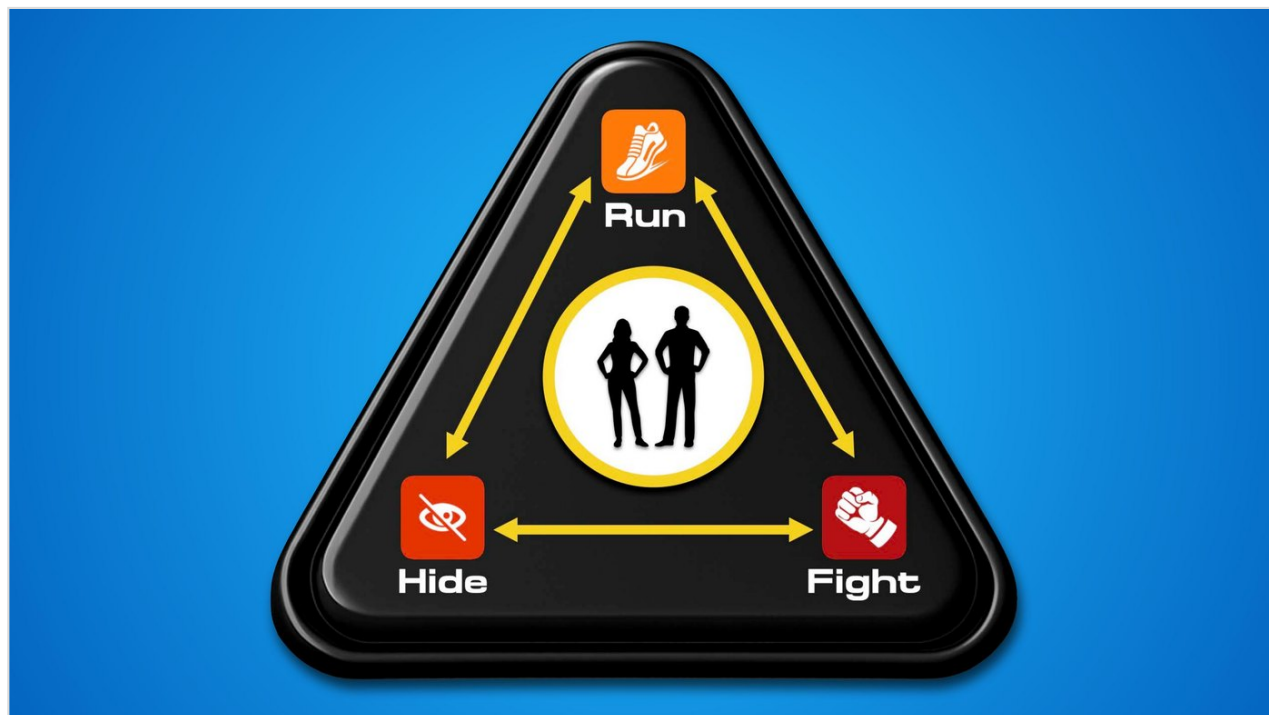
Shots Fired!

"The first seconds matter. Most active shooter events happen in a matter of minutes, and the earliest action is what saves your life."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Run, Hide, Fight — Your 3-Dimensional Action Plan

Not a linear sequence — the right choice can shift moment to moment.



■ **Run**

Get out when you know where the threat is.

■ **Fight**

A last resort when you cannot run or hide.

■ **Hide**

Stay out of sight when you cannot.

■ **Dynamic, not sequential**

Move between all three as the event changes.

Run, Hide, Fight is the core response framework — but it is a three-dimensional action plan, not a linear checklist. The right choice can shift between run, hide, and fight over the course of an attack, and teams should understand all three so they can adapt in the moment rather than freeze.

"We built Run, Hide, Fight at DHS from actual studies of who survived and who didn't. It's now the global standard."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

The First Seconds Matter Most

Many incidents are over before police arrive.

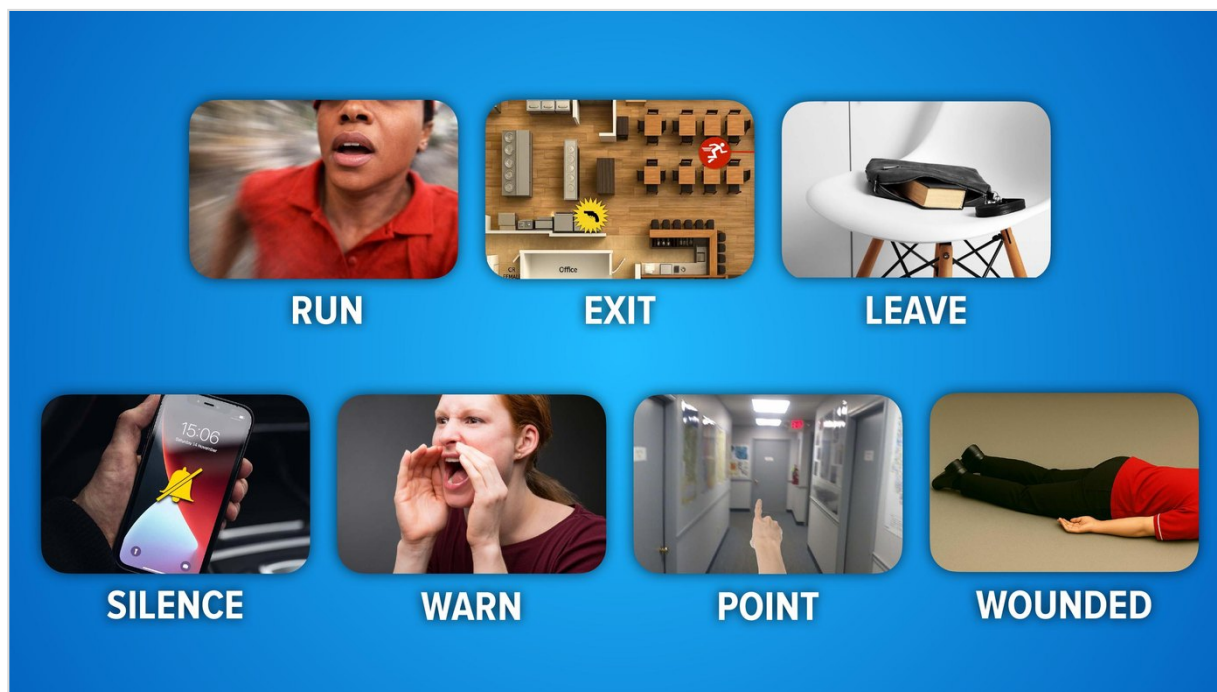


- **Most events last only a few minutes**
It ends fast.
- **Early action saves lives**
Seconds drive outcomes.
- **Trained responses take over**
Practice becomes instinct.
- **Every location needs a plan**
No exceptions.

Active shooter incidents often unfold and end within minutes, frequently before law enforcement arrives — which means the people on site are effectively their own first responders until help gets there. That places significant weight on immediate action. Teams that have trained and planned give themselves the best chance to respond effectively.

Run — Get Out, and Get Others Out

When you know where the threat is: run TO safety as much as FROM danger.



- **Have a destination**
A known exit, away from the gunfire.
- **Go even if others don't**
Leave belongings behind.
- **Bring your phone, silence it**
Warn and guide guests as you go.
- **Leave the wounded while the threat is active**
You can't help anyone if you're hit.
- **Call 911 once safe**
Location, description, weapon.

When a person can tell where the gunfire is coming from, the priority is to run — and it is just as important to run to safety as from danger, so they need a destination: the nearest exit, in the opposite direction of the threat. Go even if no one else does, and leave belongings behind. Bring a phone but silence the ringer, warn others along the way, and help point guests to the exit. As hard as it is, while the shooter is engaged you have to leave the wounded — you cannot help anyone if you become a casualty too. Call 911 once you are safe, with the location, a description, and the weapon.

"If someone is down hard and can't walk, you're going to have to leave them and keep going. As terrible as it is, stopping creates a bottleneck — and more people get hurt."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Hide — Lock, Barricade, Stay Out of Sight

When you can't tell where it's coming from: you can't be a target if the shooter can't find you.



- **Find a lockable room with few windows**

An office, stockroom, or guest room.

- **No lock? Barricade**

Brace inward doors; tie off outward doors.

- **Can't lock or run?**

Crouch beside the door, ready to spring.

- **A simple locked door works**

Attackers rarely break through — they move on.

- **Lights off, silent, out of sight**

Phones silenced, away from windows.

When the direction of the gunfire is unclear, the safer move is to hide. Find the closest room with a lockable door and as few windows as possible — a manager's office or stockroom in a QSR, a back office, guest room, or storage room in a hotel. Attackers almost never take the time to break through a locked door and instead move on to an easier target. No lock? Barricade: brace inward doors with heavy furniture, tie off outward doors. Then lights off, out of sight of windows, phones silenced, silent.

"A simple locked door can save your life."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Fight — Commit, Improvise, Overwhelm

A last resort when you can't run or hide — but the shooter isn't all-powerful.



- **Act first and commit fully**
Yell, move fast, confuse the attacker.
- **Improvise weapons**
Anything sharp, heavy, or that burns or blinds.
- **Same principles for any weapon**
Knife or otherwise.
- **The shooter isn't invincible**
Openings will come.
- **Strength in numbers**
Several attacking together can overwhelm.

When a person cannot run or hide and is face-to-face with the threat, fighting is the last resort — but a real option, because the attacker can be stopped. The best chance is to act first and use full force: yell, move quickly, and confuse the attacker, who usually does not expect resistance. Almost anything at hand can become a weapon, and there is real strength in numbers: several people moving at once, from different angles, can overwhelm through shock, speed, and surprise.

"Active shooters are fighting the clock. If they feel real resistance — or think they're being disarmed — a lot of them will just quit and run."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Chances to Fight Back

Even armed, the shooter has real limits.



- **One direction at a time**
A gun cannot cover every angle at once.
- **Limited rounds**
Every gun runs empty and must reload.
- **Reloads and jams**
Brief moments of vulnerability.
- **Read the opening**
Those seconds are the chance.

A gun can only point in one direction at a time and cannot cover every angle at once. Every gun holds a limited number of bullets and must be reloaded, and any gun can jam. In those brief moments the shooter is vulnerable — which is what makes a committed, coordinated response possible.

Turn Anything Into a Weapon

Improvise: sharp, heavy, or something that burns or blinds.



- **Something sharp**
To stab.
- **Something heavy**
To throw or swing.
- **Something that burns or blinds**
A fire extinguisher sprays and strikes.
- **Whatever is at hand**
Improvise from the environment.

Almost anything at hand can become a weapon: something sharp to stab, something heavy to throw or swing, or something that burns or blinds. A fire extinguisher can spray to block vision and double as a heavy object. The point is to use the environment rather than wait to be a target.

There Is Power in Numbers

When you must fight, fight together.



- **One person is at a disadvantage**
Several moving at once are not.
- **Attack together, from different angles**
Without warning.
- **Speed, surprise, and teamwork**
Shift the balance.
- **Use improvised weapons**
Everyone contributes.

One person may be at a disadvantage, but several people moving at once, attacking from different angles without warning, can overwhelm an attacker through shock, speed, and surprise. If people must fight and others are with them, they should act together.

Knife Attacks and Other Weapons

The same principles apply beyond firearms.



- **Attackers still have limits**
No weapon is all-powerful.
- **Close range raises the danger**
Distance matters.
- **Run, hide, fight still applies**
The framework holds.
- **Improvise and commit**
Same response principles.

These same principles apply to knife attacks and other weapons. With any weapon, an attacker still has limits — and if you are close to the threat, the danger can be just as serious. The run, hide, fight framework and the use of improvised weapons and numbers apply here too.

Caught in an Open-Space Attack

Restaurants and hotels are mostly open space — know how to use it.



- **Mostly open areas**

Dining rooms, drive-thru, lobbies, ballrooms.

- **Break the line of sight**

If the shooter can see you, you can be targeted.

- **Few lockable rooms**

So line of sight and cover matter most.

- **Use cover**

Solid objects between you and the threat.

Restaurant and hotel facilities are largely open indoor spaces — dining areas, drive-thru, lobbies, ballrooms, back offices, and storage — which often don't offer a room with a lockable door. Two ideas matter most: line of sight and cover. If you are in the shooter's line of sight, you can be targeted, so the immediate goal is to break that line by putting something between yourself and the threat.

Open Spaces: Line of Sight and Cover

Break the line — then move toward an exit.

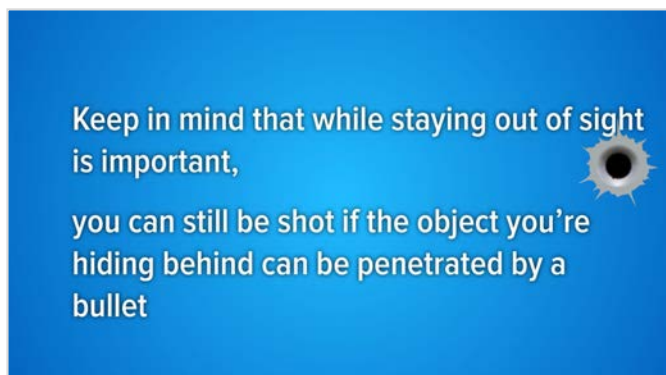


- **Line of sight**
Seen means targetable — break it.
- **Cover**
Columns, heavy fixtures, service counters, large displays.
- **Concealment is not cover**
Out of sight is not protected.
- **Move to an exit**
Use cover to get out.

Cover is any physical object that can shield or block you — structural columns and beams, heavy furniture and fixtures, service counters, and large product displays. Use it both to break the shooter's line of sight and, when time and safety allow, to move toward an exit.

Impenetrable vs. Penetrable

Out of sight is not the same as protected.



- **Concealment hides you**
But won't stop a round.
- **Cover stops rounds**
Choose the thickest, heaviest.
- **Know the difference**
It can be the difference.
- **Prefer solid mass**
Columns, masonry, heavy equipment.

Staying out of sight is not the same as being protected: you can still be shot through an object a bullet can penetrate. If time and safety allow, choose the thickest, heaviest objects available and use them as true cover, not just concealment.

"Real cover is a ballistic barrier — a steel appliance, a thick tree, an engine block. That's what actually protects you, not just something to duck behind."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

Working With Responders

Help law enforcement help you.



- **Follow officer commands**

Do exactly as directed.

- **Keep hands visible and empty**

No sudden movements.

- **Do not run at or grab officers**

Let them work.

- **Share location, description, and details**

Speed and accuracy help everyone.

When law enforcement arrives, their first job is to stop the threat, so everyone should follow commands and keep hands visible and empty. Avoid sudden movements, never run toward or grab officers, and understand that medical aid is typically given once people are out and the area is secured. Accurate information about location, description, and injured people speeds the response.

"This was hard for us as officers — we became cops to save people. But we can't stop for the wounded until the threat is stopped."

— Al Shenouda, City Shield Security

PART 5

Duty of Care, Liability, and Insurance

"You are more insurable when you have the policies, procedures, and training in place — and if you're prepared, you'll have far less cost when an incident occurs."

— **Renee Rhodes, IMA**

You Have a Duty of Care

A reasonable obligation to protect people on your premises.



- **Protect employees and guests**
Everyone on site.
- **Take reasonable, foreseeable precautions**
The legal standard.
- **Preparation shows good faith**
Documented diligence.
- **Document what you plan and do**
Records matter.

Duty of care is the responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect the people on your premises, including guests. It is best understood as a commitment to preparation, not a fear of liability. Planning, training, and documentation demonstrate that an operator acted responsibly.

OSHA, Liability, and Insurance

Documented, reasonable readiness reduces exposure — and supports insurability.

- **OSHA's General Duty Clause**
Workplace violence is a recognized hazard.
- **Preparedness supports insurability**
And claims outcomes.
- **Liability turns on foreseeability**
And reasonable, documented steps.
- **General information, not legal advice**
Align coverage with your broker.

Under OSHA's General Duty Clause, employers must provide a workplace free from recognized hazards, and workplace violence is increasingly treated as one. When incidents lead to litigation, the questions often center on what was foreseeable and what reasonable steps were taken — documented plans, training records, and consistent practices help demonstrate diligence. Insurers, too, increasingly look at how organizations manage violence-related risk. This is general information, not legal advice; confirm specifics with counsel and align coverage with your broker.

"Even where training isn't yet required, OSHA can cite you under the General Duty Clause — it's your responsibility as the employer to provide a safe and healthy work environment."

— Renee Rhodes, IMA

PART 6

Recovery and Business Continuity

"A colleague once told me: the body won't go where the mind has never gone. It's about getting people to think it through before they ever live it."

— Dan Stechow, TPOP

Response Doesn't End With the Threat

Recovery begins immediately.



- **Account for people**
Know who is safe.
- **Begin reunification**
Reconnect people safely.
- **Provide and coordinate medical aid**
Bridge to EMS.
- **Preserve the scene for investigators**
Support the investigation.

Once the immediate threat ends, attention turns to accounting for people, providing aid, and beginning reunification. These first steps are chaotic without a plan, so prepare them in advance. Clear roles reduce confusion at a critical moment.

"Trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together after everything falls apart is not when you want to discover the holes in your plan."

— Dan Stechow, TPOP

Medical Readiness Saves Lives

Simple preparation bridges the gap to EMS.



- **Stock trauma and bleeding-control kits**
Within reach.
- **Train Stop the Bleed basics**
A high-impact skill.
- **Know your nearest resources**
Hospitals and responders.
- **Plan for rapid access**
Reach kits and exits fast.

In the minutes before EMS reaches the injured, basic bleeding control saves lives. Stocking trauma kits and training staff in Stop the Bleed bridges that gap — one of the highest-impact, lowest-cost investments an operator can make.

Support Your People and Restore the Business

The human recovery lasts far longer than the incident.



- **Provide mental health support and EAP**
Watch for delayed effects.
- **Communicate openly and often**
Keep people informed.
- **Coordinate with investigators**
Reopen deliberately.
- **Work your insurance claim early**
Start recovery sooner.

The emotional impact lasts well beyond reopening — visible leadership, open communication, and access to mental health resources and an EAP are essential, and some effects appear later. Reopening is deliberate: coordinate with investigators, manage communications, and engage the insurance claim early. A continuity plan prepared in advance shortens the path back.

"No one who lives through one of these is ever the same afterward. The sooner you can get people into a counseling situation, the more it helps."

— Dan Stechow, TPOP

CONCLUSION

Five Take-Aways

Prepared operators protect their people, their guests, and their business.

1 Recognize and report warning signs early

Most premeditated attacks give warning.

2 Prepare facilities, plans, and people

Decide in calm time, not under fire.

3 Train Run, Hide, Fight as a dynamic plan

The right choice can change moment to moment.

4 Culture and training carry it

Across every location, every shift.

5 Plan for recovery and the insurance side

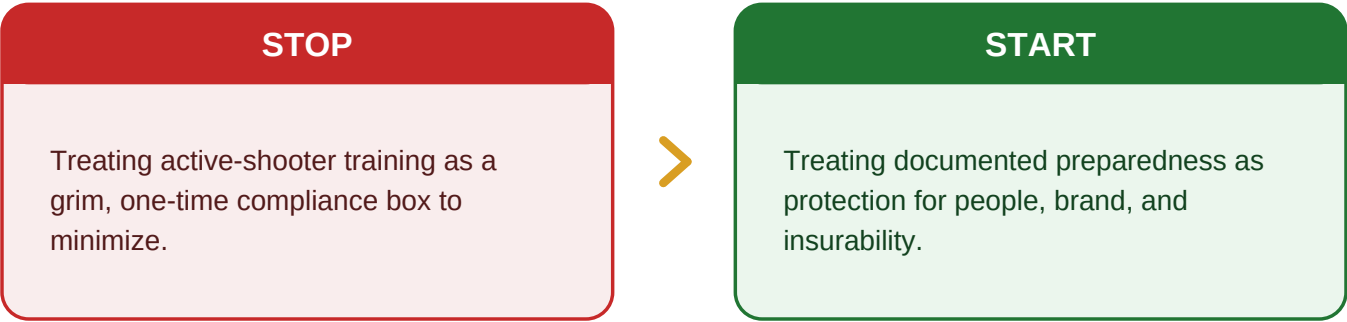
Continuity protects people and brand.

THE GOAL IS CONFIDENCE, NOT FEAR

Most premeditated attacks give warning signs, and preparation is what turns a catastrophic event into a survivable one. Recognize risk early, plan and train in advance, and prepare to recover — that is what protects both people and the business.

Stop Thinking of Preparedness as a Cost

The most useful shift a leader can make is how they account for active-shooter preparedness. Treated as a grim compliance box, it is deferred and cut; treated as protection for people, brand, and insurability, it earns its place in the plan and the budget.



Move	What It Looks Like
Replace the binder	Trade the plan no one has read for a simple one the team has practiced.
Drop "it won't happen here"	Take reasonable, foreseeable precautions and document them.
Reframe the message	Build confidence on readiness, not fear.
Go beyond the annual video	Reinforce culture with role-specific drills across locations.
Build the business case	IMA and TPOP can help you connect readiness to insurability.

Q&A Highlights

Real questions and answers from the session's live Q&A, lightly condensed.

Q For QSR and hotel operators, what makes these environments different to prepare for?

You're open to the public, so anybody and everybody is welcome — and that alone creates greater exposure. Add hours that vary widely, hotels that never close, and the fact that you're protecting guests and employees at the same time, and preparation becomes essential rather than optional.

— *Quinn Green, IMA*

Q What warning signs should frontline restaurant and hotel staff be trained to notice?

Escalating anger and grievances — the same person complaining and making threats that increasingly allude to violence. Marked behavioral changes in an employee or guest, and an unusual fixation on prior attacks or weapons. No single sign is proof, but that downward spiral of indicators is something staff can be trained to catch early.

— *Al Shenouda, City Shield Security*

Q How do you train on something this serious without frightening staff or guests?

Stay away from gratuitous, graphic violence — no photos of victims. Address the issue honestly and with the solemnity it deserves, but keep it generic. In practice people are grateful for it: across thousands of frontline reviews the response is the same — thank you, I feel better having known this. People are already worried; good training replaces fear with confidence.

— *Al Shenouda, City Shield Security*

Q What is the most common preparedness gap you see in hospitality operations?

The basics. When we run surveys we constantly see exits blocked with stock and doors that don't lock or aren't secured. One locked door can save your life, so simple access control, clear unobstructed exits, and good exterior lighting are the least expensive, most effective place to start.

— *Al Shenouda, City Shield Security*

Q From a risk standpoint, how does documented preparedness affect liability?

Every employer is required to have emergency response plans, and those should include an active-assailant policy. Unless you're grossly negligent — if you've trained your people and done what you reasonably can — it's much harder to be held liable. When OSHA steps in after an incident, the first thing they ask is whether you're training your people and to see your policy.

— *Renee Rhodes, IMA*

Q Does being prepared actually affect our insurance?

It won't necessarily lower your premium directly, but carriers can require training and a written response policy as a condition of coverage. Being prepared makes you more insurable — and if an incident does occur, a prepared operation carries far less cost. In a hard market, underwriters may decline an unprepared risk altogether.

— *Renee Rhodes, IMA*

Q&A Highlights (continued)

Q After an incident, what do owners most often wish they had done sooner?

Time and again it's 'we should have done it.' Someone wanted to put training in place but couldn't get the budget approved because it wasn't deemed an imminent threat — then months later there's a shooting. The investment to train your people is a fraction of the mess you clean up afterward, so don't wait for a disaster to get in front of it.

— *Dan Stechow, TPOP*

Q If everyone could do one thing this week to be better prepared, what would you tell them?

Watch the Run, Hide, Fight video and share it with your family and colleagues. Have honest conversations, avoid the denial that it can't happen to you, and figure out the most basic of plans. Chance favors the prepared mind — and that's a worthwhile weekend's work.

— *Al Shenouda, City Shield Security*

KEEP GOING

Your Complimentary IMA Hospitality Training

A perfect addition to this guide — free online training built for restaurants and hotels, compliments of IMA.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Online training built for restaurants and hotels
- Turnkey — no IT requirements
- One year of unlimited access
- Four ~10-minute modules — assign the topics you choose

THE FOUR MODULES

- Situational Awareness
- De-Escalation Techniques
- Active Shooter / Assailant Response
- Safe Interactions with Homeless Persons

GET STARTED IN MINUTES

Go to ima.thepowerofpreparedness.com Manager code: **IMA2026**

- Set up your manager account and receive your access link.
- Share the link with current and future staff.
- Track completion on your dashboard.

Need more? Corporate-LMS integration, your own branding and locations, additional course topics, and custom scenarios are available via the IMA-TPOP site (fees apply).