

TAEKWONDO LIFE

June 1, 2016 Issue #1

Magazine

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1ST HISTORIC INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Active Shooter :

New Guidance For Taekwondo Schools Now Available

by Dave Young

Since the Columbine High School massacre on April 20, 2009, the term “active shooter” is widely known. However, only recently have schools received clear guidance on how to prepare for and train staff to respond to an active shooter.

In November of 2015, the **Interagency Security Committee** published *Planning and Response To An Active Shooter: Policy and Best Practices Guide*. This single cohesive document provides a greater focus on active shooter incidents than previous **ISC** documents and serves as the definitive resource for all Federal agencies and departments.

According to the ISC, an active shooter is defined as an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. While the majority of incidents involve the use of firearms, the term “active shooter” may also apply to an individual armed with any other type of weapon (e.g., firearm, knife, explosives, etc.).

One key recommendation of this guide is that employers provide active shooter training to all employees. Also, the guide emphasizes that no single response (e.g., lock down) fits all active shooter situations so individuals must know their response options and be empowered to respond decisively based on the situation.

As a result of this new guidance, martial arts schools should have their own policies and training in place. But, in addition, school owners should have sufficient knowledge of active shooter preparedness and response strategies to answer the questions they will inevitably be asked by their local schools

This article will provide a foundation of what you should know.

According to the FBI there has been over 160 active shooter attacks between 2000-2012. Many of these attacks had months of planning, practice and even rehearsal. Although there has been significant research to try determine why these attacks take place, at the time of the attack “the reason why” doesn’t matter. All that matters – at the point of impact – is doing what is necessary to save lives.



For staff and kids to have the best chance of survival requires planning, training and ongoing drills – with one of the primary goals being to clearly establish who will take the lead during an actual event.

There are a variety of approaches taught on how to best respond to an active shooter. There are single-response strategies (which are now discouraged) and multiple-response strategies such as: “Run, Hide, Fight,” “Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate,” and “Escape, Barricade & Defend.”

As a martial arts school owner, you should be trained in one of the multiple-response strategies – so you can train your own staff and be a resource to local schools.

However, the larger issue – beyond how to respond to an active shooter – is active-shooter preparedness, which is missing from most active-shooter training programs.

When an active shooter incident occurs, it’s critically important that everyone within a facility knows what to do and is working together. What’s obviously much more important is what can be done to prevent an active shooter incident from happening in the first place.

One of the most important things that staff can do to prepare for an active shooter attack is maintain a vigilant awareness of students so they might be able to address a situation before it escalates.

Staff can do this by following three steps:

1) **Identify** what is going on in their classroom

By paying attention to individual students and classroom social dynamics, staff should be able to identify specific risk factors and be able to answer these questions:

- What are the social dynamics and groups (or "cliques") that exist in the classroom?
- Who feels safe in the classroom? Who is scared?
- Which students are struggling for their own safety and survival?

2) **Log** any information that might indicate a certain student is at risk of acting violently

Logging unusual or threatening behaviors allows staff to identify patterns or trends in behavior that you might not otherwise notice.

- Conduct a bi-weekly walk-through of the classroom
- Review the browsing history of computers students have access to
- Document anything a staff members finds unusual or potentially threatening (so it can be used by administration or law enforcement if something were to happen)
- Keep a written diary ("safety log") of patterns of suspicious behaviors or threatening activities

3) **Report all behavior that gives cause for concern**

- **Be decisive** — if you feel your safety is being compromised, alert administration and authorities immediately
- When making a report, refer to your safety log
- **Have a preplanned response** — know your reporting procedures and duties, including who should receive your report and how to submit your report
- Identifying Risk Factors

Bottom line, the best approach to prevent an active shooter attack is to remain alert to what is going on with students, be decisive (alert authorities immediately if a problem is sensed) and have a preplanned response (report all behavior giving cause for concern).

Knowing how to respond to an active shooter is critically important but effective preparedness should not be ignored. Training programs should include both to provide the greatest opportunity to save lives.



Dave Young has dedicated his life to teaching others the lifesaving lessons he learned on the streets, as a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, during his experiences as a corrections and police officer, and as a professional law enforcement trainer over the last 25+ years. Dave developed one of the first active shooter training courses for the Marine Corps in 1990 and has presented the information in this course in live training programs both domestically and internationally.

You can learn more about Dave at: www.vistelar.com



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