Lockdown Planning and Preparation



If an armed person is known or believed to be inside a building and seeking to harm staff, a protective lockdown procedure needs to go into effect. Unlike evacuation, no internal team can move building occupants to safety when an armed perpetrator is roaming the building. Rather, every person must be able to hear a lockdown warning and take cover immediately.

- A public-address system that can broadcast a lockdown warning throughout all buildings is ideal. The system should be audible and intelligible throughout the facility.
- A number of people should be able to broadcast a warning from multiple locations as soon as a threat is detected. Also keep in mind that the receptionist desk or office located adjacent to the front door may be the first target of an armed aggressor.
- Everyone needs to know exactly what to do when a lockdown warning is broadcast. The goal is for all to become silent and invisible—which will make it more difficult for the armed perpetrator to find a target.
- Anyone present should hide within a closed and locked or barricaded room with the lights off. They need to be prepared to remain in lockdown for a lengthy period of time, until police or a recognized voice sound the “all clear.”

TRAINING, DRILLS & EXERCISES

Training, drills and exercises are essential to ensure that everyone can execute the emergency response plan. Evacuation drills also are required by many regulations. More importantly, they teach everyone how to take appropriate action to protect themselves and those around them.

- Sound the fire-alarm system, emergency voice-communication system or mass-notification system to familiarize everyone with the warning sound.
- Evacuation drills need to be designed to challenge people to find a secondary exit and have everyone travel to assembly areas.
- Train anyone assigned to assist people with functional needs and practice the use of evacuation-assist devices as part of the drill.
- Test electronic-notification systems and verify the ability to account for all evacuees.

Lockdown drills require only a limited amount of time and can be done in any

weather. Before conducting a lockdown drill, raise awareness of lockdown procedures and then announce the drill. Evaluate to make sure everyone knows where to go and how to take cover.