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Myths (and Facts) about Classroom Barricade Devices

By Lori Greene, AHC/CDC, FDAI, FDHI, CCPR

The following myths and facts about classroom barricade devices were presented at the annual conference of the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM), where I represented the Door Security & Safety Foundation in an effort to help each state fire marshal understand the safety concerns associated with the use of secondary locking devices.

NASFM members approved a resolution at the 2015 conference, supporting its Classroom Door Security Checklist. These documents are available on the Foundation's website, doorsecuritysafety.org; on NASFM's website at firemarshals.org; or by visiting iDigHardware.com/schools.

1. MYTH: The benefits of barricade devices outweigh the risks.

FACT: The perceived benefit of barricade devices is the relatively low cost; most ranging from \$50-\$150, and the easy procurement and installation. The school custodian could buy a slide bolt or padlock and hasp at the hardware store and accomplish a similar level of security. Historically, fire marshals have not allowed these security methods, because they're not code-compliant. Some jurisdictions are continuing to enforce current

codes that do not allow these devices, and some are being pressured by school districts and politicians to put the codes aside in favor of security.

2. MYTH: Emergency responders can easily defeat a barricade device.

FACT: I'd like to know how emergency responders are going to gain access to a classroom once a barricade device is in place. There have already been school shootings where the intruder brought materials with them to barricade the doors, including the incidents at Virginia Tech, the

West Nickel Mines schoolhouse, and Platte Canyon High School. At Platte Canyon High School, explosives were used by emergency responders to gain access to the classroom, and a student hostage was killed by the shooter during the chaos. After the West Nickel Mines shooting at an Amish schoolhouse, several news reports discussed law enforcement officers' concerns that they are not equipped to overcome classroom barricades.

3. MYTH: Some agencies recommend barricading with furniture; barricade devices are a better option.

FACT: A classroom barricade device may be easier to install than using furniture to barricade the door, but it may also be easily installed by an unauthorized person to secure a classroom and prevent access by school staff and emergency responders.

A 2007 study called *Barricaded Hostage and Crisis Situations in Schools: A Review of Recent Incidents*, examined 19 hostage situations that occurred in schools between 1998 and 2007. In 16 of the 19 cases, the perpetrator was



Photos courtesy of Lori Greene



a student at the school—the threat was already in the room. A barricade device available to anyone in the classroom could make these crimes easier to carry out, or could even encourage criminal acts.

4. MYTH: School shootings are very common and should be the main security concern for schools.

FACT: Statistics for school shootings are quite subjective. Some lists include gang-related shootings on school grounds, suicides, and accidental discharge of weapons. Other reports include only random shootings inside of the building, and omit suicides, gang related incidents, and deaths resulting from interpersonal conflicts.

In 2012, the year of the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, there were seven K-12 school shootings in the U.S. All of the school shooters were students except for two. The other casualties—three deaths and six injuries—were the result of students who brought guns to school.

While each incident is tragic, the statistics show that school shootings, although widely publicized, are very rare.

In comparison, the incidence of non-fatal victimization at school is very high. According to the National Center for Education, in 2012, students ages 12–18 were victims of more than 1.37 million nonfatal victimizations at school, including 615,600 thefts and 749,200 violent victimizations; 89,000 of which were serious violent victimizations.

5. MYTH: The risk of fire during an active shooter situation is low, so code requirements are not a priority.

FACT: Barricade devices are installed during a lockdown, so some may consider them safe for this limited period. One of the problems is that there are currently no widely-used standards for school security, and schools frequently call lockdowns for events that do not involve an active shooter. There are many situations that could require

an evacuation while a school is in lockdown, and doors must provide free egress to facilitate evacuation.

I don't know of a barricade device that meets the current model code requirements for fire protection, accessibility, or egress—particularly when installed along with existing latching hardware.

6. MYTH: Lots of other states are allowing classroom barricade devices.

FACT: Although there are a few states where barricade devices have been allowed either by the state fire marshal or because of political intervention, there are many states that have issued directives addressing their requirements for code-complaint hardware.

In Minnesota, I found the rationale requiring code-compliant locks very compelling given the fact that the state is the location of the 2005 school shooting at Red Lake High School, where a 16-year-old killed seven people and wounded five others.

Although the classroom doors were locked, the shooter broke the glass and gained access to the classroom by turning the inside lever. And yet, Minnesota has not responded to this incident by choosing inexpensive security over free egress, fire protection, and accessibility. There are glazing products and films that will delay access to the inside lever, and would be a much more logical solution than installing a barricade device.

7. MYTH: Fire marshals do not have authority over barricade devices that are not permanently attached to doors.



Photo courtesy of Wayne Ficklin

FACT: How many fire marshals would allow this chained and padlocked panic hardware (above) in an occupied school? This photo was taken after the end of the school day, but while the school was occupied for an event. The fire marshal has the authority to order the chains and padlocks removed, even though they aren't permanently attached. Why would classroom doors be any different?

8. MYTH: Locksets do not provide enough protection against active shooters.

FACT: There are many locks that provide the necessary level of security and meet the model code requirements for egress, fire protection, and accessibility. These products are certified to meet recognized industry standards for security and durability and are listed for use on a fire door assembly. In some cases, schools looking to use barricade devices already have locking hardware but may not have distributed keys or established the protocols for lockdown.

In addition to standard mechanical locksets, there are also electrified locks available which can be locked using a fob, a code, or from a remote location. All of these classroom locking products will allow free egress at any time.

The Final Report of the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission states: "The testimony and other evidence presented to the Commission reveals that there has never been an event in which an active shooter breached a locked classroom door." A holistic approach must be taken for classroom security including training, drills, key distribution, and impact-resistance of glazing adjacent to the hardware, and there is no reason to sacrifice life safety in favor of security.

Key Points for Consideration:

- After numerous international and national code development cycles, there remain no model codes that permit the use of emergency supplemental hardware in buildings other than group E, Group B educational and I-4 occupancies.
- Expanding the scope of emergency supplemental hardware to other use groups is inconsistent with the code development guideline found in Code of Virginia 36-99 where, “In formulating the Code provisions, the Board shall have due regard for generally accepted standards as recommended by nationally recognized organizations, including, but not limited to, the standards of the International Code Council and the National Fire Protection Association”
- There IS a national standard that provides guidelines for facility preparedness of ALL OCCUPANCIES regarding active shooter and hostile events. NFPA 3000 is the Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program and chapter 9 is specifically for facility preparedness.
- Active Shooter/Hostile Event protection of public buildings (and more broadly ALL occupancies) can be accomplished by referencing Chapter 9 of NFPA 3000 in the development, operation and maintenance of lockdown plans. This added reference to the only national standard for these events directly accomplishes the goals outlined in HB670 and SB33.

Proposal:

Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code

404.2.3.3 ASHER Program Compliance

The development, operation and maintenance of lockdown plans, including the use of emergency supplemental hardware, shall be in accordance with Chapter 9 of NFPA 3000.



NFPA 3000TM (PS)

**Standard for an Active
Shooter/Hostile Event
Response (ASHER) Program Toolkit**

2018

IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY TO COME TOGETHER AT A MINUTE'S NOTICE?



When the unthinkable occurs, it's imperative that everyone knows the role they have to play. **NFPA 3000™ (PS), Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program** is a provisional standard created to help communities develop an integrated program for planning for, responding to, and recovering from active shooter or hostile events. NFPA 3000™ (PS) is not a list of measures to take, but a set of guidelines with which any community can create a unified plan of response specific to their needs.

GETTING UNIFIED WITH NFPA 3000™ (PS)

STEP 1 ASSESS

Whether you're a first responder, facility manager, civic leader, or school administrator, the first step is to identify whether an integrated plan exists to deal with an active shooter or hostile event.

- Take the risk assessment we've created to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your current plan, or lack of one, available at nfpa.org/nfpa3000-assessment.
- Share the results of the assessment among your community partners to raise awareness of shortcomings and propose the creation of an integrated program.

STEP 2 ALIGN

Begin developing your integrated program by assigning a project leader and bringing together all stakeholders relevant to the mission.

- Participating partners can include but are not limited to Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, Emergency Management, Facility Management, Business Leaders, Community Leaders, and Education Leaders.

STEP 3 PLAN

Start creating a specific plan for the whole community using the completed risk assessment as a starting point.

- Purchase the standard and the (optional) online training course.
- The online training course includes additional tools, such as the Program Planning Checklist. Download a sample at nfpa.org/nfpa3000checklist.
- Use the standard to help identify gaps and resource needs.

STEP 4 EDUCATE

Once the plan is complete, the team begins to educate the community at large, assigning roles and responsibilities to police officers and firefighters, emergency services, teachers, doctors, nurses and anyone else who may be called on to play a crucial role in a hostile event.

- Ensure the best program is in place by training together, doing practice drills or exercises, evaluating the results, and revising the plan as needed.

Implementing NFPA 3000™ (PS) is a way for communities, their facilities, and responders to begin coming together to develop the relationships and trust that are essential to an integrated response. And given the stakes, the more unified we can act during a hostile event, the more potential we have for saving lives.



NFPA 3000™ (PS): STANDARD FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER/ HOSTILE EVENT RESPONSE (ASHER) PROGRAM

What You Need To Know About NFPA 3000™ (PS)

As more hostile events continue to occur, it is critical for law enforcement, first responders, emergency personnel, facility managers, hospital officials, community members, and others to have the information they need to be prepared when attacks happen. To address that need, NFPA® developed a new standard – NFPA 3000™ (PS), *Standard for an Active Shooter/ Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program*.

The purpose of NFPA 3000™ (PS) is to identify the minimum program elements needed to organize, manage, and sustain an active shooter and/or hostile event response program and to reduce or eliminate the risks, effect, and impact on an organization or community affected by these events. The document addresses the following areas and others:

- **Planning**
 - Assessing risks
 - Developing community-wide programs
- **Responding**
 - Establishing competencies
 - Communicating to all stakeholders
- **Recovering**
 - Planning recovery efforts
 - Taking into account healthcare and mental health issues

4 Main Concepts

Every chapter is written with these 4 concepts in mind.

Whole Community

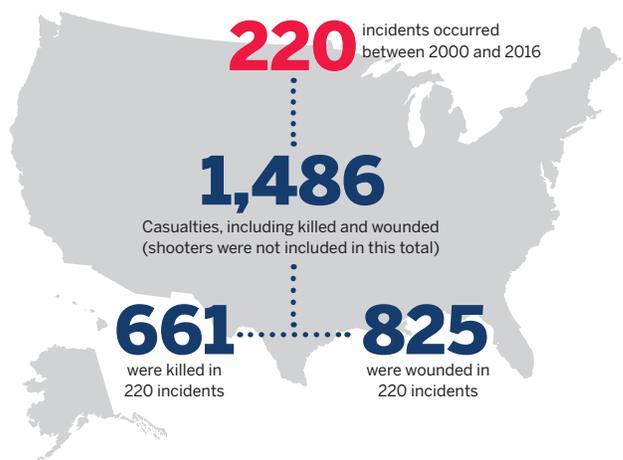
Unified Command

Integrated Response

Planned Recovery

By the Numbers

Active shooter events in the US: 2000–2016



Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response Program





NFPA 3000™ (PS): STANDARD FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER/ HOSTILE EVENT RESPONSE (ASHER) PROGRAM *CONTINUED*

What You Should Know



If you are a **policymaker**, you need to know how implementing NFPA 3000™ (PS) can help make your entire community safer. As a leader, you can influence all aspects of your community to put into practice the parts that are relevant and be the connection that brings everyone together.



If you are a **facility manager**, you need to be involved in the creation of an active shooter/ hostile event response plan, integrate the plan with your response community, and train all personnel on the plan.



If you are a **first responder** (law, fire, or EMS), you must work together across disciplines to have the needed knowledge and training to reduce harm.



If you are a member of the **public**, ask your local officials if they have an active shooter/ hostile event response program in place that is integrated with the entire community.

Who Worked on Developing NFPA 3000™ (PS)?

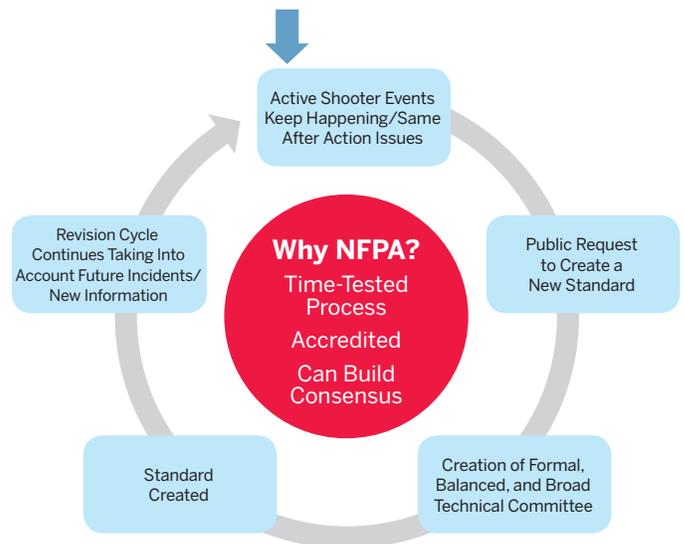
The standard was created with widespread support from fire service, law enforcement, EMS, emergency management, higher education, and facility management professionals. Committee members include representatives from 46 government agencies, organizations, and associations.

➔ **BECOME AN NFPA MEMBER**
FOR MORE OF THESE RESOURCES

Is NFPA 3000™ (PS) Only for the Fire Service?

No, NFPA 3000™ (PS) is for all safety planners, first responders, and policy makers. This includes fire, EMS, police, school superintendents, facility managers, building owners, safety officers, safety and security consultants, loss control/risk safety officers, risk managers, emergency services directors, and federal, state, city, and municipal government officials. All of these stakeholders need to be at the table and working together.

How was NFPA 3000™ (PS) Developed?



Next Steps You Can Take

- ✓ Learn more by going to www.nfpa.org/3000 where you can follow the standard's development process and sign up for updates.
- ✓ Identify and implement the components that are relevant in your community.
- ✓ Visit www.nfpa.org/3000news for access to all the resources you need to implement NFPA 3000™ (PS) in your community.
- ✓ Engage with our experts and your peers on NFPA Xchange™ at <https://community.nfpa.org/>.



IT'S A BIG WORLD.
LET'S PROTECT IT TOGETHER.™

This material contains some basic information about NFPA 3000™ (PS), *Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program*. It identifies some of the requirements in NFPA 3000™ (PS) as of the date of publication. This material is not the official position of any NFPA Technical Committee on any referenced topic which is represented solely by the NFPA documents on such topic in their entirety. For free access to the complete and most current version of all NFPA documents, please go to www.nfpa.org/docinfo. References to "Related Regulations" are not intended to be a comprehensive list. The NFPA makes no warranty or guaranty of the completeness of the information in this material and disclaims liability for personal injury, property, and other damages of any nature whatsoever, from the use of or reliance on this information. In using this information, you should rely on your independent judgment and, when appropriate, consult a competent professional.



NFPA 3000™ (PS) READINESS ASSESSMENT

How prepared are you in the event of an active shooter incident?

Active shooter/hostile event incidents are not exclusive to big cities or to any particular area of the United States. These incidents are occurring all across the country. This map from www.fbi.gov shows the number of incidents from 2000-2017.

Are you adequately prepared to respond if such an event occurs on your community or organization? Take this brief assessment to help evaluate your readiness. Gauge your readiness level by answering Yes or No to the questions that follow.



Yes No

- Your community or organization is adequately committed to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from an active shooter/hostile event incident in a coordinated manner — not only internally but in partnership with other organizations.
- Individuals in your community have discussed and have planned for coordinated roles in the event of an incident.
- You know what is expected of you in your job role if an incident occurs.
- You have a planning team that integrates public and private partners in your community that creates active shooter/hostile event plans together.
- You participate in planning or training with organizations outside of your own.
- Based on your needs and risk assessments, you have adequate supplies and resources to meet the mission of preparing, responding, and recovering from an event.
- You have adequate financial resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an incident.

Yes No

- Your community (or organization) has conducted a risk assessment to evaluate relative risks for facilities or locations.
- You have an adequate communication plan for yourself, your community and your stakeholders that would allow you to stay in touch with your stakeholders and loved-ones in the event of an incident.
- You have planned with outside agencies and non-governmental partners for support in order to recover.

Next Steps You Can Take

- ✓ Visit www.nfpa.org/3000news for helpful materials and access to all the resources you need to implement NFPA 3000™ (PS) in your community or organization.
- ✓ Learn more by going to www.nfpa.org/3000 where you can follow the standard's development process and sign up for updates.
- ✓ Engage with our experts and your peers on NFPA Xchange™ at <https://community.nfpa.org/>.



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NFPA 3000™ (PS) ACTIVE SHOOTER / HOSTILE EVENT RESPONSE PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY CHECKLIST

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

Community/Facility: _____

GOALS

This checklist helps guide the planning process for communities and facilities responsible for developing, managing, and sustaining an ASHER program by addressing emergency operations plans, standard operating procedures, and standard operating guidelines. The numbers that follow each item below refer to a specific section in NFPA 3000™ (PS), *Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program*. Please use this checklist to help you get started. A more detailed checklist and other tools can be found in the NFPA 3000™ (PS) online training. For more information, visit www.nfpa.org/3000.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT (6.2)

Yes No

- Develop an ASHER plan organized in a logical framework based on resource capabilities and risk assessment. (6.2)
- Establish multi-agency and multidisciplinary relationships to develop plans, risk assessments, mutual aid agreements, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs). (6.2.1)
- Use formal management systems to ensure that plans are developed, maintained, updated, tested, and activated during the entire four-step process that follows: (6.2.2)
 - Needs or gap assessment
 - Implementation
 - Plan development
 - Evaluation
- Ensure the planning team performs a needs or gap assessment of resources necessary to meet the plan's mission. (6.2.3)

Yes No

- Ensure the plan is based on the results of a risk assessment and an analysis of ASHER program capabilities in relation to the risk. (6.2.4)
- Confirm that, at a minimum, the analysis includes the following: (6.2.4.1)
 - Review of minimum standards* for emergency responder competencies in Chapter 12, Law Enforcement, and Chapter 13, Fire and EMS
 - Analysis of current capabilities, including other plans and mutual aid of the authority having jurisdiction
 - Review of agreements already in place between agencies
 - Identification of gaps between applicable existing standards** and current capabilities
 - Development of capabilities required to bridge gaps
- Ensure plans address coordination between agencies, including the following: (6.2.5)
 - Resource management across all disciplines
 - Staffing
 - Integrated training
 - Health and medical issues (including behavioral and holistic health)
 - Financial responsibilities and management
 - Recovery and restoration
- Check that plans are flexible so they can be adjusted as circumstances and environments change and serve as a starting point for multi-agency multidisciplinary operations. (6.2.6)

* NFPA 3000™ (PS) provides the minimum requirements.

** Existing standards include, but are not limited to: NFPA 99, NFPA 101, NFPA 450, NFPA 451, NFPA 1500, NFPA 1521, NFPA 1581, NFPA 1600, NFPA 1616, NFPA 1620, NFPA 1700, NFPA 1710, and NFPA 1720. For more information on any of these standards, visit www.nfpa.org/docinfo.

NOTES:



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