

Capital Gazette Shooting – Annapolis, Maryland

On Thursday, June 29, 2018, Jarrod W. Ramos, age 38, entered the Capital Gazette office in Annapolis, Maryland, shot and killed 5 staff members and wounded 2 others. He used a pump action shotgun. It was reported that Ramos barricaded the rear door(s) of the building in an apparent attempt either to keep victims from fleeing or to keep police out. He was subsequently apprehended by law enforcement authorities. In 2012, Ramos sued the news group for defamation, based on their coverage of a criminal harassment case against him.

There are many lessons that can be learned from reviewing active shooter events. While details of this incident are still being developed, it's clear that the shooter had a vendetta against the Capital Gazette and specifically targeted the organization. Executives tasked with security initiatives should take note of what occurred at the Gazette and continue to consider the strategy of conducting site security surveys and active shooter training. While there are no panaceas to prevent an active shooter event, there are a number of measures which can be taken to better secure facilities and provide the training that may ultimately save lives. Security assessments will identify weaknesses and provide options to consider as we all look to provide a safer environment for our employees.

Consider a few snippets from various news accounts below and some observations.

The suspected shooter's apparent motive is extremely idiosyncratic, based on a personal vendetta he had with the newspaper for covering his arrest on harassment charges. Jarrod W. Ramos sued the paper in 2012 and lost. Over the years, he also made multiple threats against the news outlet.

All organizations face the risk of active shooter/work place violence from disgruntled employees, customers, aggrieved spouses/partners of employees, terminated employees, etc. The threat can come from virtually anywhere.

"Gunman shot through the glass door to the office and opened fire on multiple employees," Davis said. "Can't say much more and don't want to declare anyone dead, but it's bad."

Offices need to review the vulnerabilities of entrances and internal areas. One of the recommendations often made is to harden the foyer/vestibule entrance area(s) with bullet resistant glass and material as well as continue on with using blinds/shades to provide concealment in the office areas. Limit public access to certain areas, if needed at all, and require card access for employees/staff members to enter space.

"Absolutely terrifying," he said. "You can just imagine, in a completely open scene, this was on the first floor, the ground floor. There are glass windows all around the room. There is nothing except for a few half-walls at the editors' offices on the left to impede a shooter."

Again, an illustration of the vulnerability posed by glass and the "shooter's" ability to visually observe people on the inside of the office space. Bullet resistant materials now exist to place over existing glass. In the alternative, tinting of windows and/or installation of blinds to provide concealment are an effective way to disrupt the active shooter. They often look to identify victims prior to engaging.

San Felice was one of the terrified employees who threw themselves under their desks when a shotgun-wielding maniac with a grudge against the outlet stormed their office and opened fire Thursday, killing five people and wounding two others.

The importance of providing areas of refuge for employees to retreat to as well as active shooter training. Hiding under desks provides little in terms of concealment.

"There is nothing more terrifying than hearing multiple people get shot while you're under your desk and then hear the gunman reload," Davis tweeted.

The importance of active shooter training and understanding the "run, hide, fight" principles. If one can recognize that the shooter is reloading, he/she needs to understand this may be the time to act/fight as there's a lull in the shooting.



Related Article: These are the victims of the Capital Gazette newsroom shooting

"There are glass windows all around the room. There is nothing except for a few half-walls at the editors' offices on the left to impede a shooter," he added.

After shooting, staffers at the Capital Gazette are still putting out a newspaper

Another reporter, Selene San Felice, said she heard the first shots and grabbed her purse before heading to a nearby back door. Two other staffers and an intern who were also trying to get away joined her, but the door

was locked.

With nowhere to go, she hid under a desk with an intern. Another woman got behind a filing cabinet after falling to the floor. John McNamara, [one of the five employees who died](#), kept trying to open the door.

But the gunman had barricaded the back entrance of the paper's office so people could not escape as he began "systematically hunting and killing," state's attorney Wes Adams said at a hearing Friday.

Having an adequate number of exits to the outside of the building is critical and a recommendation often made after a site assessment. Too often, office space in executive wings and elsewhere provides

no means of egress other than the way in which they entered; which is most likely into the danger area. Here there appears to have been a means of egress, but the door was purposefully blocked by the shooter, demonstrating a level of forethought by the shooter.

Summary

Active shooter preparedness is multi-dimensional. Physical site surveys are a necessary part of assessing where security measures can be upgraded. Organizations need to recognize there's a tradeoff between additional security and maintaining the open philosophy so important to many in the work place. This is a delicate balance and management can work with security specialists and facility managers to find ways to better safeguard against work place violence.

Active shooter and situational awareness training should be made available to all who work within your space. Along the same lines, victim sustainability training and access to public bleeding control stations and trauma products is essential. While we cannot necessarily prevent an active shooter from gaining access to our work place, we can provide our people with the best chance for survival.