

Courthouse Safety Training

Presented by the
National Center for State Courts

for the
Courts of Appeal of Maryland
Dept. of Emergency Preparedness & Court Security



Courthouse Safety

The purpose of this seminar is to highlight successful security techniques and common sense approaches to minimize risks while you are at work in the courthouse and courtroom.

A simple approach to enhancing your safety at work is learning to be alert, aware, and how to react to unexpected situations.

Introduction

Courtrooms are used for offenders and individuals who feel wronged by the criminal justice system. Many are reactive. Courthouses represent our way of life, thus making them prime locations for perpetrators to: plan attacks, select targets, engage in subversion and sabotage, call in threats and hoaxes, use bombs and chemicals, take hostages and manipulate the media.

PROTECTING

“OUR COURTS”

Protecting Our Courts

Courts should consider improving personal and facility security through the use of integrated security systems including:

- Protective Lighting
- Lockdown Systems
- Emergency Egress Doors
- Alarms
 - Intrusion
 - Duress Buttons
 - Fire/Smoke
 - Carbon monoxide
- Detection systems
 - Metal detectors
 - X-ray equipment
 - Radiation/Chemical
 - Explosive



Protecting our Courts

- Video CCTV surveillance systems
 - Digital, pan, tilt, zoom and color
- Entry controls
 - Magnetometers and wands
 - X-ray machines
 - Check points—reduced entry
- Security officers
 - Fixed posts-Staffing
 - Internal/External patrols
- Prisoner security
 - Guarded
 - Hand cuffed
 - Fully restrained
 - Shackled
 - 500 pound chair



QUESTIONS?

PROTECTING

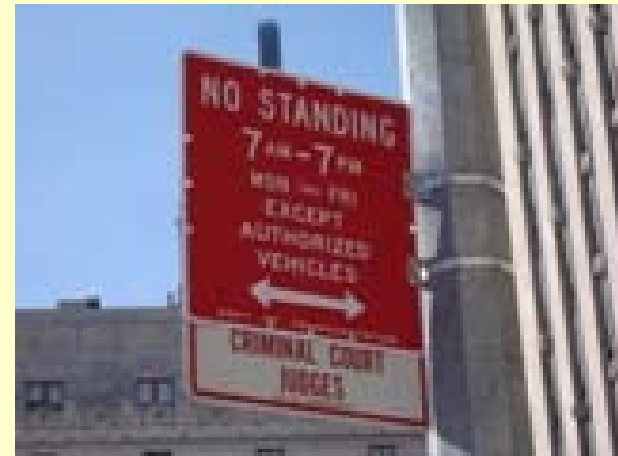
JUDGES

and

COURT STAFF

Protecting Judges

- Keep unauthorized persons from Judges' and employee separate entrances.
- Keep unauthorized persons from Judge's parking areas.
- Periodically check judges vehicles to discourage vandals and to detect suspicious activity.
- Do not use signs that identify judges parking and court office spaces



Protecting Judges

- Judges chambers should not be accessible from public hallways.
- Judges chambers and courtrooms should be visually inspected or swept every morning.
- The door to chambers should be kept locked whenever unoccupied, i.e. lunch hour.
- Be alert to cleaning staff and repair crews, i.e. background checks.
- Inspect and/or x-ray mail, packages, flowers
- Judges should make every effort to avoid public corridors, elevators, and prisoners.

Protecting Court Staff

- Court staff should be informed of and communicate to officials about the presence of difficult defendants, etc.
- Court staff should be trained in incident reporting and receive feedback within a reasonable timeframe.
- Court staff and those working in courtrooms should meet at least quarterly to debrief and discuss incidents.
- Court staff should have a seat on the Court's Security Committee and participate on its task forces.
- Court staff should be trained in "stay" or "evacuate" procedures and have office *Go Bags* within easy access.
- Court staff should practice evacuation drills regularly and understand the building "color code" system.

QUESTIONS?

Courtroom Decorum

Uniformed court personnel interact with the public on a daily basis. Officers should be impartial, polite, and visible.

It is the Judges responsibility to maintain order and decorum in their courtroom and it is the court security officers and court staffs responsibility to assist and support the judge.

The court security officers must deal with routine breaches of court decorum. Exercising common sense and tact usually corrects these breaches. Officers that correct the small violations aid in keeping a constant vigil of the courtroom.

Courtroom Decorum

Review of Duties for Court Staff & Security Staff

- Do not discuss court cases or Judges' decisions with anyone.
- Be attentive to duties and refrain from fraternization and idle conversation.
- Lock the courtroom when not in use.
- Keep all objects such as pencils water bottles, glasses, wire mesh baskets, scissors, etc. away from prisoners.
- Keep prisoners separated from complaining witness and victims at all times.
- Be familiar with the case and aware of all related threats; including witness, victim, and family issues.

COURTROOM CHAOS



QUESTIONS?

Courtroom Security

Enforcement of basic rules of Courtroom Decorum and Security such as:

- Reading a paper or magazine
- Possession of a Cell/Camera Phone
- Eating or Drinking
- Talking or Whispering
- Sleeping or Slouching
- Wearing inappropriate clothing, hat, shorts

Will give the courtroom a sense of security and order and will deter further acts of indiscretion.

Cell Phones



Courtroom Security

- Do not allow anyone to come between the officer and the prisoner.
- Do not allow anything to be passed between the prisoner and another person.
- Do not allow the officer to be distracted by other courtroom activities when responsible for security of prisoners.
- Ensure that in the event of an emergency or disturbance, the officer secures the prisoner before responding to the call and one stays put.



Positioning of Deputies in the Courtroom

Best practices for assignment of officers in the courtroom when:

- Incarcerated defendants are on trial.
- Incarcerated defendants are on the witness stand.
- Incarcerated defendants are on trial and other jailed witnesses are called to testify.
- Bail defendants become jail defendants.
- Tracking violent, escape risk and other potential risk defendants through verdict and sentencing.

QUESTIONS?

Fire-Emergency Evacuations

- Sound Alarm when ordered or appropriate
- Orderly evacuation – Who's in Charge?
- Rally Points Outside of Courthouse
 - Safe & Secure?
 - Communication?
 - Chain of Command?
- Accountability
 - Mobility Impaired – ADA Issues
 - Defendants?
 - Jurors?

Panic/Duress Buttons

- Strategically Placed in Courtroom
 - Judge – Bailiff – Court Reporter – Clerk
- Reaction Plans By Staff/Response Teams
 - Who does what, when, where and why
 - Where do you stay or go?
- Not for Fire/Medical Emergencies
- Practice, Practice, Practice

Medical Emergencies

- Call 911
 - Give Exact Location
 - Describe injury/illness
- Make person comfortable
- Stay Calm – Who is Trained to Respond
- Personnel trained in 1st Aid/CPR/AED
- *Is this a ruse?*

Bomb Threats



- Telephone?
 - Bomb Threat Checklist
 - Ask questions...Ask questions....
- Notifications
 - ALL must be reported
 - Law enforcement issue
- Decisions.... Decisions..... Decisions
- Evacuate? Stay and search?
 - Who searches?







Suspicious Package

- *Trust your feelings – sixth sense*
- **DO NOT TOUCH!!!**
- Immediately contact Law Enforcement
- Prevent or limit any exposure to package
- Prepare for evacuation
- Accountability of all

IT IS THIS EASY !!!



Where do you go??

ATF	VEHICLE DESCRIPTION	MAXIMUM EXPLOSIVES CAPACITY	LETHAL AIR BLAST RANGE	MINIMUM EVACUATION DISTANCE	FALLING GLASS HAZARD
	COMPACT SEDAN	500 Pounds 227 Kilos <i>(In Trunk)</i>	100 Feet 30 Meters	1,500 Feet 457 Meters	1,250 Feet 381 Meters
	FULL SIZE SEDAN	1,000 Pounds 455 Kilos <i>(In Trunk)</i>	125 Feet 38 Meters	1,750 Feet 534 Meters	1,750 Feet 534 Meters
	PASSENGER VAN OR CARGO VAN	4,000 Pounds 1,818 Kilos	200 Feet 61 Meters	2,750 Feet 838 Meters	2,750 Feet 838 Meters
	SMALL BOX VAN <i>(14 FT BOX)</i>	10,000 Pounds 4,545 Kilos	300 Feet 91 Meters	3,750 Feet 1,143 Meters	3,750 Feet 1,143 Meters
	BOX VAN OR WATER/FUEL TRUCK	30,000 Pounds 13,636 Kilos	450 Feet 137 Meters	6,500 Feet 1,982 Meters	6,500 Feet 1,982 Meters
	SEMI-TRAILER	60,000 Pounds 27,273 Kilos	600 Feet 183 Meters	7,000 Feet 2,134 Meters	7,000 Feet 2,134 Meters

Shelter-In-Place Lock-down/Lock-in

- Escapes/Violence in Workplace/Exterior Threats/Issues
 - Communication to staff
 - Safe Havens - Lock Doors
 - Wear Identification Badges
 - No stairs/restrooms
 - Police/Fire Departments

Active Shooter/Hostage Taker

- Get away quickly (If possible & safe)
- Activate Shelter in Place
- Seek Safe Haven
- Try to remain calm, quiet, observant
- Avoid public areas
- Listen for instructions
 - Public Address System
 - E-mail – Instant Messaging - Runner

If you are held Hostage

- Remain calm, be polite and cooperate with your captors.
- DO NOT attempt escape unless there is an extremely good chance of survival. It is safer to be submissive and obey your captors.
- Speak normally. DO NOT complain, avoid being belligerent, and comply with all orders and instructions.
- DO NOT draw attention to yourself with sudden body movements, statements, comments, or hostile looks.
- Observe the captors and try to memorize their physical traits, voice patterns, clothing or other details that can help provide a description later.

If you are held Hostage -2

- Avoid getting into political or ideological discussions with the captors.
- Try to establish a relationship with your captors and get to know them. Captors are less likely to harm you if they respect you.
- If forced to present terrorist demands to authorities, either in writing or on tape, state clearly that the demands are from your captors. Avoid making a plea on your own behalf.
- Try to stay low to the ground or behind cover from windows or doors, if possible.

Emergency Situations

- Prisoner escapes or attempted escapes
- Courtroom violence against or involving:
 - Judges
 - Court staff
 - Defendant
 - Jurors
 - The Public
 - Witnesses
 - Victims



Fulton County Courthouse Judicial Center in Atlanta on Friday, March 11, 2005.

Emergency Situations

Emergencies in the Court do not have to be related to court operations:

- Fire/Smoke
- Hazardous Materials
- Terrorist Attack
- Suspicious Package
- Weather
- Civil unrest
- Medical Emergencies
- Facilities Problems



Newton City Courthouse

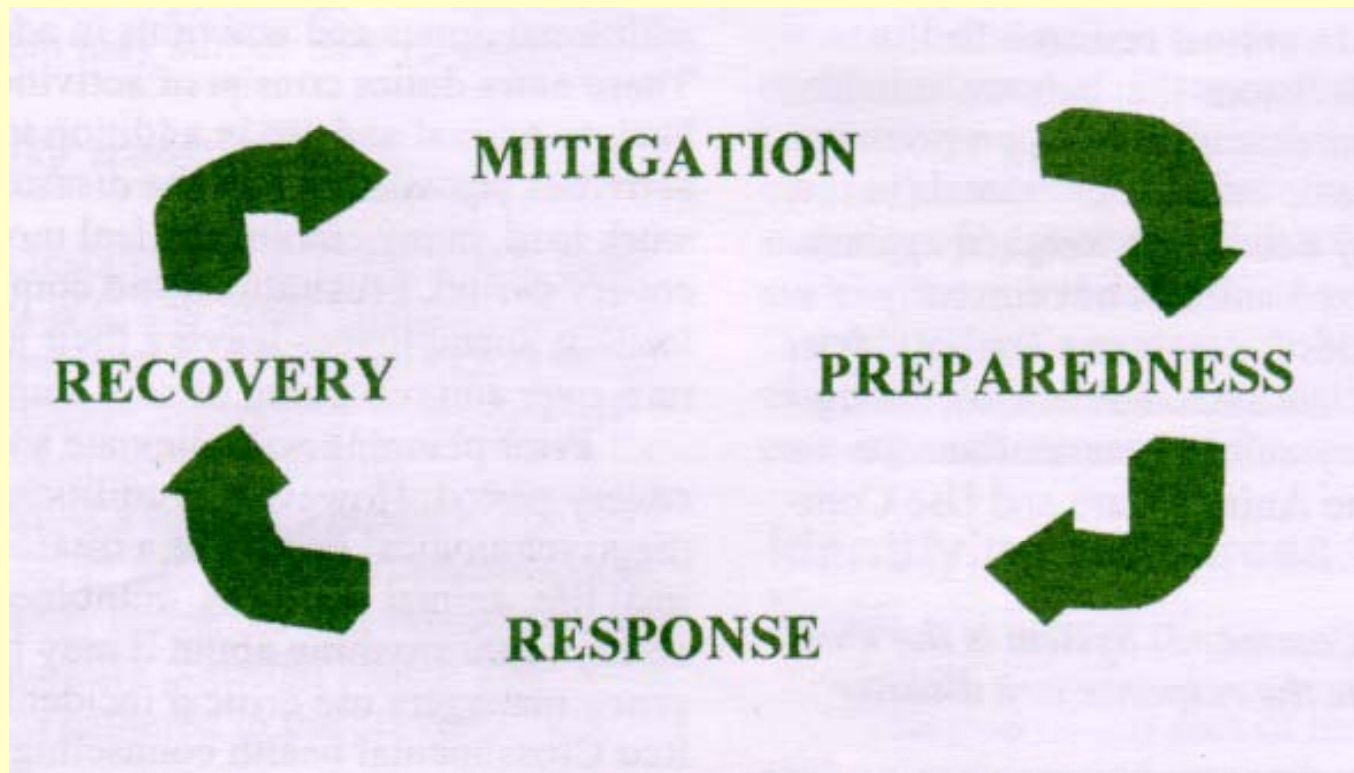
QUESTIONS?

Plan for Emergencies

Courts need to plan for emergencies. Following the standard principles of emergency management the plans should include the following steps:

- Mitigation - Determining the Courts needs and vulnerabilities by annually conducting vulnerability & risk assessments.
- Preparedness – Setting up comprehensive plans to deal with the vulnerabilities and needs of the Court. The plans should be tested and practiced, practiced, practiced!!!
- Response – Having a set of procedures and protocols which enable court personnel to respond to an incident.
- Recovery – The plan should include actions to be taken after an event to ensure that normalcy can be acquired as soon as possible.

Plan for Emergencies



Plans should be formed based on the

"ALL HAZARDS APPROACH"

The Emergency Plan Basics

All plans should include:

- A “color code” warning system with PA system
- An incident command structure which will incorporate responders from outside agencies into the command structure
- Judge protection and accountability procedures
- Employee accountability
- Evacuation procedures and routes where applicable
- Shelter in place procedures where applicable
- Building search procedures

Courthouse Warning Codes

- **Code Yellow – Situational Awareness**
 - Cautionary: Be aware and prepared to react to danger
- **Code Red - Imminent Danger**
 - Stay Put !!! Active Shooter in Courthouse
 - Emergency Protective Posture – Safe Haven
- **Code Green - Emergency – Evacuate Building**
 - Report to assigned location away from courthouse
- **Code Blue – Emergency Team Responding**
 - Fact Finding Being Conducted in Courthouse
- **Code White – Administrative/Informational**
 - Return to Normal Operations – All is well

The Emergency Plan Basics

- Securing prisoners procedures
- Court operations continuity
- Recovery and establishment of normal procedures after an incident
- Weapons safeguards; i.e. triple retention holster
- Communications
- Public Information

Training Exercises and Drills

To ensure that the Emergency Plans work they need to be taught, tested, and drilled.

- Officers and court staff trained in the skills necessary to carry out the plan
- Procedures should be drilled on a regular basis
- Full scale exercises to test overall plan

All agencies involved in carrying out a plan should drill and train together.

Summary

- Our Court system is a target for many different reasons.
- Security systems and our employees are essential to our judicial process.
- Protection of our judges and the public is paramount in ensuring an accessible and safe judicial system.
- Enforcing all rules on a daily basis will help deter a future tragedy.
- Good security planning and practice will ensure continued fair and safe access to justice.
- Training, exercises, and drills will help ensure readiness, while identifying shortfalls and areas of concern.

HOW AWARE & ALERT ARE YOU?



QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

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