

NFPA 3000 Standard: Addressing Active Shooter and Hostile Events

APPA Responds, Advances Improvements to NFPA Active Shooter Standard

By John Bernhards

A new milestone standard now released by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is likely to reset our thinking when it comes to active shooter and hostile intruder events, and facility readiness, on our educational campuses.

In April, the NFPA released a new standard entitled *NFPA 3000, Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program*. This standard was developed and published in just seven months, and was initiated by first responders in Orange County Florida, following the June 2016 Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando. NFPA quickly assembled a standards development committee of 46 subject matter experts, to include facility owners, academics, and emergency and law enforcement personnel. Also included were active shooter victims who engaged in the standard development dialogue and solutions-making process.

The momentum and drive to develop and release NFPA 3000 was further infused by the horrific massacre occurring October 1 at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas, resulting in 58 dead and over 500 wounded. A man armed with semi-automatic rifles fired from a 32nd-floor hotel window, raining gunfire on unsuspecting concert goers below. Four months later the standard was released for public review and comment, and following review and adoption of proposed public changes, the standard was finalized and published on April 11, 2018.

It is anticipated that NFPA 3000 will be readily adopted in many jurisdictions, as public pressure escalates on the issue of active shooters, and as communities seek answers. Now is the time for all educational facilities leaders to familiarize themselves with the NFPA 3000 standard, and to begin the conversation with state and local code officials on whether the

standard will be adopted in their jurisdictions – and, if so, when. Dialogue is also needed across different institutional departments, most notably facilities, emergency planning, life safety, and campus law enforcement. The standard is available for viewing online and at no cost on the NFPA website at www.nfpa.org. APPA members attending the APPA 2018 Annual Conference in Washington D.C. (August 3-5) can participate in an NFPA 3000 educational session where NFPA, together with APPA, will present and discuss the standard, and be available to answer questions.

IMPACTS TO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The focus of NFPA 3000 is preparation for hostile events, coordination when events occur, and event recovery. There are numerous areas within NFPA 3000 that have an impact on educational facilities with regard to emergency planning, facility evacuation plans, preparation, and risk management. NFPA 3000 outlines requirements for a risk assessment of facilities that establishes which buildings and properties are at “high risk” for hostile events. The standard also identifies funding obligations and defines facilities readiness requirements.

APPA'S RESPONSE

APPA's Standards and Codes Council (ASCC) promptly responded to NFPA 3000's development. After careful review of the draft standard, APPA conducted an online town hall forum attended by more than 400 APPA members and stakeholders. NFPA's



John Montes joined both myself and codes consultant Bill Koffel to summarize the standard's content and identify areas of impact to educational facilities.

The areas of greatest impact were found in Chapter Nine of the standard, entitled "Facility Preparedness." The standard identified the need for an annual exercise or drill at each facility. Town Hall Forum attendees raised concern over the overall effectiveness and necessity of an annual hostile event exercise for every building on a campus with multiple, contiguous build-

ings. The requirement was viewed as overly redundant, costly, and a strain on campus personnel resources.

Campus law enforcement and life safety officials contacted by APPA also shared these same reservations and concerns. After receiving these responses, APPA crafted proposed changes to the draft standard through NFPA's public comment process. APPA's proposed changes included a recommendation that the number of required annual exercises be limited to no more than three per campus. This language would limit the required number

of exercises but would not restrict a campus to conduct as many exercises as it felt necessary in preparing for such events. APPA also proposed that "table top exercises" be listed specifically as an exercise option in the final standard.

The NFPA 3000 committee positively responded by removing the exercise requirement for every facility, and by adding language simply stating that "facilities with multiple buildings in a contiguous location shall annually exercise ASHER plans." To further complement this final language, the annex to the NFPA 3000 standard identifies "facilities with multiple buildings" to include schools and college campuses. In short, the new language in the final approved standard provides educational institutions with considerably more latitude. Additionally, the approved standard also clarifies the meaning of "exercise" and identifies seminars, workshops, and table tops as acceptable discussion-based "exercises," along with the more resource-demanding exercises (operational exercises) such as live building drills and full-scale exercises.

CONCLUSION

NFPA 3000 requires facility owners and management to coordinate closely with life safety, emergency personnel, law enforcement, and first responders to ensure buildings and grounds have appropriate resources, emergency plans, and systems in place to prepare and respond to hostile events. The APPA Standards and Codes Council quickly engaged members to respond to NFPA 3000 – resulting in positive changes and making the standard more flexible and less costly to implement. ☺

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