

NSC 2019: Workplace Violence and Mass Shootings

"Our best possible course of action is to have a workplace devoid of negative emotions," says Jack Jackson, SafeStart senior consultant.

Stefanie Valentic EHS Today | Sep 13, 2019

With the prevalence of active and mass shootings in the United States, employers should have an emergency response plan to protect workers.

However, some companies wait to have a plan because leadership doesn't see the possibility of it happening, said Jack Jackson, SafeStart senior consultant, at the 2019 National Safety Congress and Expo in San Diego.

"We have to talk about it now, rather than later," Jackson told attendees. "We don't need to sit complacent in our surroundings and in our own little world because we don't think it could happen."

Jackson explained how **threats leading to a violent incident in the workplace can happen both on and off the job. A person must plan for both scenarios. Safety professionals can train workers to recognize signs to prevent an incident from occurring.**

"We can never say enough about these incidents until we do something about them," he said. "Either we can plan now, or we can wait for something to happen and then you get to decide."

He referenced the Aug. 4, 2019 mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio, in which a lone gunman killed 10 people. Jackson explained, "Police were able to take down the gunman because they were training and had a plan in the event that will happen."

During an attack, Jackson alluded to the 3 Fs: **Fight, Flight or Freeze**. A pre-determined plan will reduce the chance someone will freeze in an active shooting situation. During an incident, a person will fall to the level of training they had to make decisions. Stress limits the ability of a person to perceive information and make a plan. Jackson said following levels of stress can dictate how well someone responds:

White: Not alert, comfortable in surroundings, best for being at home.

Yellow: Relaxed alert, not caught off guard, eyes and mind are on the task you are performing.

Orange: Possible threat. Extra vigilant and aware of what is going on around you, increased heart rate.

Red: Optimal level for tactical and survival skills. Threat has been verified. Fine motor skills compromised.

Grey: High heart rate. Physical and mental performance suffers - slow auditory response. Complex motor skills compromised.

Black: System overload. Possible evacuation of bladder and bowels.

An emergency response plan can help someone in an active or mass shooter situation overcome stress and respond accordingly. Jackson also informed the audience about the "**Run, Hide, Fight**" widespread tactic of reacting to an active shooter incident.

Watch the video to get Jackson's insight on the "Fight" response of active shooter response protocol.

https://youtu.be/UMu2t_rVdTk