

# PROTECTING YOUR CONGREGATIONS AGAINST AN ACTIVE SHOOTER

## **Presenters:**

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*The opinions of the presenters do not necessarily reflect the  
opinions of Church Mutual Insurance Company.*



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Excellence in Faith & Service

# **AREAS IN FOCUS**

- **Do congregations really need a plan?**
- **Case study & decade of shooters**
- **Mentality of a shooter**
- **Shooter factsheet**
- **Considerations for a robust security and response plan**
- **Other important considerations**
- **Q&A Session**

# **DO CONGREGATIONS NEED A PLAN?**

# **CASE STUDY**

# Sept. 15, 1999 Church in Texas

- Over 150 teenagers at church singing hymns.
- Suspect entered and shot 14 people.
- Ended up killing 7 people and injuring another 7 before killing himself.



# March 12, 2005

## Church in Wisconsin

- Suspect opened fire on the congregation, killing 7 and wounding 4 before taking his own life.
- He was described by people that knew him as a normal guy with no warning signs.



# **Dec 9, 2007**

## **Church in Colorado**

- Suspect was asked to leave a youth center.
- Returned, opened fire killing 2 and injured 2.
- 35 minutes later, he went to a church and killed 2 people.



**Colo. Church  
Gunman 'Hated  
Christians'**

Was expelled from  
missionary school  
where he killed 2

# March 8, 2009

## Church in Illinois

- Suspect walks into the church and shoots the pastor dead, point blank.
- Several church members confronted the shooter with aggression and overpowered him.

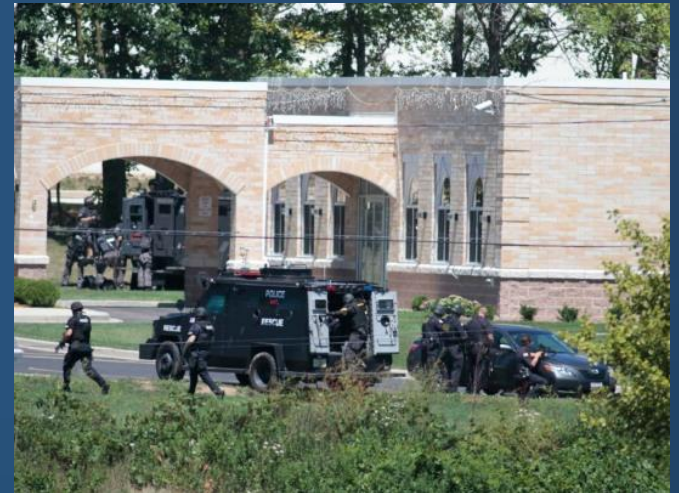




# August 5, 2012

## Temple in Wisconsin

- A male suspect fatally shot 6 people and wounded 4 others in a mass shooting.
- The suspect committed suicide by shooting himself in the head.



# March 31, 2013

## Church in Ohio

- A suspect killed his father at the church.
- Afterward, he shouted about Allah and God.
- The suspect was later arrested by the police.



**Man Leaving Easter Service  
Murdered by Son: Police**

# U.S. Faith Based Shooter by State

## Inside the Sanctuary (1999-Present)



# Active Shooter Defined

Armed person(s) whose action is immediately causing death or great bodily injury.

# Mentality of a Shooter

- Will continue until stopped
- Primary Motive: Revenge
- Other Motives:
  - Hatred, domestic or marital issues, child custody dispute, congregation dispute, denied services, disappointment in leadership's decision, physical/mental illness, financial trouble, mad at the world
  - Or it could simply be anything
  - Are there pre-indicators?

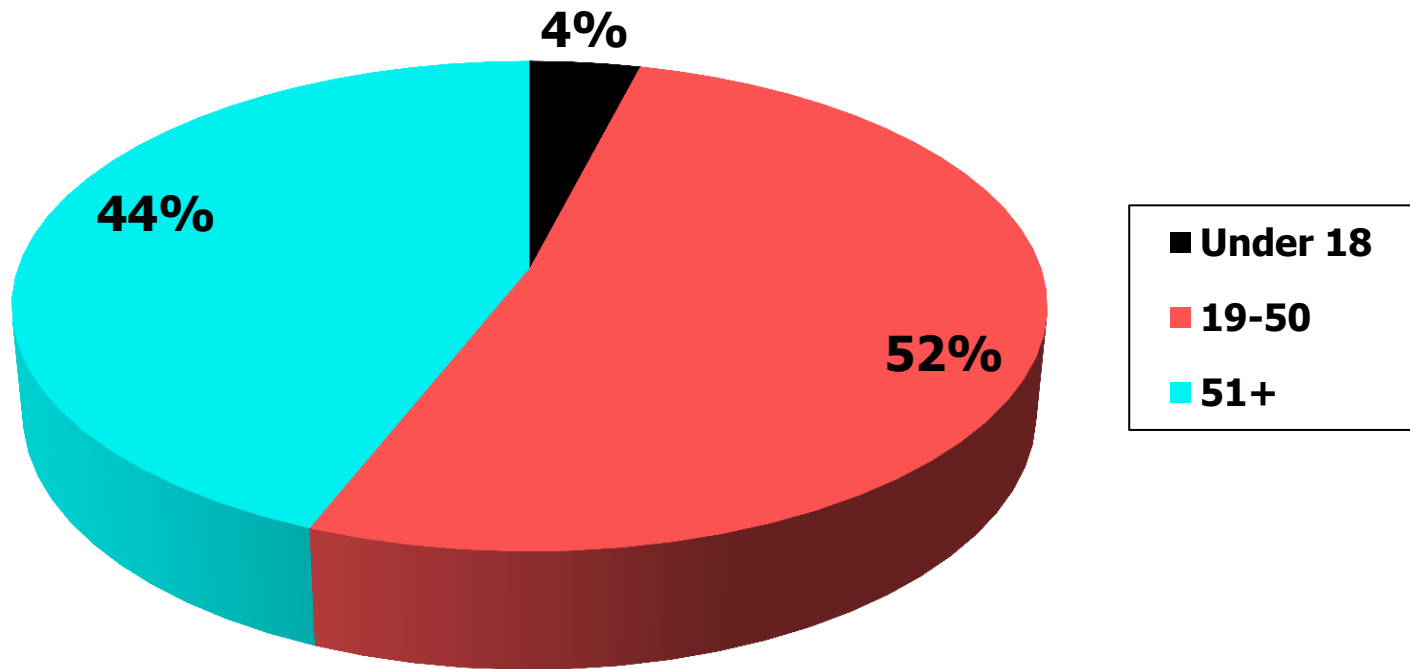
# Basic Analysis

## Key Findings:

- Unless person communicates intent directly
  - Predicting an active shooter incident is difficult
  - More difficult in large congregations

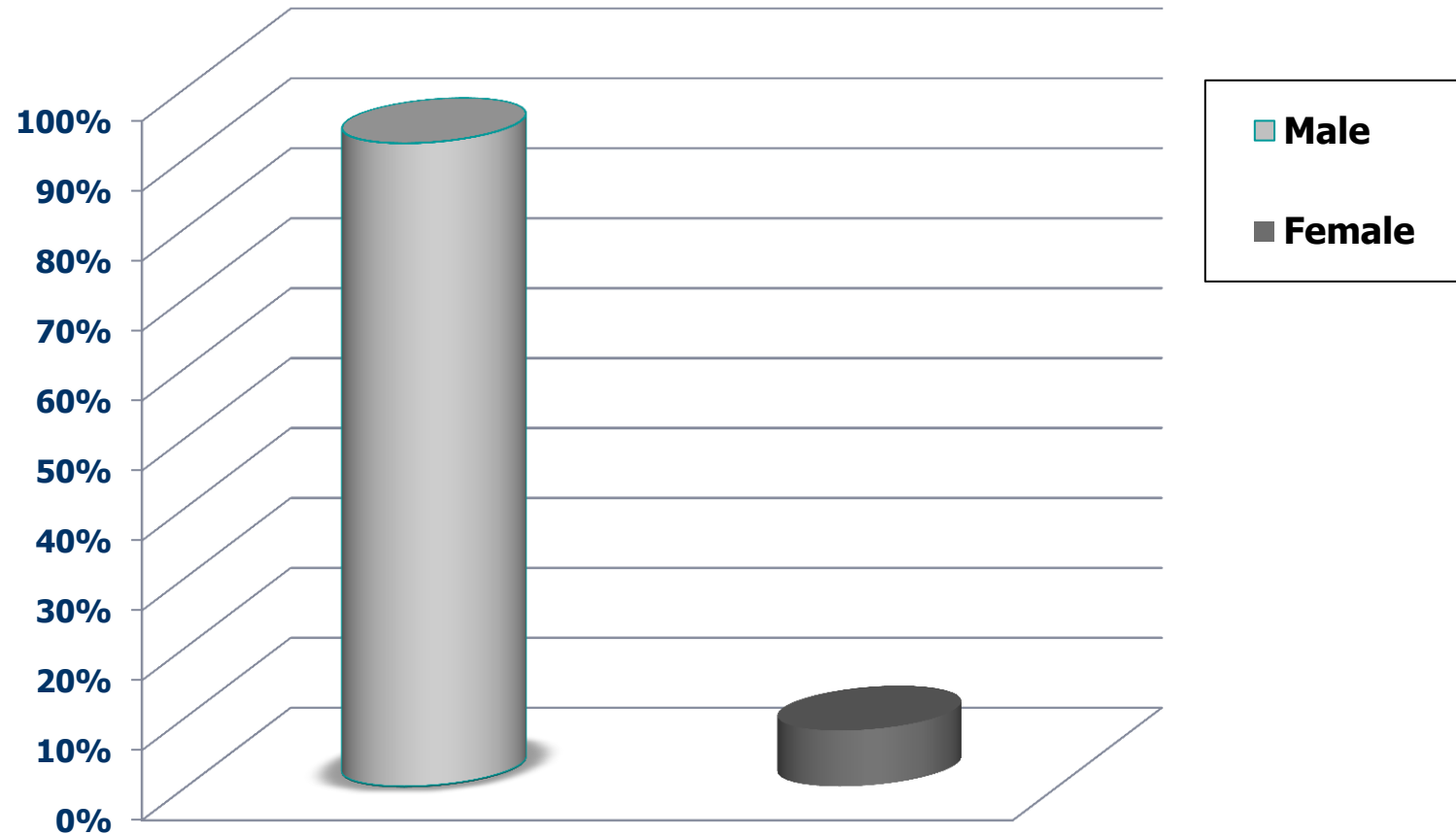
# SHOOTER FACTSHEET

# Shooters by Age

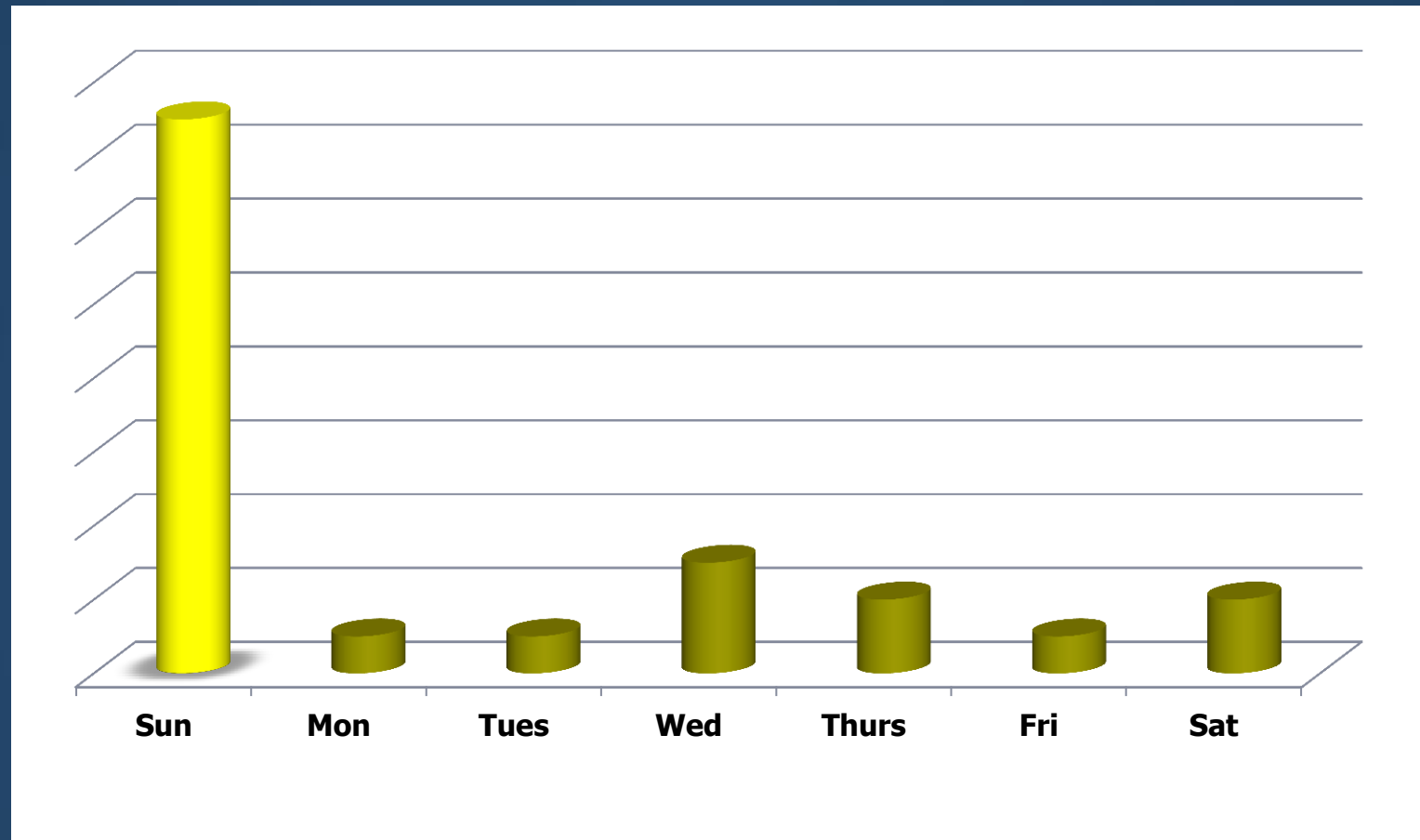




# Shooters by Gender

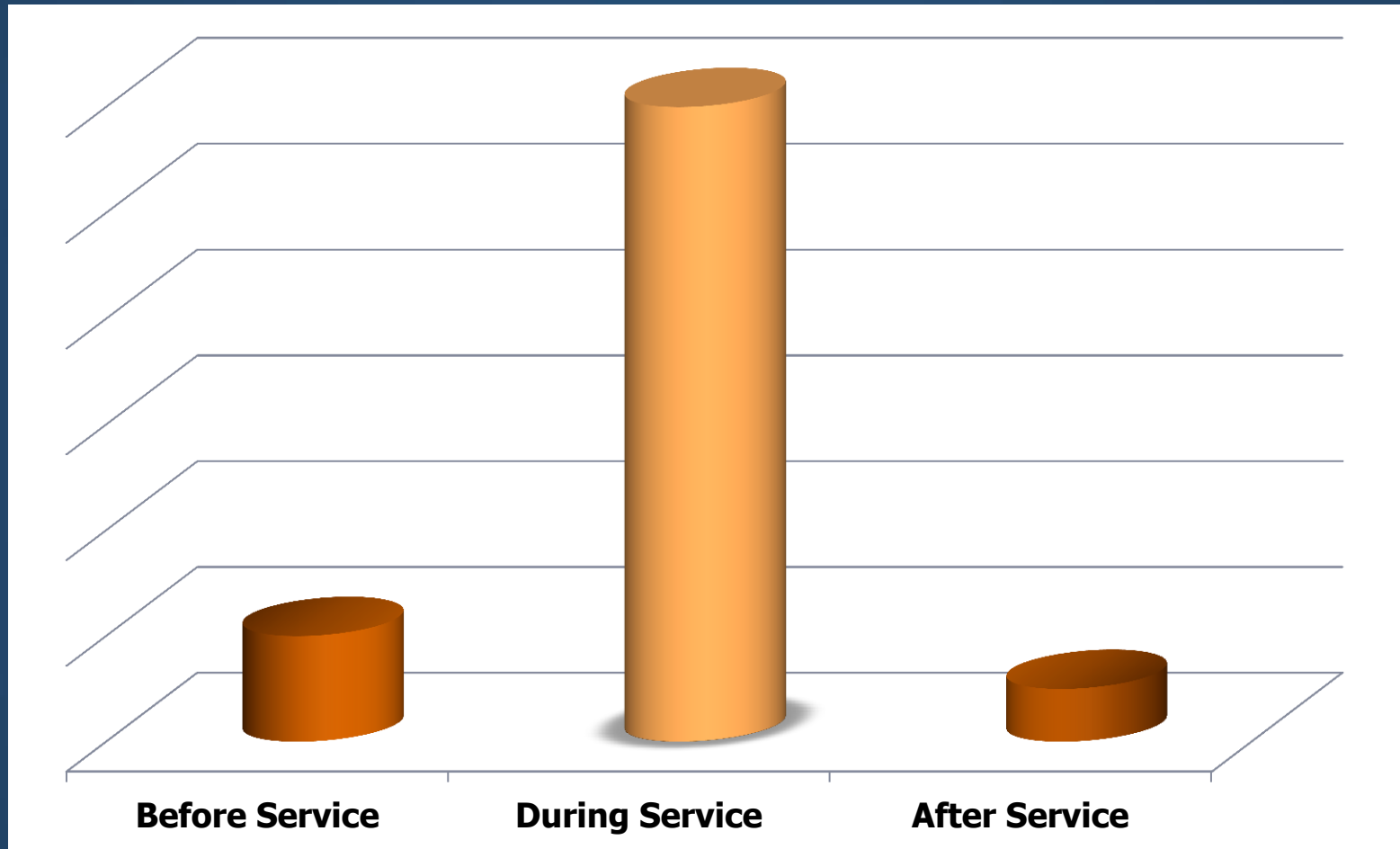


# Day of Choice



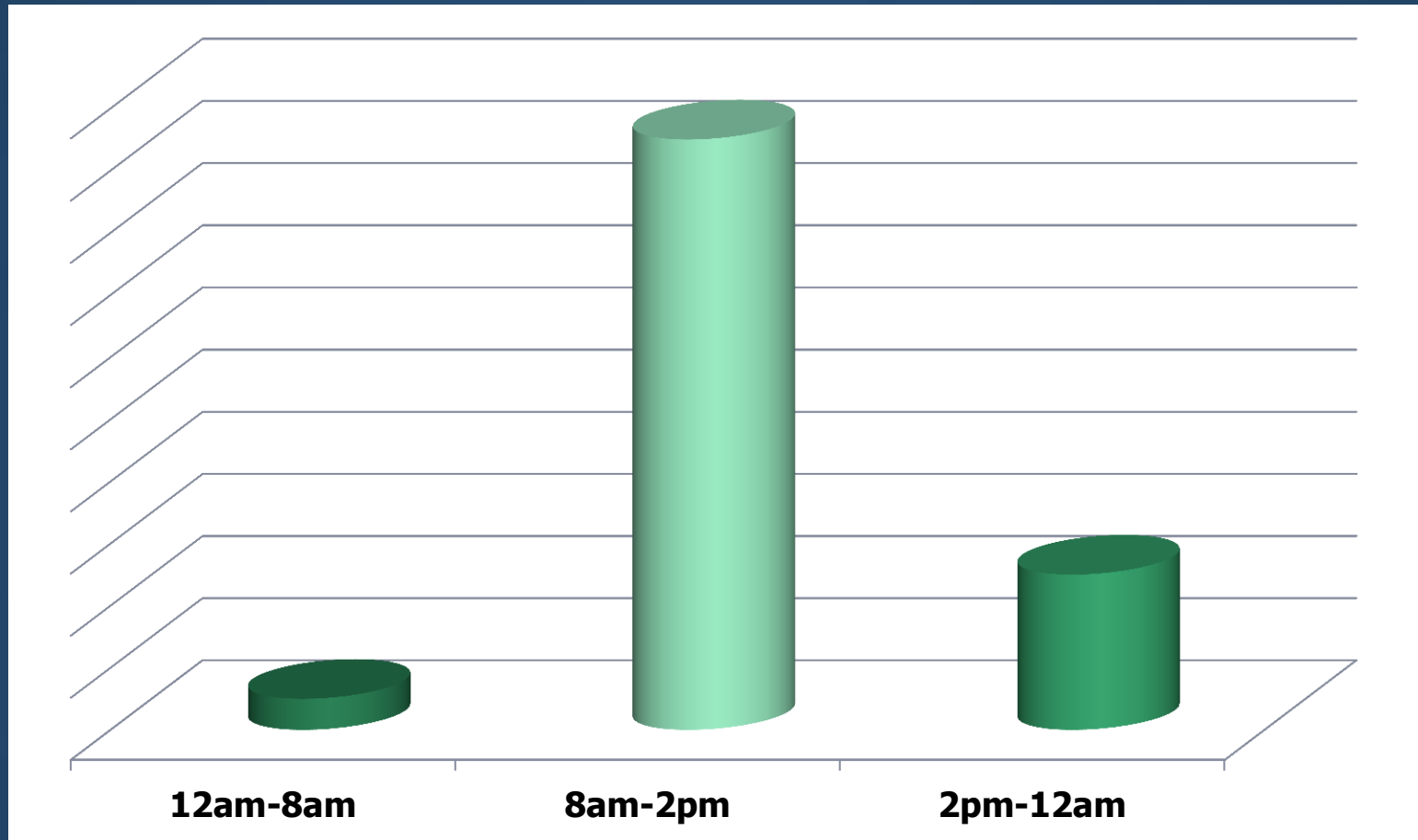
- The idea may brew for weeks or months
- Pre-implementation 2 days prior to the attack
- Higher risk on Sundays

# Period of Choice on Sunday



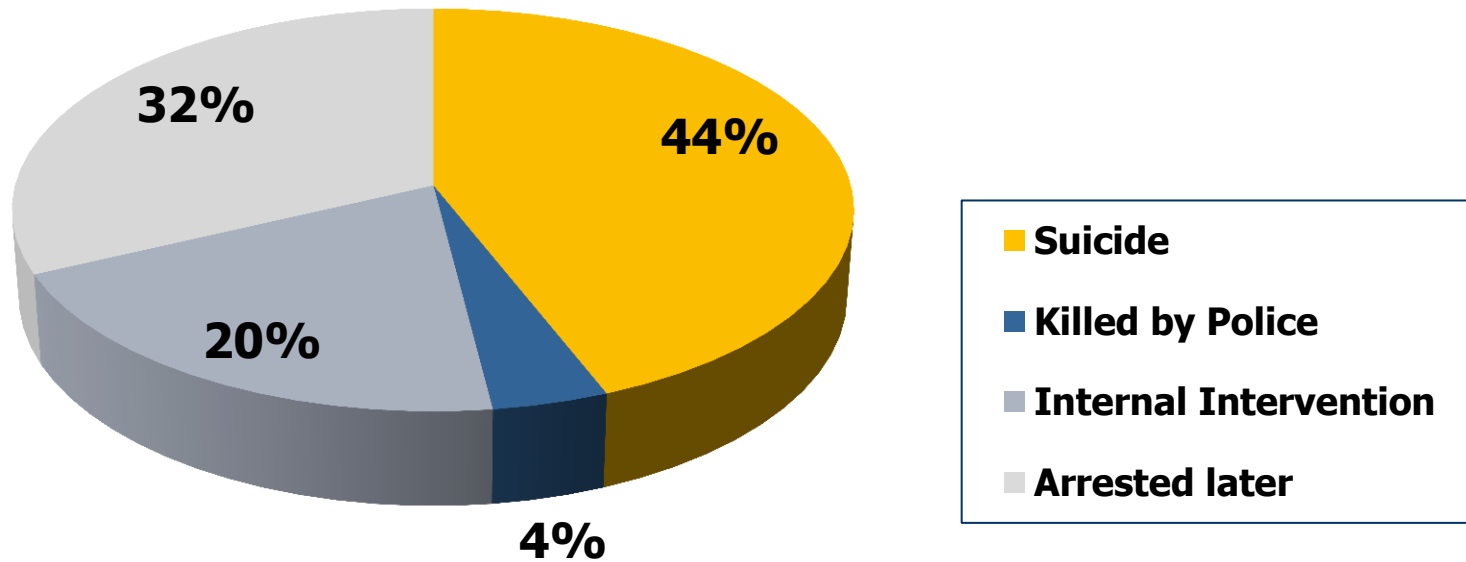
- Usually after service begins

# Time of the Day



- Can happen at any time
- Key Factors: Occupancy and opportunity

# Shooter Outcome



- Most incidents end before police arrive

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR A ROBUST SECURITY AND RESPONSE PLAN

*The following are considerations for a robust security and response plan and does not cover every conceivable situation or all variables.*

# **Your plan**

- **Initial assessment**
- **Promote awareness among your congregation**
- **Preparedness for key staff**
  - **Recommended course of action**
  - **Post-incident course of action**
    - **Evacuation process & assembly point(s)**
    - **Post-incident counseling process**
    - **Media protocol**
- **Considerations for armed security**

# **Initial Assessment**

## **Factors to consider:**

- Size and layout of facility
- Size of the congregation
- Internal & external risk factors
- Lockdown capability
- Number of exits
- Location of children's ministry or other programs
- Unarmed or armed security & state laws
- Pre-established emergency response protocols
- Training for congregation, staff, & security
- Communication methods
- Police/sheriff/medic response time
- And many more



# **Promoting Awareness Among Congregation**

- **Be proactive about engaging your congregation**
  - **Larger congregation may want to consider promoting awareness with everyone or by groups**
  - **Smaller congregation could address their congregation as a whole**
  - **Or via Newsletters/brochures**

# Content



## ACTIVE SHOOTER

*A SURVIVAL MINDSET*

- Recommended Action
  - Before any incident
  - During incident
  - Post-incident

## **Before any incident**

- Urge congregation to maintain general awareness
- Encourage them to report unusual situation to staff

## **During an active shooter incident**

- Include recommended course of action such as
  - Get out if safe to do so
  - Call for help
  - Unable to get out, then hide horizontally
  - If viable, lock door
  - Face to face contact, go for weapon

## **Post active shooter incident**

- **List evacuation expectations inside your brochure**
- **Indicate services available**
  - **Counseling and prayer time**
- **Cooperation with law enforcement**
  - **Police may need to speak to witnesses**

# **Prepare Key Staff**

- Leadership
- Ushers
- Children's ministry staff
- Youth ministry staff
- Volunteers who play critical roles

## **Course of action should cover:**

- Shooter on premises but not at key staff location
- Shooter enters key staff location

# **Shooter on Church Premises**

## **Applicable key staff options:**

- **Identify the general location of the threat**
- **Alert others**
- **Call 911...seek shelter or lockdown in a safe place**
- **Lock door or blockade with any furniture**
- **Turn lights off**
- **Lead people to hide between or behind furniture**
- **Ask congregation/others not to huddle together**

# **What If You Are Outdoors?**

## **Guide congregation/children to:**

- **Seek shelter in any safe building nearby**
- **If not practical to do so:**
  - **Run with group toward opposite/safe direction**
  - **Spread out in small pockets**
  - **Run between objects**
  - **Upon arriving at safer location, remain there**

# **Shooter Enters Your Location**

**Congregation should implement safety options**

**Applicable key staff should:**

- **Consider the following factor**
  - **Shooter's distance from staff, congregation, & children**
- **Key staff/others close to shooter should act**
- **Call 911 as soon as possible**



# **Post-Incident for Key Staff**

- **If evacuation is necessary**
  - Key staff should guide people to assembly point(s)
  - Assist with headcount if applicable
- **Counseling process**
  - This may entail prayer & encouragement

# **Post-Incident for Key Staff (continued)**

- **Media protocol for Key Staff**
  - Staff/others should know your media protocol
  - Control your message
- **Social media factor**
  - Key staff should Discourage people from posting info on social media
  - May cause confusion and make it more difficult to manage situation at hand

# Are These Measures Enough?

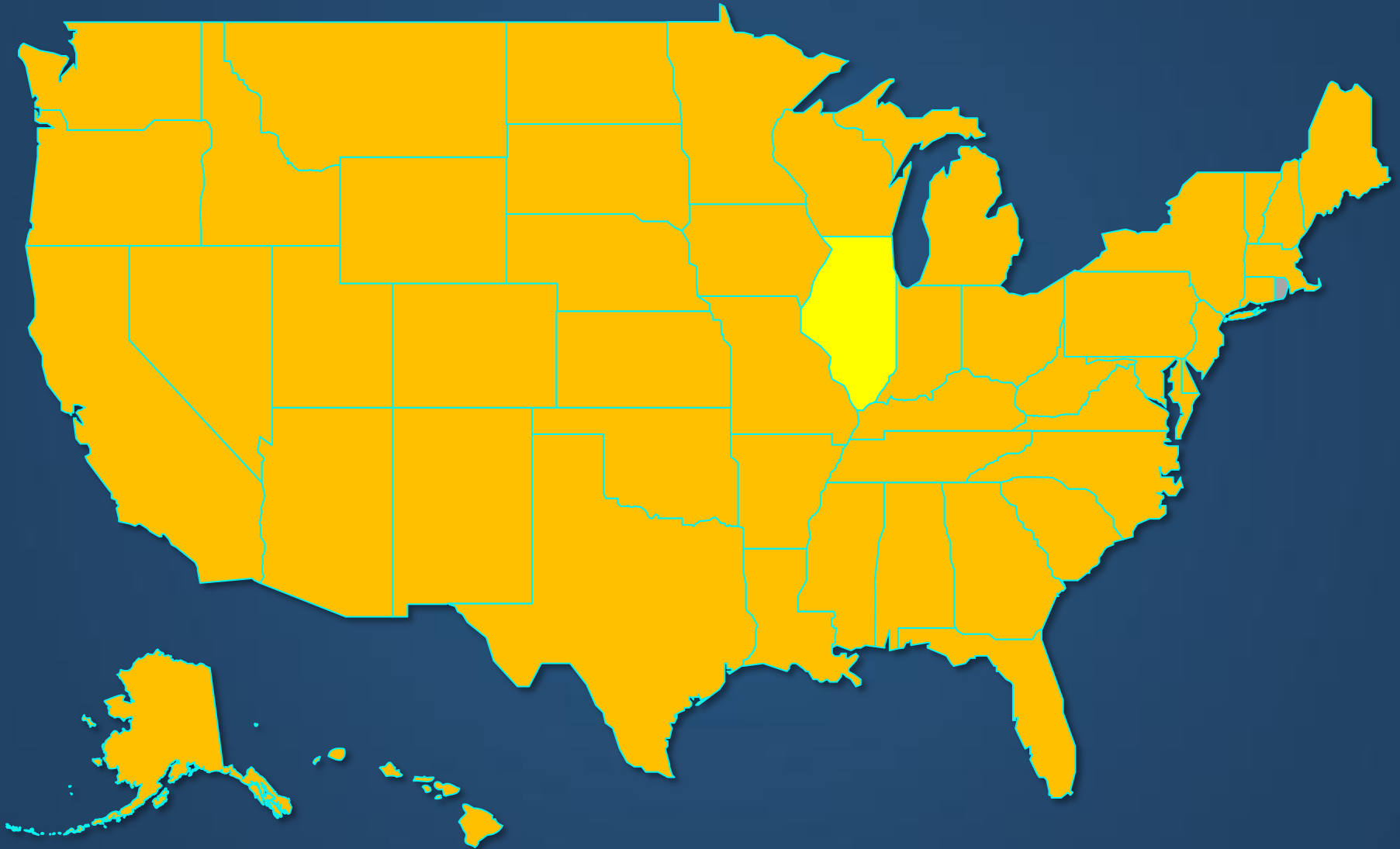
## Recent Assessment:

- Awareness & staff response plans great...
- A New Factor – Advanced First Aid training
- More robust security response plan needed
  - Security team

# **The Basics of a Security Team**

- **Very complicated subject & process**
  - **No easy path. State laws vary**
- **Options to discuss with legal team:**
  - 1) **Internal armed security team via:**
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> amendment**
    - **CCW**
    - **Security guard certification**
  - 2) **External armed security guard company**
- **Involve consultant or legal team**

# General CCW Laws by State



# Armed Guard Certification by State

<b>Alabama</b>	<b>Hawaii</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>South Dakota</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	<b>Idaho</b>	<b>Michigan</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Tennessee</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	<b>Illinois</b>	<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>N. Carolina</b>	<b>Texas</b>
<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>Indiana</b>	<b>Mississippi</b>	<b>North Dakota</b>	<b>Utah</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>Iowa</b>	<b>Missouri</b>	<b>Ohio</b>	<b>Vermont</b>
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Kansas</b>	<b>Montana</b>	<b>Oklahoma</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>Oregon</b>	<b>Washington</b>
<b>Delaware</b>	<b>Louisiana</b>	<b>Nevada</b>	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>West Virginia</b>
<b>Florida</b>	<b>Maine</b>	<b>N. Hampshire</b>	<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>Wisconsin</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>S. Carolina</b>	<b>Wyoming</b>

- ◆ Most Regulated
- ◆ Less Regulated
- ◆ Minimal Regulated

# **Internal Armed Security Team**

**If congregation decides to arm & state laws permits:**

- **Decide if plain clothes or uniformed security**
  - **Current/retired Police officers is a good option**
- **Establish a committee system**
  - **They decide the # of armed persons needed**
  - **Establish a process to approve or disapprove requests**
  - **Possible Committee representation:**
    - **Board members**
    - **Senior pastor & elders**
    - **Legal counsel**
    - **An expert or experienced person**

# Selection criteria & protocol

## Some considerations:

- Do you arm every interested person?
- Establish a standard selection criteria
- How does the leadership select who is authorized?



# Establish use of force policy

## Some Considerations:

- How strict should your policy be?
- Get input from legal team and the police
- Direct and straight to the point
  - State your goals
  - Define lethal and less lethal weapons
  - Define danger to life or great bodily injury
  - When should less lethal weapon be considered?
  - When can lethal force be used?
  - Who provides the weapons to security team?
- Must be in compliance with the law
- Identify liabilities/risk factors if lethal force is used

# Training your armed security team

## Considerations:

- Establish standardized training program
- Initial or ongoing training could entail:
  - Orientation to facility or layout
  - Use of force policy
  - Briefing & communication methods
  - Weapons training
  - Active shooter response training

# Who manages the internal church security team?

- Consider putting this in place
- The manager should:
  - Have strong leadership skills
  - Be reliable, experienced & well trained
  - Have excellent critical thinking skills
- Responsibilities may include:
  - Compliance with the law & church rules
  - Handle scheduling
  - Handle training of armed and unarmed staff
  - Restock brochures for congregation
  - Liaison with law enforcement

## Partnership with local police

- Meet with them periodically
- Initial meeting could entail topics of mutual interest such as:
  - Orienting the police to facility and property layout
  - Access to your facility (issued keys?)
  - Their arrival time
  - Communication methods
  - Discuss how to identify your armed security (if you have one in place)

# External Armed Security Company

- State laws vary
- Pro and cons
- Vetting is necessary

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Advanced first aid training for key staff
- Have multiple exit point at sanctuary/event centers
- Make sure exit signs are installed
- Maintain staff presence inside the lobby during service
- Depending on the size of your church, consider monitoring the parking lot as well
- Invest in a low cost camera system

# Q&A SESSION

Due to the high volume of questions, presenters will not be able to respond to every question submitted.

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