4.20 Public Mass Shooting Incidents


For the purpose of this hazard analysis, the Public Mass Shooting definition expands and broadens the definition of Active Shooter to include the following:

1. Any number of actors targeting victims.
2. Use of any type of weapon to kill or injure victims (guns, knives, blunt force, fire and vehicles, etc.).
3. Any motive or reason for the attack.
4. Any event that happens in a relatively public place, including schools, places of worship, workplaces, restaurants, parking lots, public transit, public venues, private parties, etc.
5. Killing of four or more people no matter their relationship to the assailant(s).

The definition was broadened because all public mass shootings must be mitigated (if possible), responded to and resolved at the local level, regardless of the shooter or shooters’ reasons, agenda or location of the event.

A public mass shooting incident describes a specific In Progress type of shooting situation faced by police and the public. This type of incident requires specific response protocols for law enforcement personnel and actions the public can take to seek protection while waiting for police to arrive. Immediate notification of the incident to authorities, quick response by police, protective actions by responders and citizens, and preparedness activities (e.g., training and education) can decrease a potential shooter’s chances of successfully carrying out his or her plans.

The majority of public mass shooting situations are over within in five minutes or less, which means the emergency Response Time greatly exceeds the Incident Duration, giving law enforcement little or no opportunity to interdict the shooter or prevent further deaths or injuries sustained by the victims. It only takes a few minutes for many victims to be killed or wounded before law enforcement can arrive at the scene; therefore, individuals and at-risk target facilities must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with a public mass shooting situation before police arrive.

Experts have indicated that much work can be done to prevent public mass shootings. Analyses of past incidents demonstrate that people do not simply snap one day and start shooting; they build up to it over months or even years. Along the way, they often say or do things that seem odd or raise red flags to the people around them. Some of the more recent statistics indicate that more than 50 percent of attackers had broadcast their intent before taking action. Many times people concerned about a fellow student, family member, co-worker, or a neighbor exhibiting red flags do not communicate concerns to authorities because they decide “was not serious,” “just joking,” “blowing off steam,” “not their place or worry,” etc.

There are five phases attackers progress through before the first bullet is fired or first bomb is placed. These include:

1. Fantasize – They fantasize about what they can do or what other shooters have done in the past.
2. **Planning** – They think about what they are going to do and plan different scenarios. An *Active Shooting* incident is a highly premeditated action.

3. **Preparation** – It takes time for shooters to acquire guns, ammunition, and in some cases a Kevlar protective vest or make Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and figure out how to put all their equipment together.

4. **Practice** – They go to the location and study where they will park, where the doors are, whether doors are locked, the floor plan, and so on.

5. **Event Horizon** – This phase is where perpetrators implement and carry out their plans.

A good mitigation strategy is to disrupt attackers in one of the first four phases of developmental progress before their feelings manifest into violence they believe is justified or they obtain the capability to perpetrate the actions.

Public mass shooting incidents occur for many reasons, such as personal vendetta, to incite terror, religious motivations, mental health issues, family arguments, holidays, financial stress, hate motivations, marital break-ups, etc. Many times assailants may know their targets and total strangers may be killed in the crossfire.\(^{cclxxv}\) (See Figure 4.20.1) Other times assailants purposely target venues or facilities for the sole purpose of public massacres. Each public mass shooter incident is unique and many experts agree that a common workable detailed profile of a mass shooter does not exist.\(^{cclxxvi}\) However, there are some observations that are often associated with attackers that perpetrate public mass shootings. The characteristics include the following:\(^{cclxxvii}\)

- Attackers are likely to engage more than one target. They may target particular individuals or they may be intent on killing as many randomly chosen people as possible. They often go to locations with high concentrations of people, such as schools, theaters, shopping centers or other places of business.
- Attackers’ intentions are usually an expression of hatred or rage, rather than financial gain or motives associated with other types of crimes. Thus, police tactics of containment and negotiation may be an inadequate response to an active shooter.
- Attackers often, but not always, are suicidal. Escape from the police is usually not a priority, nor do they attempt to hide their identity.
- They often have made detailed plans for the attack, are better armed than the police and will likely have significant quantities of ammunition. Attackers usually will have some familiarity with the chosen location. In some cases, they have planned diversions or booby traps, such as explosives.
- In some situations, attackers choose a location for tactical advantage, such as high ground or a protected location. In other incidents, active shooters have remained mobile, making police response exponentially more difficult.
4.20.1 Historical Occurrences

Normally when people think of Mass Public Shootings they refer to high profile incidents like the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, the shooting in the Aurora, Colorado movie theater, the shooting in Tucson, Arizona involving U.S. Representative Gabrielle Gifford, Virginia Tech shootings, Columbine High School shootings, or the University of Texas–Austin shootings. Some of these incidents have occurred in public places, and some in locations that are considered more restricted, like elementary schools and high schools. USA Today conducted a study of public mass killings in the United States from 2006 to June 2015 and found 273 cases had occurred across the nation (See Figure 4.20.2) The FBI conducted a study of Active Shooter incidents in the United States between 2000 and 2013 and concluded 160 cases had occurred.

The Kansas City region and surrounding areas unfortunately have seen some mass public shootings as defined in this hazard analysis. (See Table 4.20.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number Killed</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 27, 2015</td>
<td>Tyrone, MO</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Joseph Jesse Aldridge, 36, traveled to four homes in the dark of night, shooting people multiple times with a .45-caliber handgun. He left seven dead, including some relatives, and one wounded before killing himself. The killings occurred within about three miles of one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2, 2014</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A 34-year old ex-con went on a shooting and beating rampage and killed five individuals in their homes and yards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13, 2014</td>
<td>Overland Park, KS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Two people were killed at the rear parking lot of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City. The suspect then killed a woman and injured two others in the parking lot of Village Shalom, a Jewish retirement community located a little more than a mile away from the Jewish Community Center.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.20.1: Local and Surrounding Area Mass Public Shootings (2006–2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number Killed</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 13, 2013</td>
<td>Topeka, KS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>After finding a woman in an alley with gunshot wounds, police found her car and then her house half a mile away, where her brother, ex-husband and another woman lay dead of gunshots. The first victim died two days later. No arrests have been made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1, 2013</td>
<td>Topeka KS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>One person shot and killed behind a strip mall and three other people killed in a residence. No one arrested for the crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 23, 2013</td>
<td>Parsons, KS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A nurse and her three children — ages 4, 6 and 9 — were reported missing after the woman didn't show up for work. Their bodies were found in their home. David Cornell Bennett, Jr., a former boyfriend, has been charged with murder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28, 2013</td>
<td>Ottawa, KS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kyle Flack killed three adults and an 18-month-old toddler with a shotgun in their home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22, 2009</td>
<td>Kansas City, Kansas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adrian Burks went to the house where his girlfriend was staying, got in an argument and killed her and the other three people who lived there, including a 3-year-old girl. He pleaded guilty to the four shootings and was sentenced to life in prison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2009</td>
<td>Raytown, MO</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gevante Anderson walked into an apartment and opened fire. Three victims were shot and the fourth victim, the youngest, Gerard Clemons, was stabbed to death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8, 2008</td>
<td>Kirkwood, MO</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A gunman carrying a grudge against Kirkwood City Hall leaders left a suicide note on his bed warning &quot;The truth will come out in the end,&quot; before he went on a deadly shooting spree at a council meeting, killing five people before being killed by police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 16, 2006</td>
<td>Kansas City, KS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hersel M. Isadore Jr., 28, was &quot;depressed and acting irrationally&quot; in the weeks before he fatally shot his longtime girlfriend, four of their children and a cousin, according to a police report. Isadore then committed suicide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14, 2006</td>
<td>Kansas City, KS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Three women and a man were found shot in a house about 3 a.m. after neighbors reported hearing gunshots. Two men were arrested the following month. The murders came to light when a 9-1-1 caller reported dead bodies and claimed responsibility for the killings. The caller stated that the reason the individuals were killed was that they were prostitutes and therefore they were &quot;scum.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30, 2001</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A gunman suspected of wounding a police officer shot and killed two people and wounded at least two others at a shopping center in Kansas City, Missouri, before being gunned down by police. A fourth person was found dead at a home in the nearby area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.20.2 Probable Locations
The entire planning area is at risk from a public mass shooter incident. This is a particular concern for the 11 types of places identified below, where active shooter events have historically happened. An FBI report studied 160 active shooter incidents occurring in the United States between 2000 and 2013 and found that they mainly occur in the following places:
- Businesses open to public (pedestrian traffic)
- Businesses closed to public (pedestrian traffic)
- Shopping malls
- Educational environments (Pre-K to 12th grade)
- Educational environments (higher-education institutions)
- Open spaces
- Government properties (non-military)
- Government properties (military)
- Residences
- House of worship
- Health care facilities

The study also indicated that of the 11 defined location categories, the majority of incidents — 45.6 percent of the 160 — occurred in an environment related to business or commerce. The second most common incident locations were in educational environments (24.4 percent), which happened to involve some of the highest casualty numbers. See Figure 4.20.3 and Map 4.20.1-Map 4.20.4 for potential locations of public mass shootings.

Figure 4.20.3: Potential Locations of Active Shooter Incidents
Map 4.20.1: Regional Schools and Colleges
Map 4.20.2: Regional Shopping Centers
Map 4.20.3: Regional Businesses
Map 4.20.4: Regional Government Facilities
4.20.3 Extent, Severity, Magnitude

Severity: High
Magnitude: High

During a public mass shooting, the actual areas where physical destruction of buildings and infrastructure are likely to occur make up less than 10 percent of the jurisdictional area. This is because areas affected would be contained in the buildings or confined space where the shootings take place. The major impact of a public mass shooting event is the loss of and/or injury to human life and disruption of community safety and routine. This type of event causes cascading interruptions not only to the facilities involved in the event, but to a majority of the local and surrounding communities. Public mass shooting events are no-notice, high-impact events that require quick and coordinated response from the traditional first responder community as well as facility employees and patrons where the shootings occur. These incidents are particularly devastating for public safety personnel and survivors, since many times family, friends, coworkers and acquaintances may be killed or injured. Many of these individuals are subject to post-traumatic stress disorders and the community as a whole may see increased mental health issues.

These types of events tend to require enormous community resources, often for extended periods of time. The FBI and local law enforcement officials must complete detailed crime-scene investigations which can take weeks to months. Often the loss of life and injuries are so psychologically traumatic to the community that the facility where the event occurred becomes a reminder of the tragedy and must be removed so healing can begin. The actual shooting event itself tends to have no warning, but often the shooter’s intentions were broadcast long before shooting event occurs. This makes the recovery/healing process harder because many members of community feel that the tragedy might have been avoided.

A good example of this took place in Newtown, Connecticut. After the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting investigation was finished, the town spent almost $1.4 million on the abatement and demolition of the school building. The residents of the community voted to raze the structure and fund a permanent memorial to honor the 20 first-grade students and six educators killed in the massacre. The Cinemark Theater in Aurora, Colorado, reopened six months after the shooting and was renamed the Century Aurora. The facility was remodeled at a cost of $1 million.

A public mass shooting event can have significant impact on the lives and safety of people. The following recent incidents have some of the highest causality counts:

2. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia – 49 (32 killed, 17 wounded), April 16, 2007

Damages to property and public infrastructure are usually limited to the localized crime scene, depending on the incident. There is potential impact on the built environment from this type of event, but it is hard to quantify and would vary greatly with each incident. One of the largest impacts of these events is not economic, but the long term psychological and social changes and effects on the
community. These include such things as fear, anger, resentment, and many other mental health aspects that can take years to resolve, if ever. After such events occur, about 10 to 15 percent of people in the community will have symptoms of post-traumatic stress or depression. The entire community often defines itself as being the target or the victim, and the tragedy can cause collective disbelief and shock.

### 4.20.4 Probability of Future Occurrence: High

The probability that a public mass shooting incident will occur within the region is extremely high. There have been 14 incidents in Kansas City and surrounding areas in the last 14 years (2000–2014). These incidents involved 65 killings, or four people killed on average per year. (See Figure 4.20.4)

Nationwide, more than 200 mass killings have occurred since 2006, and the occurrence is far more predictable than many might think. A USA Today study indicates a mass killing happens about every two weeks in the United States. (See Figure 4.20.5)
The FBI studied the characteristics of 160 active shooter incidents between 2000 and 2013 and found an average of 11.4 incidents occurred annually in the United States. This trend is increasing; the first seven years averaged 6.4 incidents per year, while the average increased to 16.4 in the last seven years. Large public massacres like the one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, account for one in six mass killings.

4.20.5 Vulnerability Analysis and Potential Losses

People affected: Medium (Between 100,000 to 150,000 people affected)

A study of 160 active shooter incidents in the United States between 2000 and 2013, found 1,043 total causalities had occurred (486 killed, 557 wounded) (See Figure 4.20.6). In addition, there is the psychological trauma experienced by all those directly involved in the event, their families and friends, and the wider community.

As noted earlier, about 10 to percent of the community may experience psychological after effects from a mass shooting. The planning area has a population of 1,018,205 people, so this type of event could affect between 101,821 and 152,000 people.

Vulnerable Populations – The public mass shooting event most likely to involve considerable numbers of vulnerable populations would involve a health care facility. Of the 160 active shooter events identified by the FBI, 2.5 percent occurred at these types of facilities. Some public mass shooter events have involved children, another vulnerable population. To mitigate these concerns, the community should make sure that plans and educational efforts are in place and they have been exercised, especially to practice evacuations and identify accessible safe areas.

Current Vulnerabilities – All counties and cities throughout the region are vulnerable to public mass shootings. Every jurisdiction has schools, businesses, places of worship, governmental offices, shopping centers, and health care facilities, etc., where these events have historically happened. Some jurisdictions have large public events, fairs, parades and local government meetings where public mass shootings could occur.

Future public mass shootings are inevitable. Vulnerabilities to this type of event may be exacerbated by a lack of preparation for the threat of potential mass shooting incidents or failure to implement methods to prevent individuals from harming others. These vulnerabilities may be overcome by
increased preparedness for at-risk targets and better methods of evaluating individuals and groups that may be prone to targeted violence.

**Future Vulnerabilities** – Data indicates mass public shooting events are increasing. This means educational institutions, private and governmental organizations, public venues, etc., must take the possibility of a mass public shooting event seriously. Mitigation strategies and actions must be included into future planning, educational and development projects. One major issue that educational facilities must look at in the future is designing new schools and retrofitting existing building to help protect students and faculty from potential perpetrators.

Public safety officials, social scientists, emergency management, business leaders and others must make an effort to develop programs that help frontline professionals identify the red flags often demonstrated by potential shooters before they act on their desire to harm others. Law enforcement officials can then use an assessment process to evaluate the actual threat that a person poses. This assessment process may not prevent every mass public shooting from occurring but the effort would help organizations cope with potential threats.

**Total Exposure: High** *(This hazard could involve damages greater than $10,000,000)*

Economic losses are associated with this type of event. FEMA’s value of a statistical life for 2014 is 6.6 million. The cost of treating a gunshot wound injury, adjusted to 2015 present value of money, is $23,951.22. A study by the FBI of 160 active shooter incidents in the United States between 2000 and 2013 averaged 35 people killed and 40 injured each year. The report also found that the median number of individuals killed in each incident was two and the median number of individuals wounded in each incident was two.

The Kansas City area experiences about one mass public shooting event each year, with an average of four people killed in each event *(see Section 4.20.1 Historical Occurrences in this hazard analysis)*. Using these statistics, the estimated annual regional cost of a mass public shooting would be more than $26 million. (4 killed X $6,600,000 per life) + (2 injured X 23,951.22 medical cost of treating gunshot wounds) = $26,447,182.00. This figure does not include long-term health care disability costs, public safety response costs, damage to facilities, lost wages, or lost business operating income or workers compensation, which could easily add millions of dollars.

The chance of dying in a public mass shooting is about the same as the probability of being struck by lightning. The chance of being hit by lightning is 1:280,000. The odds that a school shooting would occur in a U.S. school in 2013 (calculated by taking the average number of school shootings per year and comparing it to the number of schools in the U.S.) is 2.46:132,656.

**Natural environment** – In most cases, mass public shootings do not have major impacts on the environment. Should the incident happen to involve the release of hazardous materials, however, the environment in surrounding areas could be seriously affected.

**Loss Estimation for Region** – Because of the randomness of these types of events, data limitations and low numbers of historical mass public shootings occurring in the planning region, the breakdown of cost and probabilities by county or jurisdiction is not practical or useful. Some jurisdictions in the planning region have more schools, shopping centers, places of worship, business etc., than others, but national data indicates these event scan occur anywhere across the region *(See Table 4.20.2 and Table 4.20.3)*.
### Table 4.20.2: Average Mass Public Shooter Loss Estimation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Risk (Probability + Severity/2)</th>
<th>Magnitude (Percent of County Affected)</th>
<th>Total Exposure (Dollar Value)</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Maximum Loss Estimation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P=3 S=3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Specific Jurisdictional Vulnerabilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cass</th>
<th>Clay</th>
<th>Jackson</th>
<th>Platte</th>
<th>Ray</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large number of public events</td>
<td>Large number of public events</td>
<td>Large number of public events</td>
<td>Large number of public events</td>
<td>Large number of public events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple school districts Buildings</td>
<td>Multiple school districts Buildings</td>
<td>Multiple school districts buildings</td>
<td>Multiple school districts Buildings</td>
<td>Multiple school districts Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerous businesses throughout the county</td>
<td>Numerous businesses throughout the county</td>
<td>Numerous businesses throughout the county</td>
<td>Numerous businesses throughout the county</td>
<td>Numerous businesses throughout the county</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerous houses of worship</td>
<td>Numerous houses of worship</td>
<td>Numerous houses of worship</td>
<td>Numerous houses of worship</td>
<td>Numerous houses of worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerou colleges and dormitories</td>
<td>Numerou colleges and dormitories</td>
<td>Numerou colleges and dormitories</td>
<td>Numerou colleges and dormitories</td>
<td>Numerou colleges and dormitories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Centers</td>
<td>Shopping Centers</td>
<td>Shopping Centers</td>
<td>Shopping Centers</td>
<td>Shopping Centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.20.6 Problem Statements

Problem statements, such as those below, can support development of mitigation strategies for public mass shooting incidents:

- Public mass shootings have little or no warning time and can happen anywhere in the region.
- Law enforcement and public/private organizations must work together to reduce mass public shootings.
- Evaluation process can be developed to help businesses, schools, etc., better identify potential shooters and communicate concerns to law enforcement.
- Education can help the public learn to take protective actions during the initial stages of a public mass shooting event.
- The Kansas City Regional Terrorism Early Warning Group can work with public and private organizations to help detect and deter possible events.
- A public mass shooting incident is distinguished from multiple homicide incidents by the need for an immediate response by law enforcement supported by many other sectors such as emergency medical services, transportation and utilities.