

EFCOG Best Practice #147

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Best Practice Title: PNNL simulates active-shooter, site-wide lockdown during working hours

Facility: Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, operated by Battelle.

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Brief Description of Best Practice: PNNL security and emergency preparedness personnel worked together to conduct a site-wide lockdown of all buildings included in the Lab's security system, simulating an active-shooter event. The lockdown was patterned after a university model designed to cover multiple sites and facilities. About 4,400 staff members in multiple facilities at the Richland campus, PNNL-managed facilities on the Hanford Site north of campus, and the Marine Sciences Laboratory in Sequim, WA, were included in the drill. Approximately 6,000 phones at the three sites were targeted with calls from the Lab's Communicator Notification System, alerting staff members to the lockdown and later informing them the test was terminated. Proximity cards that provide electronic access to buildings were deactivated for 15 minutes and staff members were instructed to stay inside their building during the drill. Areas normally accessible to the public were also locked down for staff members who did not reach property protection areas before the drill started.

Why the best practice was used: The lockdown was conducted to help staff members prepare for potential workplace violence, specifically a shooting incident similar to others experienced around the United States and to test PNNL's processes and systems for responding to such incidents. The building security system test was designed to determine if there were issues with locking down proximity-card entry at the buildings in question. Testing the Communicator Notification System (CNS) was designed to find out if the plan to notify the entire lab about the lockdown in a 15-minute period and then terminate the test in the same way could be achieved without error. Finally, the test aimed to determine how well staff members were informed about the drill and how they would respond.

What are the benefits of the best practice: The lockdown provided an opportunity to verify how well the procedure, the equipment and the systems would function during the test. It also provided feedback regarding how well the instructions for the test had been communicated to staff members and how thoroughly they understood and followed instructions. Security and emergency preparedness personnel learned that improvements were needed in all those areas and, as a result, the Lab and its staff will be better prepared in the event of a real shooter incident in the future.

What problems/issues were associated with the best practice: After the lockdown drill, the security and emergency preparedness teams, agreed on 13 corrective actions that would help improve PNNL's response in the event of a future lockdown or similar emergency. Two of those actions included rewriting the physical security access programs that failed to lock down doors properly during the drill, making sure they would function properly in the future. The remaining corrective actions focused on improving the communication and notification process (phone and email) to make sure staff members are quickly alerted when an event such as an active shooter is in process. One of the more significant notification problems identified during the lockdown drill was the time required by the CNS to notify all staff members by phone. The notification process was intended to take 15 minutes, but lasted 36 minutes. Part of the delay can be attributed to staff members who replayed their messages—some multiple times—keeping their lines busy up to 22 minutes. Because the message was voice-activated, staff members who answered on speaker phone did not hear anything unless they spoke first. The CNS reaches staff members' business phones. Off-site PNNL facilities in Seattle and Portland were not slated for notification, but mistakenly received calls.

How the success of the Best Practice was measured: Almost all doors performed as expected and only two staff members out of approximately 4400 left their buildings during the lockdown. The purpose for the lockdown was to test our capability to issue a lockdown during an active shooter event at one of our managed buildings. The security and emergency preparedness teams also gained valuable feedback about the effectiveness of the Communicator Notification System. While there were complaints about delays with phone notification, Lab staff members generally felt the lockdown was a good idea. They were happy PNNL did something to be better prepared, but still wanted to be notified more quickly. The Lab

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established a baseline for improving notification time and will diversify notification methods to include text messages, computer flash messaging and other communication techniques to reach as many staff members as possible in a shorter period of time. Refresher training has been modified to include additional information on emergency preparedness and response. The Pacific Northwest Site Office of the Department of Energy, PNNL's client, also voiced support for the drill and the plan is to repeat it annually

Description of process experience using the Best Practice: Prompted by the increasing frequency of incidents involving armed shooters around the nation, PNNL's Emergency Preparedness team decided to assess and enhance the Lab's preparedness for such an event. Procedures were written addressing the incident, including expected responses by staff members and coordination of responsible parties with the police department. Emergency Preparedness Orientation and Annual Refresher Training were both modified to include the expected responses staff members should take by including a video displaying appropriate actions. All PNNL staff members received this training during the fiscal year in which the lockdown drill was scheduled to simulate an active shooter at a PNNL facility to conduct a preliminary test of the process and equipment. PNNL places a great deal of emphasis on security, having recently set up a "Contractor Protective Force" certified by the Department of Energy to perform Security Officer (SO) duties. Likewise emergency preparedness is emphasized at the Lab—and that was the key reason management agreed to a first-time lockdown drill.

Following is a brief overview of the lockdown procedure:

- **Procedure:** The security and emergency preparedness teams effectively prepared PNNL personnel for the lockdown drill with multiple Lab-wide announcements, emails, an Operating Experience article, and training (including a video) for both managers and staff members. Combined with instructions provided before the drill, these communication methods helped explain to staff members the reasons for the drill, what to expect when it happened, and how to prepare. The teams locked down all PNNL-managed buildings at three PNNL sites, and notified staff members by phone at the beginning and end of the drill.
- **Staff member experience:** The drill provided an opportunity for staff members to understand and rehearse safe lockdown procedures and tested the Lab's operations and emergency preparedness processes. Staff members generally appreciated the Lab's effort to prepare for such an emergency and work out protective measures in advance. They recognized the importance of the drill and stayed in their buildings for the required time. They also voiced concerns when they were not notified in a timely fashion.
- **Assessment:** As part of a broad approach to prepare and protect staff members from workplace violence, the lockdown revealed areas where improvements are needed, especially with respect to the door-locking system and the Communicator Notification System. The Lab issued a Lessons Learned article prior to the lockdown drill entitled "PNNL lockdown to help staff prepare for potential workplace violence" and another recapping what the Lab as a whole learned from the drill entitled "Experience with lockdown drill helps PNNL prepare for workplace violence." The article also provided reminders to guide staff members if such an event ever occurs at the Lab.