

A.L.I.C.E Training Highlights Options-Based Shooter Response Protocol

More than 100 municipal employees practiced real-life active shooter response strategies – including scenarios involving lockdowns and proactive countermeasures to stop an attacker – during a two-day train-the-trainer session held on October 5-6 at St. Anselm Church in Sudbury, MA. Employees from area police departments, city and town halls, and schools completed the training, which was presented free of charge by MIIA.

Instructors from the A.L.I.C.E. Training Institute of Medina, OH – the leading active shooter civilian response training provider in the country – presented the training session, which included informative lectures, interactive table top exercises, and hands-on scenario re-enactments. The training covered the basics of the widely used “Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate” (A.L.I.C.E.) active shooter response protocol. Upon completion of the two-day program and a certification test, attendees can return to their workplace and train other employees to use the protocol as standard operating procedure for emergency situations involving an intruder.

“It is unfortunate that these difficult times call for us to prepare for something as potentially tragic as an armed intruder,” said Stan Corcoran, Executive Vice President of MIIA. “We never think it will happen to us – in our building, or in our town – but we must be prepared in the case it does. Having a plan in place, and building awareness for a response protocol and each available option, can truly save lives.”

The A.L.I.C.E. protocol aims to empower individuals and maximize chances for survival by teaching age-appropriate methods for proactively handling an aggressive intruder in an option-based manner – tactics which have become more acceptable and proven effective versus a conventional lockdown-only approach. During the training, instructors discussed developments in theory on how to best handle an intruder in the wake of recent tragic events such as the shootings at Columbine, Sandy Hook, and Virginia Tech.

According to the Department of Justice, average police response time runs around 11 minutes – and in many cases a 911 call is not made right away – meaning that casualties in many cases are incurred prior to help arriving. Instructors leveraged examples from previous violent incidents to show how taking proactive, individual action could help mitigate casualties and save lives.

A.L.I.C.E. is not a sequential A to E model, instructors in Sudbury emphasized, but instead covers five different responses – and, evacuation (the last letter in the acronym) is always preferable when possible. As a key part of the training, attendees had the opportunity to participate in real-life scenarios emulating being stuck in a classroom while an active shooter enters the building, as well as being out in the open in a crowded cafeteria or walking down a hallway. They practiced making quick decisions about whether evacuation was safe, as well as how to best use available objects to lock down a room (and create a physical barrier) and/or physically distract an attacker so they could be disarmed.

In addition, attendees learned the importance of keeping everyone in the building aware and informed on the whereabouts of an attacker, via loud speaker, radios, or whatever communication method is available – using clear language without jargon or code words.

In Massachusetts, state regulations mandate that all local school systems have evacuation and medical emergency response plans in place. In 2014, the Massachusetts Task Force on School Safety and Security released a 30-page report highlighting multiple recommendations on what schools can do to enhance safety and security. The A.L.I.C.E. program is mentioned in the report as an option for enhancing a lockdown strategy “... to empower individuals to take common sense actions critical to their safety.”

Upon completion of this (and other MIIA risk- and loss-prevention training programs), the participating municipalities and school district are eligible to receive credits through the MIIA Rewards Program.

