



FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND SPRINKLERS, WHY NOT BLEEDING CONTROL STATIONS?

THE LEAST LIKELY, VERSUS THE MOST PROBABLE.

By Greg Tony, CEO of Blue Spear Solutions*

Take a second and stop whatever you are doing and think about your last visit to a school, place of worship, place of employment, sporting arena, gym, daycare center, supermarket or mall. Now, think about whether or not you saw a fire extinguisher mounted on a nearby wall. There is a good chance you did and if you did not notice one, I can assure you it was in place. In fact, it is federally mandated that multiple fire extinguishers be easily accessible at the locations I mentioned.

According to the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) "1910.157(c)(1). *The employer shall provide portable fire extinguishers and shall mount, locate and identify them so that they are readily accessible to employees without subjecting the employees to possible injury.*" Portable fire extinguishers are mandated by the federal government. Requiring businesses to provide a reasonable expectation of safety for its employees, staff, and visitors as it relates to fire preparedness and response, is indeed a prudent and necessary act.

Now I offer you some food for thought, when was the last time a school suffered a fire resulting in a large casualty of students being injured or worse, killed? Can you think of any recent incident without utilizing a search engine on your phone or computer? Most likely, the answer is no.



Monday, December 1, 1958, a fire broke out at Our Lady of the Angels School in Chicago, Illinois shortly before classes were to be dismissed for the day. The fire originated in the basement of the school near the foot of a stairway. The elementary school was operated by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago and had an enrollment of approximately 1,600 students. A total of 92 pupils and three nuns died when smoke, heat, fire and toxic gasses cut off their normal means of escape through corridors and stairways. Many more were injured after jumping from second-floor windows. The severity of the fire shocked the nation and surprised educational administrators of both public and private schools. The disaster led to major improvements in standards for school design and fire safety codes. One of the more profound improvements came in the form of code regulator guidelines for implementation of sprinkler systems within buildings.



Today, building structures are not only required to have fire extinguishers accessible to help reduce preventable fire fatalities. Advanced fire sprinkler systems are installed and in most cases federally mandated, with 35 to 40 million installed each year in the United States. This level of sprinkler usage represents a four-fold increase in the use of sprinkler systems in the past 25 years, and shows the results of a widespread acceptance of built-in fire suppression systems in both new and existing construction. The probability of seeing another fire tragedy like the one at Our Lady of the Angels School is highly unlikely to ever occur again in the United States.

So now I challenge you to think of the last time you heard of a large populous of students being shot inside of a school, resulting in mass casualty? There's a good chance you can immediately name at least three. Active Shooter incidents are very unpredictable making it impossible to determine exactly when and where an incident will occur. However, experts do examine statistical data, which illustrates that schools are subject to these incident more frequently than fatal fires.



Hundreds of students have died on the floors of educational institutions across our nation due to massive blood loss. Our hearts sink when we remember the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. And, just recently UCLA was subject to gun violence on their campus. These tragic incidents reaffirm my position on the need for life-saving training and equipment installation. Sadly statistics prove that shootings, like UCLA, will continue to occur.

Unfortunately, we are slow to act on a national level to mandate better preparedness protocols to improve victim survivability rates, just as it was done after the 1958 school fire in Chicago. In particular, we have not required legislation from our elected officials to federally mandate Public Access Bleeding Control Stations be placed in schools, along with appropriate training to educators and office staff. The ability of immediate responders, *bystanders and victims*, to provide aid or self-aid to improve survival rates is indisputable

At Blue Spear Solutions we are committed to educating, training and supplying our clients with the necessary tools to save lives. A victim suffering a major arterial bleed has less than three minutes to survive should the injury go untreated. Whether the mechanism of injury is inflicted by an act of violence, a work-related incident or motor vehicle crash, our highly-trained staff and equipment will meet your needs through our Co. A.S.S.I.S.T.® program. The program consists of a three-tier systematic approach to preparation: Active Shooter Awareness and Response, Bleeding Control Techniques and Strategic Placement of Public Access Bleeding Control Stations. The Co. A.S.S.I.S.T.® program was developed as a result of the “Stop the Bleed” initiative, a months-long collaboration between Federal and non-governmental agencies, whose goal is to engage the public to have an active role in the response to disasters of all sizes.



To learn more about our services and equipment visit, www.bluespearsolutions.com or call, 888-447-5834.

** About the Author: Blue Spear Solutions CEO, Greg Tony, is a nationally-certified public safety professional with more than 10 years of experience in advanced life-saving techniques including Active Shooter Threat Instruction, Basic Tactical Medical Response and is a recognized State of Florida Emergency Medical Responder. With active shooter situations and mass bombings on the rise in our nation and world-wide, Greg researched best practices to preserve and sustain life, empowering individuals to protect themselves and help others. His research and passion to save lives led to the development of the Co. A.S.S.I.S.T.® program and creation of Blue Spear Solutions.*