

WI Active Threat Integrated Response Conference – 2025

LESSONS LEARNED



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I recently had the opportunity to attend the Wisconsin Active Threat Integrated Response Conference (ATIRC) in Wisconsin Dells. This was my first time participating, and I found the experience highly valuable. As a result, I wanted to share some lessons learned with the group.

Now in its eighth year, this conference provides critical insights and training for those responsible for active threat response and emergency management on campus. Given its relevance and local accessibility, I highly recommend attendance for professionals in this field.

The event is organized by the newly established Wisconsin Active Threat Training Association (WATTA) and will be held again in Wisconsin Dells from February 16–20, 2026. For more information, please visit: <https://www.wiatirc.org/conference>.

Overview Agenda at Conference:

- The Dichotomy of Why (Presenter: [John Curnutt](#))
- [Mount Horeb, WI Middle School Incident](#) Debrief 2024 (Presenter: Josh Jarvis)
- [Jacksonville, FL Dollar General Incident](#) Debrief 2023 (Presenter: Adam Blinn)
- Understanding the Threat Landscape: Terrorism Trends, Tactics & Procedures (Presenter: [US Secret Service](#))
- [Laguna Woods, CA Geneva Pres. Church Incident](#) 2022 (Presenter: John Marley)
- [Allen, TX Allen Premium Outlet Mall Incident](#) Debrief 2023 (Presenter: Shellie Taylor)

Below are key takeaways and recommended actions for enhancing security at our colleges.

Classroom Security Measures

- Colleges must continue to lock classroom doors during class hours to create secure environments.
- Investing in additional security infrastructure, such as reinforced doors and automated lockdown systems, can further enhance protection.
- Faculty and students should be regularly trained on lockdown procedures to ensure preparedness during an emergency.

Campus Security Patrols

- Regular campus security patrols have proven effective in preventing incidents before they escalate.
- Expanding security patrol coverage, particularly in high-traffic areas and during late hours, should be a priority.
- Implementing real-time surveillance and communication systems for security personnel can enhance situational awareness and response times.

Mental Health Monitoring and Intervention

- Colleges must continue to prioritize mental health resources and early intervention programs.
- Establishing robust reporting mechanisms for faculty, students, and staff to report concerning behavior can help identify potential threats.
- Strengthening partnerships with local law enforcement and mental health professionals ensures coordinated responses to individuals exhibiting signs of distress or potential violent tendencies.

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Emergency Response Training and Drills

- Conducting regular active threat response drills prepares students and staff for emergency situations. It also tests your response protocols.
- Training should incorporate law enforcement collaboration to simulate realistic response scenarios.
- A clear chain of command and communication strategy during an active threat situation is crucial for effective crisis management.

Use of Technology for Threat Detection and Response

- Investing in AI-driven security systems that can detect suspicious activities in real time can improve proactive threat mitigation.
- Mobile emergency alert systems should be *expanded* to ensure rapid communication with students, faculty, and staff during incidents.
- Implementing access control measures, such as ID badge entry and biometric authentication for high-security areas, can help restrict unauthorized access to campus facilities.



Community Engagement and Awareness

- Increasing awareness about recognizing and reporting potential threats should be a key focus.
- Regular safety workshops and seminars can help students and faculty understand their role in maintaining a secure campus environment.
- Encouraging a culture of "see something, say something" can empower individuals to take an active role in campus safety.

Final Thoughts...

The conference reinforced the importance of a comprehensive and proactive approach to campus security. In multiple sessions, I learned how security patrols successfully prevented incidents at certain facilities, forcing offenders to leave and commit their crimes elsewhere. By investing in security measures, strengthening mental health initiatives, enhancing training programs, and leveraging technology, colleges can create a safer environment for students, employees and visitors. Lastly, ongoing collaboration with law enforcement and community stakeholders remains essential in mitigating active threat situations effectively.

Resources:

- [Active Threat Data and Mitigation Strategies](#)
- [Develop a Plan - Active Threat](#)
- [CISA Active Shooter Preparedness](#)

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