

New York City Hospitality Alliance Hosts Active Shooter Training

The nation has experienced a number of devastating tragedies in recent years. In June of 2016, 49 people lost their lives in a mass shooting while enjoying a night out at Pulse nightclub in Orlando. Unfortunately, this is not the only disaster of its kind. On October 1, 2017, a gunman relentlessly targeted a large crowd of concert attendees with automatic weapons from his nearby Las Vegas hotel room. Such attacks have become a harsh reality. On November 6, the NYC Hospitality Alliance and McGowan Program Administrators partnered with the NYPD to prepare restaurant, nightlife, and hotel operators for the unthinkable.

The NYPD had several representatives present at the conference, with the main goal of educating the audience on the best ways to react in a worst-case scenario. “The main focus is to familiarize their staffs with the different scenarios that can happen and devise an action plan for those scenarios,” explained Inspector Thomas Conforti. The audience learned that there are a number of things to keep in mind in the event of a shooting, some of which may be counterintuitive. For example, it is never a good idea to pull a fire alarm in response to an active shooter. Pulling the fire alarm could potentially lead to chaos, when patrons need to evacuate in a quick and orderly manner. In addition, it is important to get the appropriate responders on the scene; pulling a fire alarm could cause unnecessary confusion. It is

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also imperative to remember to call 911 immediately. This may seem obvious, but in a situation with an active shooter, many people may fail to contact police because they are under the assumption that somebody else has already made the call.

An adequate response to an emergency situation is largely founded in preparedness. “We have to be proactive and think about this,” said Andrew Rigie, Executive Director of the NYC Hospitality Alliance. While it’s difficult to prepare for the unexpected, the NYPD speakers at the conference stressed the importance of creating a plan. First and foremost, restaurant, hospitality, and nightlife workers should have a discussion about the best exit routes in the establishment. For example, it may be wise to direct patrons to a back door in the event that an active shooter is in the front. Patrons may not be aware of another exit, so the employees should be prepared to point it out. It is also a good idea to have a conversation about potential safe rooms. If there is a shooter in the establishment, there may be rooms that patrons could barricade themselves into in order to escape the gunfire.

Preparedness can mean the difference between a calculated response and a frenzied reaction.

In addition to the conference, the NYC Hospitality Alliance worked with the NYPD to create “Safe Night Out,” a video describing the best way to respond to an active shooter in the establishment. It is also important for hospitality, restaurant, and nightlife operators to be aware of the Active Shooter/Workplace Violence insurance offered by McGowan Program Administrators. “This event is the first in a series of programs aimed at helping hospitality operators to mitigate their risks,” said McGowan’s Kevin O’Connor.

Unfortunately, hotels, restaurants, bars, and clubs are inherently vulnerable to attacks. “We are a welcoming industry. We want people to come in and feel secure,” said Paul Seres, owner of multiple hospitality venues in New York. Due to the frequency of terrorist attacks and shootings in recent years, it is more important than ever to be prepared, and this is especially true in the hospitality industry.

McGowan Program Administrators is a leading provider of insurance products for Restaurant Insurance



McGowan’s Kevin O’Connor (L) and NYCHA’s Andrew Rigie (R) hosted a seminar that created strategies for a scenario involving an active shooter

nationwide. They recently teamed with the NYC Hospitality Alliance to provide a portfolio of insurance solutions for the New York City restaurant community. McGowan Program Administrators Restaurant Umbrella policy provides restaurant owners the peace of mind that accompanies having the type of insurance coverage that manages to expect the unexpected. Managing a restaurant risk comes with its fair share of threats. No matter if your risk is a single store or has multiple locations and multi-state operations, McGowan can help. In addition, the umbrella coverage also aggregates per location, so restaurant owners and managers need not worry about obtaining multiple overlapping and redundant policies.