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Police Response to Mass Shootings in the United States: 1966-2016

This study examines 186 mass shooting events for the protocol police followed upon arrival at the scene. In 124 of these cases, the police arrived on scene after the shooter had stopped shooting, either because the shooter committed suicide, fled the scene or was detained by people in the area who were not currently police officers. Of the 186, only 62 cases included police arriving on scene and following a response protocol, either engagement or perimeter. The number of casualties varied for each incident and type of police response. These cases were analyzed to determine if one type of response protocol was more effective in decreasing the number of casualties resulting from a shooting. Analysis of the data showed signs that suggested there are more casualties as a result of following the perimeter protocol, but these results remain statistically insignificant. However, indirect support for the effectiveness of the engagement protocol reducing the number of casualties included the correlation between the shooting duration and the total number of casualties.

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