

Are You Safe in Your Office?

BY BARRY H. BLOCK, DPM, JD

Forty years ago, when *Podiatry Management Magazine* began publishing, the thought of asking this question as an editorial was unfathomable. The almost weekly reports of shootings in public places, however, now forces us to confront this reality. Places we once considered safe havens such as schools, stores, theaters, hospitals, and houses of worship have been the scene of murder and mayhem.



If you think podiatrists are safe, consider the case of Dr. Thomas Shock of California, who was murdered in 2018 by a gang hired by the husband of one of the podiatrist's patients. The reason? The husband was unhappy with the doctor's treatment of his wife's foot, which he believed eventually contributed to her death.

So, how can you protect your staff, patients, and yourself? While there is no foolproof solution, there are several common sense steps you can take. The first is to install a magnetic buzzer system and intercom for your front door. Today, systems like Ring or SimpliSafe allow you to see patients before they enter your practice. Additional safeguards include installing in-office video cameras.

Your office should also have a fireproof safe to hold prescription pads, controlled substances, and petty cash. Staff should be instructed to inform you of any potential threats such as suspicious behavior or unhappy patients. While these measures can't guarantee absolute safety, they go a long way to protecting your office in an increasingly unsafe world.

Respectfully Submitted,

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