

PUBLIC SAFETY BULLETIN: Preparing for an Active Shooter

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security advises that an active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active-shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active-shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active-shooter situation.

There have been countless national tragedies at schools, public events and in the workplace. The risk that they pose is real. There is no warning. An active-shooter incident can happen at any time.



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How to Respond When an Active Shooter Is in Your Vicinity

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that customers are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active-shooter situation.

Evacuate. If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises and be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

Hide Out. If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

- Your hiding place should be out of the active shooter's view and provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door). Do not trap yourself or restrict your options for movement. To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place, lock the door and blockade the door with heavy furniture.
- If the active shooter is nearby, lock the door and silence your cellphone and/or pager. Turn off any source of noise (radios, televisions) and hide behind

large items such as cabinets and desks. Remain quiet if evacuation and hiding out are not possible. Stay calm and dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location. If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

Take action against the active shooter.

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by acting as aggressively as possible against them, throwing items and improvising weapons, yelling and committing to your actions.

How to respond when law enforcement arrives.

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

- Officers usually arrive in teams of four and may wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets and other tactical equipment.
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns and handguns, and may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation. Officers may shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.

How to react when law enforcement arrives.

- Remain calm and follow officers' instructions.
- Put down any items in your hands such as bags or jackets and immediately raise hands and spread fingers, keeping your hands visible at all times. Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding onto them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises.



Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 operator. The following information will need to be provided:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter
- Number and type of weapons held by the shooter
- Number of potential victims at the location

The first officers to arrive on the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises. Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation

is under control and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

Mock Active Shooter Training.

The most effective way to train your staff to respond to an active-shooter situation is to conduct mock active-shooter training exercises. Local law enforcement is an excellent resource in designing training exercises. Training exercises for your employees will help them recognize the sound of gunshots and be able to react quickly when gunshots are heard and/or when a shooting is witnessed. The exercises teach how to evacuate the area, hide out and, as a last resort, act against the shooter. The active shooter training also covers calling 911, how to react when law enforcement arrives and how to adopt a survival mind set during times of crisis.