

A Minute for **Safety**

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Commercial Lines

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ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS

The potential for a shooting incident by an active shooter* exists, unfortunately, in every workplace throughout the United States. While the regulation of firearms has been enhanced in recent years, firearms are able to be acquired with relative ease. Mass shooting incidents usually involve firearms and randomly selected targets or victims. Active shooter events usually last less than 15 minutes, sometimes before law enforcement arrives. It is important to prepare for such an event, and to be ready to respond if the unthinkable happens.

It is difficult to predict who could become an active shooter. An active shooter may be a current or former worker, a family member or friend of coworkers, someone who has a beef with your business, or a complete stranger. While it is difficult to predict a person's actions, there are some behaviors that may indicate a person may be planning a shooting incident. Report any of the following observations or uneasy, "gut" feelings to your supervisor, management, and/or human resources:

- Increased use of alcohol, drugs, and absenteeism.
- Decreased hygiene and appearance.
- Depression and/or social withdrawal.
- Disregard for work quality or company policy.
- Mood swings and overly emotional responses.
- Paranoid, suicidal, or doomsday behavior or discussions.
- Increased discussion of violent incidents and weapons/firearms.

BE PREPARED

Now is the time to create an emergency action plan to respond to an active shooter situation.

- Gather the contact names and phone numbers of emergency responders, hospital, management, and building personnel.
- Discuss how to alert employees about an incident. Will you use a code word over the public address system, an all-call phone alert, text messages.
- Obtain supplies such as, first aid kits, flashlights and communication devices.

Once you have response procedures in place:

- Create a written plan and distribute to employees with responsibility for emergency management.
- Train employees on the plan and how to react when gunshots are heard.
- Conduct random emergency drills based on an active shooter scenario.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the drill and adjust your plans and training as needed.



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WHAT TO DO IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

In the event your workplace becomes the target of an active shooter, the best choice you can make is to evacuate the active shooter area, if possible. For evacuations:

- Always know two exits and escape routes in your workplace and every building you visit.
- Guide others to the escape route and prevent them from entering the shooting zone.
- Exit whether others follow you or not.
- Leave all personal items behind, but take your cell phone if possible.
- Keep your hands visible at all times and follow police instructions.

If you can't escape an active shooter scenario, find a place to hide out:

- Find an office with a door that you can lock and/or barricade.
- Stay out of sight of windows, if possible, close the blinds and turn off the lights.
- Silence your cell phone, turn off computers and any other electronic device.
- Stay quiet.
- If it is safe to do so, report the incident to first responders, don't assume someone else has reported the incident.

If you are unable to evacuate or hide, call 911 and talk to the dispatcher or leave the phone line open so they can listen and record events. If possible, describe the location of the shooting, the shooter's physical characteristics, and the type of weapons. Remain calm, listen, and think about your next moves.

As a last resort, if your life is in danger, you may need to take action against the shooter. If you decide to proceed, attack the shooter "aggressively and overwhelmingly" with improvised weapons. Throw objects and yell at the shooter. Law enforcement officials recommend that you "commit to your actions," don't hesitate or stop.

When law enforcement arrives at an active shooter scene, their first priority will be to identify and stop the shooter. They will go past wounded victims and may push people down to the ground. Listen to officer commands. Keep your hands visible, raised, with fingers spread wide. Don't shout, grab, point, or make distracting noises during officer response. Don't hold anything in your hand, including a cell phone, which could be mistaken for a weapon.

Active shooter situations can be random, with rapid and unpredictable events unfolding. Planning for the proper response now can boost the chance of survival through the event.

For more information, response planning guides, and training resources, go to the Department of Homeland Security website at <http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>.

*The Department of Homeland Security defines an active shooter as "an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area."