

Active Shooter

One of the worst forms of workplace violence is an active shooter situation. Police may respond promptly to your 911 call but, in the interim, lives are at risk. In an active shooter situation, you have the following options.

Escape

No matter where you are on the property, always have a plan. Escaping from the situation is your best plan of action.

- If there is an escape path – Get out
- Leave regardless of whether others follow
- Leave your belongings
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent others from entering the area
- Keep your hands visible when exiting the building
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

Hide

If you can't escape, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

- Be out of view of the shooter
- Provide some protection if shots are fired in your direction, such as a room with a closed and locked door
- Pile heavy furniture in front of the door to further restrict shooter access
- Be sure not to trap yourself
- Remain as quiet as possible
- Silence your cell phone and any other sources of noise, such as radios
- If you can, call or send a text or email to the police
- If you call 911 but can't speak, just allow the dispatcher to listen to what is going on

Fight

As a last resort, when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt, distract or incapacitate the shooter.

- Act as aggressively as possible against the shooter
- Throw items and use improvising weapons such as a lamp, chair, etc.
- Yell
- If you are in a group of people, move together
- Commit to your actions



Signs of Potential Violent Behavior

- Sudden changes in demeanor
- Physical complaints against people or groups
- Depression or withdrawal
- Emotional responses to innocuous comments
- Paranoia
- Comments about suicide or wanting “to show someone”
- Comments about firearms in conjunction with violent crimes

When the police come, they will not necessarily know who the attacker is so you need to take steps to further protect yourself.

- Promptly follow all police instructions
- Drop anything in your hands and raise them, keeping them visible at all times
- Do not make any quick movements
- Move to where the police direct you and be prepared for further screening

Preparing for an Active Shooter Situation

It is extremely important to have a plan for this type of situation. Reacting quickly when gun shots are heard or a shooting is witnessed is vital. Your plan should include the following:

- An evacuation procedure from all areas of your building, including designated assembly points and maps showing primary and secondary escape routes
- Designate safe points and hiding places within the building
- Discuss what communication options are available with your local police and include them in your plan
- Contact information for local hospitals, including distances away from your building, phone numbers and contact people
- Procedures for employees to follow including fighting as a last resort (what can be used as a weapon and how to disrupt the attack) and what to do when the police show up
- Training on these procedures, including mock drills coordinated with local police

Preventing an Active Shooter Situation

It is not always possible to prevent a shooting situation from developing. Shooters are often individuals who feel a grudge against someone at the company and attack as a means of “evening the score.” However, below are some steps you can take.

- Establish zero tolerance for aggression in the workplace
- Create and maintain a respectful work place
- Be aware of changes in an individual that may indicate a tendency to use violent means to achieve a goal (see Signs of Potential Violent Behavior)
- If you see something, say something