

ACTIVE SHOOTER: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MITIGATE HARM

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined space or other populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there may be 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. Active shooters usually will continue to move throughout a building or an area until stopped by law enforcement, suicide, or other intervention. While it is extremely difficult to determine whether an individual will engage in this type

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of violence, there are observable behaviors that are frequently present in individuals who ultimately become an active shooter.

Because active shooter situations evolve rapidly and may involve life-threatening injuries, it is important to know how to quickly respond to minimize the chance of

injury to yourself and others. It is also important for those in positions of workplace leadership (i.e., managers, floor monitors, teachers, and school personnel) to model the appropriate responses because they are often influential and visible to direct the behavior of those in harm's way.

Responding to an Active Shooter

Workplace Leadership:

- Respond immediately.
- Remain calm and professional, and be prepared to lead.
- Evacuate employees, customers, and students using a preplanned evacuation route to a safe area.

All Personnel and Exposed Individuals:

- **Evacuate.** If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.
- **Hide Out.** If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.
 - » Barricade and lock doors and hide out of sight.
 - » Close blinds and avoid being in front of windows.
 - » Silence cell phones and remain quiet.
- **Take Action.** 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.
 - » Throwing items and improvised weapons.
 - » Yelling.
 - » It is very important that you *commit to your actions*.
- **Call 911.**

Law Enforcement and You

It is important to understand that the primary responsibility of Law Enforcement is to eliminate the threat of an Active Shooter. They will not be able to stop and help injured persons until the environment is safe. As a result, remaining aware of the following can be helpful to ensure your optimal response to Law Enforcement:

- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Avoid making any sudden movements.
- Keep your hands visible at all times.
- Put down any items in your hands and immediately raise your hands while spreading your fingers.
- Expect that officers will be shouting orders and even pushing individuals to the ground for their safety

This information is adapted from the Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Response online training. Additional information can be found at the training website here:

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS907/index.htm>

Continued

Online Resources

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress	www.cstsonline.org
National Child Traumatic Stress Network	https://www.nctsn.org/
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	www.aacap.org
American Academy of Pediatrics	www.aap.org
American Psychiatric Association	www.psych.org
American Psychological Association	www.apa.org
American Red Cross	www.redcross.org



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