

# Safety Guidelines for Active Shooter Situations on Campus

Clearly, response to an active shooter is one of the most dynamic situations that anyone will ever face. Prior to the arrival of police personnel, how you respond to an active shooter will be dictated by the specific circumstances of the encounter, keeping in mind there could be more than one shooter involved in the same situation. If you find yourself in an active shooter situation, try to remain as calm as possible and use these suggested actions to help you plan a strategy for survival. Keep in mind, the entire area is still a crime scene.

An Active Shooter event cannot be predicted to follow any pattern and the response to an active shooter is one of the most dynamic situations that anyone will ever face.

An individual must use his/her own discretion during an active shooter event as to whether he/she chooses to run to safety or remain in place. However, best practices for an active shooter event are listed below.

The potential for a school shooting exists on every campus throughout the United States. Although the possession of firearms on or around the campus is prohibited, previous local and national shootings dictate the importance and need for a response plan. In the event you observe an individual with any type of weapon on the campus, immediately contact Public Safety or call 911.

## Develop a Survival Mindset

**Awareness and Preparation:** Take time to understand your surroundings and environment before an emergency occurs. Ask yourself, "What if?" questions and develop a plan.

## In an Active Shooter Emergency

Make a decision, trusting your instincts, to take action to protect yourself to survive the situation. You generally will have three options:

### Run or Evacuate

- If you can and you deem it safe, Get Out and get to a safe place.
- Attempt to evacuate
- Have an escape route and plan
- Leave your belongings
- Keep your hands visible

### Hide

- Find a place to hide. Find protection.
- Block entry and lock doors
- Remain quiet and silence your cell phone or pager
- Close the blinds, turn off the lights, remain quiet, spread out away from other individuals, and move behind available cover. Stay on the floor, away from doors or windows, and do not peek out to see what may be happening.
- If possible and safe to do so, report the location of the assailant.

### **Fight or Take Action**

- As a last resort, try to incapacitate the shooter
- Act with physical aggression
- Make a plan with others in the room about what you will do if the shooter enters.
- Make a total commitment to action and act as a team with others.
- Do whatever is necessary to survive the situation.

Remember to always:

- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit.
- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers.

**CALL 911 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO!**

## **Additional Guidelines to Consider**

**If an active shooter is outside your building or inside the building you are in, you should:**

- Try to remain calm.
- Try to warn other faculty, staff, students and visitors to take immediate shelter.
- Proceed to a room that can be locked or barricaded.
- Lock and barricade doors or windows.
- Turn off lights.
- Close blinds.
- Turn off radios or other devices that emit sound.
- Keep yourself out of sight, stay away from windows and take adequate cover/protection, i.e. concrete walls, thick desks, filing cabinets.
- Silence cell phones.
- Have one person Call 911 and provide:
  - Your name and location and state, " we have an active shooter on campus, gunshots fired."
  - If you were able to see the offender(s), give a description of the persons(s) sex, race, clothing, type of weapon(s), location last observed, direction of travel, and identity - if known.
  - If you observed any victims, give a description of the location and number of victims.
  - If you observed any suspicious devices (improvised explosive devices), provide the location observed and a description.
  - If you heard any explosions, provide a description and location.
- Wait patiently until a uniformed police officer, or a university official known to you, provides an "all clear."
- Unfamiliar voices may be an active shooter trying to lure you from safety; do not respond to voice commands until you can verify with certainty that they are being issued by a police officer or university official.
- Attempts to rescue people should only be attempted if it can be accomplished without further endangering the persons inside a secured area.
- Depending on circumstances, consideration may also be given to exiting ground floor windows as safely and quietly as possible.

### **If an active shooter enters your office or classroom, you should:**

- Try to remain calm.
- Try not to do anything that will provoke the active shooter.
- If there is no possibility of escape or hiding, only as a last resort when it is imminent that your life is in danger should you make a personal choice to attempt to negotiate with or overpower the assailant(s).
- Call 911, if possible, and provide the information previously listed.
- If the active shooter(s) leaves the area, barricade the room or proceed to a safer location.

### **If Suspect is in Close Proximity**

- An individual must use his/her own discretion about when he or she must engage a shooter for survival.
- Generally, one can lie motionless and pretend to be unconscious or confront the individual.
- Make a plan as to how you will survive the situation.
- Make a total commitment to action and act as a team with others if possible.
- Do whatever is necessary to survive the situation.

### **If you are in an outside area and encounter an active shooter, you should:**

- Try to remain calm.
- Move away from the active shooter or the sounds of gunshot(s) and/or explosion(s).
- Look for appropriate locations for cover/protection, i.e. brick walls, retaining walls, large trees, parked vehicles, or any other object that may stop bullet penetration. When you reach a place of relative safety, stay down and do not move. Do not peek or raise your head in an effort to see what may be happening.
- Drop to the ground immediately, face down as flat as possible. If within 15-20 feet of a safe place or cover, duck and run to it.
- Move or crawl away from gunfire, trying to utilize any obstructions between you and the gunfire. Remember that many objects of cover may conceal you from sight, but may not be bulletproof.
- Try to warn other faculty, staff, students and visitors to take immediate shelter.
- Wait and listen for directions from Public Safety and/law enforcement personnel.
- Call 911 and provide the information listed in the guideline.

### **Help Out**

- Warn others.
- Help others escape.
- Keep others away from the danger area.
- Help the injured.
- Help others stay calm

### **What to Expect from Responding Police Officers**

The objectives of responding police officers are:

- Immediately engage or contain the active shooter(s) in order to stop life threatening behavior.
- Identify threats such as improvised explosive devices.
- Identify victims to facilitate medical care, interviews and counseling.

### **When Law Enforcement Arrives**

- When law enforcement reaches you, do not run at them or make sudden movements.
- The priority of the first responders will be to identify the shooter. Law enforcement will need to ensure that you are not the shooter.
- Do not scream, yell, point, or wave your arms.
- Do not hold anything in your hands that could be mistaken for a weapon (including cell phones).
- Be quiet and compliant.
- Show the officers your empty hands and follow their instructions.
- Give the number of shooters.
- Give the location and physical description of the shooter.
- Give the number and types of weapons.
- When it is safe to do so, you will be given instructions as to how to safely exit your location.

Police officers responding to an active shooter are trained to proceed immediately to the area in which shots were last heard in order to stop the shooting as quickly as possible. The first responding officers may be in teams; they may be dressed in normal patrol uniforms, or they may be wearing external ballistic vests and Kevlar helmets or other tactical gear. The officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns or handguns. Do exactly as the officers instruct. The first responding officers will be focused on stopping the active shooter and creating a safe environment for medical assistance to be brought in to aid the injured.

## Calling for Help

- If safe to do so, stop and take time to get a good description of the criminal. Note height, weight, sex, race, approximate age, clothing, method and direction of travel, and his/her name, if known. If the suspect is entering a vehicle, note the license plate number, make and model, color, and outstanding characteristics. All of this takes only a few seconds and is of the utmost help to the responding officers.
- Although you are not expected to know all of the answers, answer them to the best of your ability. Even though you may think the questioning is wasting valuable time, the information you provide will enable Public Safety dispatchers to dispatch officers and other emergency personnel safely and effectively.

### **During your call to Police, you will be asked questions, such as:**

- What exactly is happening and how do you know? Is it still happening?
- Where is the suspect now? What was his/her last known direction of travel?
- Are there any wounded and how many?
- What is the specific location of occurrence?
- What types of weapons were used? Describe the weapon/s or other dangerous object/s if possible, and any visible ammunition:
  - Rifle / Shotgun / Handgun: revolver or automatic
  - Ammunition: Describe type, amount and type of container (metal box, cardboard box, backpack pockets and others)
  - Knife or other dangerous weapons
  - Explosive device: Give specific description
  - Were any shots fired? Describe the sound and the number of shots fired.
  - Do you know who the suspect/s is? If yes, identify them and provide any background knowledge you may have.