



ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS ACTION GUIDE



OVERVIEW



In the U.S., the most prominent attack method used to perpetrate targeted violence is with a firearm. These incidents can often be described as “active shooter” attacks. Active shooter incidents are dynamic, often unpredictable, and can evolve quickly. In the midst of the chaos, anyone can play an integral role in mitigating the impacts of an attack.

Recent active shooter incidents underscore the need to maximize preparedness and highlight the value of a coordinated response to save lives and mitigate the harmful impacts of such incidents. In most cases, active shooters use firearm(s) and have no pattern or method to their selection of victims, which often creates an unpredictable and quickly evolving situation that can result in injury or loss of life. Perpetrators of active shooter attacks may also use other weapons, including edged-weapons, vehicles, and improvised explosive devices. While law enforcement is usually required to end an active shooter situation, individuals can take steps to prepare mentally and physically for this type of event to enhance personal security and resilience.



Active Shooter is defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as “one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.”

BE ALERT TO SIGNS OF TROUBLE



While active shooter situations are often unpredictable, paying careful attention to warning signs could help mitigate a potential incident. Some shooters demonstrate progressively escalating behaviors that could be reasonably indicative of an increasing potential for violence. Recognizing these warning signs and reaching out for help could bring at-risk individuals to the attention of trained Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management professionals, as well as law enforcement, and prevent a future incident of violence.

POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Increasingly erratic, unsafe, or aggressive behaviors
- Hostile behavior based on claims of injustice or perceived wrongdoing
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Claims of marginalization or distancing from friends and colleagues
- Changes in performance at work
- Sudden and dramatic changes in home life or in personality
- Financial difficulties
- Pending civil or criminal litigation
- Observable grievances and making statements of retribution

YOU CAN HELP ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THOSE AROUND YOU:

- Be aware of drastic changes in attitude toward others
- Take note of any escalations in behavior and report observed behavior(s) in accordance with your community or organizational policies and procedures
- Provide any information that may help facilitate intervention and mitigate potential risks

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE DO IN CASE OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER ATTACK?



“Run” to the nearest exits, making use of available cover and concealment while moving away from the source of the threat(s).



If unable to safely evacuate, “hide” in a secure area where access or entryways can be locked.



If evacuation and hiding in a secure area are not possible, seek cover behind natural or artificial objects to conceal line of sight from the shooter.



As a last resort, “fight” to incapacitate the shooter. Commit to decisive and aggressive action. Fight until the threat is neutralized.



Contact 9-1-1 and remain alert for potential secondary attacks.



Render first aid when safe to do so.



Maintain situational awareness, even while helping others.



When help arrives, follow instructions given by law enforcement and first responders.

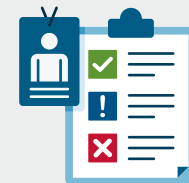
PROTECTIVE MEASURES

PHYSICAL SECURITY



- Conduct a facility or organizational security assessment to identify threats and vulnerabilities.
- Define the perimeter, key resources, and areas that require access control.
- Identify especially sensitive or critical areas that require special access controls.
- Establish surveillance plan to complement perimeter controls. Ensure adequate lighting to compliment surveillance plan.
- Post signage relating to emergency entry and exit points, first-aid stations, and shelter locations.

ACCESS, PLANNING, AND PERSONNEL



- Develop a foundational security plan and implement emergency procedures to enhance protection, mitigate harm, and improve incident response.
- Implement a Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management program in an effort to prevent incidents of targeted violence.
- Conduct periodic background checks on all staff assigned to critical or sensitive areas.
- Review personnel files of recently terminated employees to determine whether they pose a security risk and ensure they are removed from systems.
- Devise credential/badging systems that indicate areas of access and purpose of activity on the premises.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Security Public Gatherings: cisa.gov/securing-public-gatherings
- Active Shooter Preparedness: cisa.gov/active-shooter-preparedness
- Conflict Prevention Resources: cisa.gov/conflict-prevention
- Behavioral Threat Assessment Integration: dhs.gov/btai
- “If You See Something, Say Something®”: dhs.gov/SeeSay
- Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative: dhs.gov/nationwide-sar-initiative-nsi
- First Responder’s Tool Box: dni.gov/index.php/nctc-how-we-work/joint-ct-assessment-team/first-responder-toolbox

CISA Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) are trained security experts in critical infrastructure protection and vulnerability mitigation.

- For more information about PSAs: cisa.gov/about/regions/security-advisors
- To contact your local PSA, e-mail central@mail.cisa.dhs.gov

