

Student Guide

Active Shooter Awareness Short

Introduction

Fort Hood.

The Navy Yard.

The violence that occurred at these installations can happen anywhere and at any time. These horrible tragedies demonstrate the importance of knowing how to prevent and respond to an active shooter incident in the workplace.

Do you know how to respond should there be an active shooter in your workplace? What would you do to protect your own life and the lives of others?

What is an Active Shooter?

Active shooters are individuals who attempt to injure or kill people in confined and populated areas, often displaying no pattern in selecting victims. In many cases there are warning signs. And recognizing a threat early on can prevent an incident from occurring. History has shown that individuals who become active shooters in the workplace often display potentially violent behavior over time.

Indicators of potentially violent behavior include—

- Aggression or threats towards coworkers
- Presence of unauthorized weapons
- Abnormal mood swings or depression, withdrawn behavior, decrease in hygiene, paranoia
- Increased use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Suicidal remarks or comments about “putting things in order”
- Repeated violations of policies, regulations, or laws
- Talk of severe financial problems

If you recognize these behaviors, inform your supervisor. If you perceive an immediate threat, alert security.

For more information on behaviors and incidents you should report to help prevent an insider from becoming an active shooter, or causing other harm, see CDSE’s Adverse Information Reporting Short.

Remember, even with good facility access control, active shooters can still come from outside your facility or organization. Sometimes, no matter what we do, the worst happens, so it is important to be vigilant and know how to respond. This Short provides the information you need to protect your own life and those of others in the event of an active shooter incident in your workplace.

Active Shooter Response

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly, often before law enforcement personnel can arrive. Your goal in responding is to quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your life, and the lives of those around you.

Before an incident ever happens, you can take steps to protect yourself:

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Know the emergency procedures, personnel, and equipment at your facility
- Take notes of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- Have local emergency numbers readily accessible
 - Emergency Services: 9 -1 -1 LOCAL
 - Emergency Information Line
 - Local Police Department, Fire Department, and Hospital
 - Facility Security
- Prepare a workplace Active Shooter Response Plan

During an active shooter situation, there are three primary responses:

- When at all possible, evacuate.
- If escape is not possible, find a place to hide.
- When all else fails, take action against the shooter.

This Student Guide will explain when each response is appropriate and how to maximize your chances for survival. You will also learn what to do when first responders arrive on the scene.

Build a Workplace Active Shooter Response Plan: Step 1

Now begin to consider how to apply what you learn in your own workplace, so you will have a plan in place should an active shooter incident occur. We hope you will never have reason to use this plan, but preparing will improve your chances for success... and survival... in the event of the unthinkable.

Take some time to locate and review your facility's emergency procedures, personnel, and equipment. You may want to attach those procedures to the customized plan you develop. Use the Workplace Active Shooter Response Plan

template at the end of this Student Guide. You can also share it with others in your office.

The first step is to record your local emergency phone numbers in the space provided in the plan template.

Evacuate

When it's at all possible, escape is the best course of action in surviving an active shooter situation.

- To evacuate successfully, have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Leave your belongings behind and evacuate even if others do not follow you.
- If you are able, help others escape and warn people to prevent them from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- While evacuating, keep your hands visible at all times to make sure you are not mistaken for the shooter.
- Follow the instructions of any security personnel or law enforcement that you encounter.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.

When you reach safety, call emergency personnel if they have not yet arrived on the scene.

Build a Workplace Active Shooter Response Plan: Step 2

Now consider your workplace. Look around your office area. How would you escape an active shooter?

Return to your active shooter response plan and record your evacuation plan in the space provided in the template.

Be sure to identify the nearest exits to your location and map out at least two escape routes. Also consider what you would do if you were in the break room, at someone else's desk, or anywhere else other than your workstation.

Shelter in Place

If evacuation is not possible, your next best option is to find a place to hide. A good hiding place is one that is out of the active shooter's view that will protect you if shots are fired in your direction.

Choose an office or other room with a door you can close and lock, ideally one that will not cut off your options for escape. If possible, blockade the door with heavy furniture.

Then take these steps to avoid notice:

- Silence your cell phone and turn off any other source of noise (radio, TV)
- Hide behind large items like cabinets or desks
- Remain quiet and calm

Once you are sheltered, call emergency personnel to alert them to the shooter's location. If you can't speak, leave the line open, so they may listen.

If you do come under direct attack, adapt your response based on the type of weapon the attacker uses. If under attack from gunfire, crouch on the floor (don't lie) to avoid ricocheting bullets. If under attack from a grenade, lie on the floor to avoid shrapnel and point your feet toward the blast to protect your head.

Build a Workplace Active Shooter Response Plan: Step 3

Now continue building your customized active shooter response plan. Where would you hide to avoid notice?

Identify the offices or other rooms closest to your workstation. Do they have doors that lock? Heavy furniture you can use to block the door or hide behind?

Now think of other locations in your facility that you frequent. Where are good hiding places you could get to from there?

Take Action against the Shooter

As a last resort and only if your life is in imminent danger, try to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter. Taking action against the active shooter is extremely risky but may be the best chance of survival for you and others. If you decide to assume the risk, you must remain committed to your actions. Any hesitation could be fatal.

Time your response to coincide with the shooter's need to reload or remove or replace his magazine. Act aggressively, throw items, improvise weapons, and yell. Respond with speed, stealth, and violence of action.

Build a Workplace Active Shooter Response Plan: Step 4

Now think about what you would do and record your thoughts in your active shooter response plan. Taking action against a shooter can be hard to plan for. It's impossible to know in advance what the circumstances of an active shooter situation may be. However, thinking about what you might do can help you should you ever need to act.

Consider: would you be willing to take the risk? Your answer might change if you are ever faced with such a choice, but thinking can help you prepare. Regardless of what

you think you might do, identify items in your workplace you could use as weapons should you ever have need to.

Cooperate with First Responders

What should you expect when law enforcement and other first responders arrive on the scene?

First, it's important to know that law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. That means that the first to arrive on the scene will not stop to help the wounded, and you should support their efforts by following their instructions and staying out of their way. Rescue teams will follow to treat and remove the injured. If you are able-bodied, you may be asked to assist in moving the wounded.

When law enforcement arrive, they will:

- Proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard
- Arrive in teams of four and wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns
- Possibly use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Shout commands and possibly push individuals to the ground for their safety

To assist first responders:

- Remain calm and follow instructions
- Evacuate in the direction first responders are entering
- Do not stop to ask first responders for help or direction when evacuating
- Do not cling to emergency personnel
- Avoid pointing, screaming, or yelling
- Provide the following information:
 - Location of the active shooter
 - Number of shooters
 - Physical description of shooter(s)
 - Number and type of weapons held by the shooter(s)
 - Number of potential victims

To protect yourself and avoid being mistaken for the shooter:

- Put down any items in your hands
- Raise hands and spread your fingers; keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid quick movements

After you reach safety, you will likely be held in a secure area until emergency personnel have the situation under control and they have identified and questioned all witnesses. Do not leave the secure area until they instruct you to do so.

Conclusion

You just learned how to protect yourself from an active shooter, and you built your own customized plan for responding to an active shooter in your workplace. Active shooter situations are dynamic and unpredictable, so if you ever need to use your plan, you may have to adapt your actions based on the reality of the situation you face.

Remember, your first action is to evacuate. If that is not possible, find a place to hide and shelter in place. Finally, if you come under direct attack, consider taking action against the shooter.

Your Workplace Plan for Active Shooter Response

Active Shooter Awareness

Know your facility's emergency procedures, personnel, and equipment!

| Emergency Numbers | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Emergency Services | 9-1-1 LOCAL |
| Emergency Information | |
| Local Police Department | |
| Local Fire Department | |
| Local Hospital | |
| Facility Security | |

Evacuation Plan

| How would you evacuate in the event of an active shooter incident? | |
|--|--|
| Describe your plan : | |
| Identify nearest exits | |
| Map out escape routes | |
| What if you are somewhere other than your workstation? | |

Shelter-in-Place Plan

| Where would you hide in the event of an active shooter incident? | |
|--|--|
| Describe your plan : | |
| Identify rooms with locking doors | |
| Identify rooms with heavy furniture | |
| What if you are somewhere other than your workstation? | |

Take-Action Plan

| What would you do if you were forced to take action against the shooter? | |
|--|--|
| Describe your plan : | |
| Consider the risks you are willing to take | |
| Identify items that could be used as weapons | |

Cooperate with First Responders!

Law enforcement will:

- Proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard
- Arrive in teams of four and wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns
- Possibly use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Shout commands and possibly push individuals to the ground for their safety

You should:

| | |
|---|--|
| Assist first responders: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm and follow instructions • Evacuate in the direction first responders are entering • Do not stop to ask first responders for help or direction when evacuating |
| Protect yourself: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put down any items in your hands • Raise hands and spread your fingers; keep hands visible at all times • Avoid quick movements |
| Provide the following information: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the active shooter • Number of shooters • Physical description of shooter(s) • Number and type of weapons held by the shooter(s) • Number of potential victims |