



Cal EMA
CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

ACTIVE SHOOTER GUIDEBOOK

HOW TO RESPOND

WHAT IS AN ACTIVE SHOOTER?

An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is 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.

Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COPING WITH AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are in a classroom or faculty office, stay there and secure the door
- If you are in a hallway, get into a room and secure the door
- As a last resort, attempt to take the active shooter down. When the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her.

CALL 911 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO!

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER IS IN YOUR VICINITY

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that your students will follow your lead during an active shooter situation.

1. Evacuate - If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

2. Hide out - If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement

To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

3. Take action against the active shooter - 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 against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

- Officers usually arrive in teams of four (4)
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns
- Officers may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Officers may shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety

How to react when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 operator:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter/s
- Number and type of weapons held by the shooter/s
- Number of potential victims at the location

The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises.

Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

TRAINING YOUR STAFF FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

To best prepare your staff for an active shooter situation, create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and conduct training exercises. Together, the EAP and training exercises will prepare your staff to effectively respond and help minimize loss of life.

Components of an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Create the EAP with input from several stakeholders including your human resources department, your training department (if one exists), facility operators, your property manager, and local law enforcement and/or emergency responders. An effective EAP includes:

- A preferred method for reporting fires and other emergencies
- An evacuation policy and procedure
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments (i.e., floor plans, safe areas)
- Contact information for, and responsibilities of individuals to be contacted under the EAP
- Information concerning local area hospitals (i.e., name, telephone number, and distance from your location)
- An emergency notification system to alert various parties of an emergency including:
 - Individuals at remote locations within premises
 - Local law enforcement
 - Local area hospitals

Components of Training Exercises

The most effective way to train your staff to respond to an active shooter situation is to conduct mock active shooter training exercises. Local law enforcement is an excellent resource in designing training exercises.

- Recognizing the sound of gunshots
- Reacting quickly when gunshots are heard and/or when a shooting is witnessed:
 - Evacuating the area
 - Hiding out
 - Acting against the shooter as a last resort
- Calling 911
- Reacting when law enforcement arrives
- Adopting the survival mind set during times of crisis

Additional Ways to Prepare For and Prevent an Active Shooter Situation

Preparedness

- Ensure that your facility has at least two evacuation routes
- Post evacuation routes in conspicuous locations throughout your facility
- Include local law enforcement and first responders during training exercises
- Encourage law enforcement, emergency responders, SWAT teams, K-9 teams, and bomb squads to train for an active shooter scenario at your location

Prevention

- Foster a respectful workplace
- Be aware of indications of workplace violence and take remedial actions accordingly

For more information on creating an EAP contact the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Health and Safety Administration, www.osha.gov.

REACTIONS OF TEACHERS DURING AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

Students will follow the lead of teachers during an emergency situation. During an emergency, teachers should be familiar with their EAP, and be prepared to:

- Take immediate action
- Remain calm
- Lock and barricade doors
- Evacuate staff and students via a preplanned evacuation route to a safe area

Assisting Individuals with Special Needs and/or Disabilities

- Ensure that EAPs, evacuation instructions and any other relevant information address individuals with special needs and/or disabilities
- Your facility should be handicap-accessible, in compliance with ADA requirements.

Facility Manager Responsibilities

- Institute access controls (i.e., keys, security system pass codes)
- Distribute critical items to appropriate managers / employees, including:
 - Floor plans
 - Keys
 - Facility personnel lists and telephone numbers
- Coordinate with the facility's security department to ensure the physical security of the location
- Assemble crisis kits containing:
 - Radios
 - Floor plans
 - Staff roster, and staff emergency contact numbers
 - First aid kits
 - Flashlights
- Place removable floor plans near entrances and exits for emergency responders
- Activate the emergency notification system when an emergency situation occurs

MANAGING THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

- After the active shooter has been incapacitated and is no longer a threat, human resources and/or management should engage in post-event assessments and activities, including:
- An accounting of all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine who, if anyone, is missing and potentially injured
- Determining a method for notifying families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties
- Assessing the psychological state of individuals at the scene, and referring them to health care specialists accordingly
- Identifying and filling any critical personnel or operational gaps left in the organization as a result of the active shooter

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

www.calema.ca.gov
and
www.dhs.gov

This guide is an adaptation of a DHS
publication in 2008.

References for information in this document:

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- Safety Tips & Guidelines Regarding Potential “Active Shooter” Incidents Occurring on Campus, University of California Police.
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- Workplace Violence Desk Reference, Security Management Group International, www.SMGICorp.com
- How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Health and Safety Administration, OSHA 3088, 2001.