



ANY TIME, ANY PLACE:

ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATIONS



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 05

ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATIONS 07

- What is an active shooter?
- Definition of an active shooter
- Profile and motive
- Take an active role in preparing
- What you should do
- When law enforcement arrives

SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION 13

- Parents can...
- Students can...
- Talking to children about violence
- Points to emphasize when talking to children
- Addressing grief with students

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ACTIVE SHOOTERS 21

- Assessing your workplace's susceptibility to violence
- What can you do?
- Training your staff for an active shooter
- Threat assessment

FURTHER RESOURCES 26



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WHAT IS AN “ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION”?

What is an active shooter situation? An individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION AND A HOSTAGE SITUATION?

An “active shooter” is a person or persons who appear to be actively killing or attempting to kill people in a single location.

A hostage situation is one in which a person(s) takes control over another person(s), is demanding some type of action and not allowing the person(s) being held to leave. The hostage taker is not actively killing or injuring people.

DEFINITION OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER

The United States Department of Homeland Security defines an active shooter as “*an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.*” Most active shooter incidents occur in locations where there is little or no security. In most instances, shooters commit suicide, are shot by police, or surrender when confrontation becomes unavoidable. Active shooters do not negotiate — their goal is to kill as many people as possible.

PROFILE AND MOTIVE

It is nearly impossible for law enforcement to predict when a mass-shooting incident will happen. It is even more difficult to identify the type of person who will become an active shooter.

Typically, active shooters are individuals with a long history of frustration and failure. They are unable to cope with life’s disappointments and often blame others for their unhappiness. This tendency to blame others for real and perceived personal failures justifies the feeling that others deserve punishment. There is also a component of paranoia, resentment, suspicion, and contempt for those around them. Mental illness—either diagnosed or not—may be a factor.

Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement if possible
- Be in a space that can be secured by locking or blockading the door

If the active shooter is nearby:

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

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- 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 as soon as it is safe to do so!

WHEN AN ACTIVE
SHOOTER IS IN YOUR
VICINITY

QUICKLY DETERMINE
THE MOST REASONABLE
WAY TO PROTECT YOUR
OWN LIFE!





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BE MINDFUL OF THE CONTENT OF CONVERSATIONS THAT MAY BE OVERHEARD BY CHILDREN, EVEN TEENAGERS.

Limit exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.

MAINTAIN A NORMAL ROUTINE.

Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE WHEN TALKING TO CHILDREN

- **Schools are safe places.** School staff works with parents and law enforcement agencies to keep you safe.
- **The school building is safe because ...** (cite specific school procedures).
- **We all play a role in school safety.** Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- **There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping.** You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- **Although there is no guarantee that something bad will never happen,** it is important to understand the difference between the possibility of something happening and the probability that it will affect you.

- **Senseless violence is hard for everyone to understand.** Doing things that you enjoy, sticking to your normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about a possible event.
- **Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others.** They may be unable to handle their anger, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from mental illness. Adults (parents, teachers, law enforcement officials, doctors, faith leaders) work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry and to stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- **Stay away from guns and other weapons.** Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.
- **Violence is never a solution to personal problems.** Students can be part of the solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict resolution skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions that are difficult to handle.



THINGS TO AVOID

- Euphemisms when referring to the deceased such as “they are sleeping” or “they went away”
- Minimizing statements such as “it was only your great-grandmother (or dog, neighbor, etc.)”
- Predicting a timeframe to complete the grieving process such as “it has been a month, you should be getting over this” or “the pain will fade soon”
- Over-identifying (e.g., “I know how you feel”)
- Too much self-disclosure (e.g., “I lost my mom to cancer”) as not everyone handles self-disclosure the same way and the focus should remain on the student’s grief

THINGS TO DO

- Maintain routines as normally as possible
- Ask questions to ascertain the youth’s understanding of the event and emotional state
- Give permission to grieve
- Provide age and developmentally-appropriate answers
- Connect the bereaved with helping professionals and other trusted mentors and adults
- Encourage students to adopt adaptive coping strategies, particularly ones that will involve interaction with other students (e.g., sports, clubs)
- Educate teachers, employees, and families about what is healthy grief and how to support the individual

GRIEVING DOES NOT HAVE A TIMELINE.

Schools, businesses, and churches should be aware of anniversaries, birthdays, and other factors that could affect students, employees, and others months or years after the loss.

GRIEVING INVOLVES MEETING SPECIFIC MILESTONES.

Individuals are likely to experience (and often re-experience) some or all of the following adjustments/ responses:

- Accepting the death
- Experiencing the feelings and emotional pain associated with death and separation from the deceased
- Adjusting to changes and an altered environment that no longer includes the deceased
- Finding ways to remember and memorialize the deceased

GRIEVING IS A NORMAL RESPONSE TO LOSS, BUT MAY REQUIRE SOME SUPPORT.

Additional assistance should be provided when the following are noted:

- Marked loss of interest in daily activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Wishing to be with the deceased loved one
- Fear of being alone
- Significant decreases in academic or work performance and achievement
- Increased somatic complaints
- Changes in attendance patterns (e.g., chronic absenteeism)



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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ACTIVE SHOOTERS

Emergency Action Plans (EAP) and solid, knowledgeable Human Resource programs to help with conflict resolution, grief, and depression also are critical.

Remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation.

While it is something no small business owner or manager wants to believe can happen to them, events ranging from armed robberies to large-scale tragedies like the shootings in Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, Orlando, and Las Vegas force every business manager to consider the unthinkable can happen anywhere.

Workplace violence is defined as any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site.

It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers, and visitors as well. Homicide is currently the fourth-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the United States. However it manifests itself, workplace violence and active shooters in a business are major concerns for employers and employees nationwide.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE ISN'T PREDICTABLE

If you found yourself in the middle of a situation with an active shooter, would you be prepared? Would your employees be able to quickly alert the authorities? What about exits or safe hiding locations? By being prepared, you can save lives. Workplace violence doesn't discriminate based on size. Whether your business is large or small, have a plan in place and be ready in the event that tragedy strikes.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, overall, workplace violence accounted for 1 out of every 6 fatal workplace injuries that occurred in the United States in 2017, 700 were workplace homicides.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

In most workplaces where risk factors can be identified, the risk of assault can be prevented or minimized if employers take appropriate precautions. One of the best protections employers can offer their workers is to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence. This policy should cover all workers, patients, clients, visitors, contractors, and anyone else who may come in contact with company personnel. Here are eight tips for setting up active shooter training for a business of any size:

- 1. Develop an emergency response plan if you do not have one.**
- 2. Contact a member of local law enforcement and ask if they are willing to partner. Their partnership significantly helps elevate the value of an active shooter drill. If they are interested, be flexible and accommodating to their needs.**
- 3. No company is too small to conduct active shooter training. The Department of Homeland Security has a free resource on the web to use. If you are in a larger facility, take the training to various locations. Ask team members:**
 - What would be your path of escape?
 - Where would you run to once outside the building?
 - If you could not escape, where would you hide?
 - If you had to hide and the shooter found you, what would you use to protect and defend yourself?
- 4. When providing the training, do so with firmness and intensity. If this were to happen, team members would not have the luxury of time to decide and execute actions.**
- 5. Practice evacuating your location in a hurry on a regular basis.**
- 6. Critically evaluate the work location to identify things to improve safety and response capacity. Ask the advice of various first responders.**
- 7. Talk about it; do not pretend that it will not happen to you. Denial is not a strategy. Awareness increases the chances a member of your team will notice and alert others when something seems off in the work environment.**
- 8. Repeat training and drills on a regular basis.**