Dealing with an Active Shooter Situation

1. RESPONSE

Best Option: RUN!

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

- Warn individuals not to enter an area where the active shooter may be.
- 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 it is safe to do so

If You Can't Run, HIDE!

If safe 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.
- Close, cover, and move away from windows.

Keeping Yourself Safe While Hiding

If the active shooter is nearby:
- Lock the door.

- Silence your cell phone and/or pager. (Even the vibration setting can give away a hiding position.)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks).
- Remain quiet.

Consider the difference between cover and concealment. Cover will protect from gunfire and concealment will merely hide you from the view of the shooter. Choose the best space that is available quickly

When Running and Hiding Are Not Possible: FIGHT!

As an absolute last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter:

- Act as aggressively as possible against him/her.
- Throw items and use improvised weapons.
- Work together to incapacitate the shooter.
- Commit to your actions.

When possible, provide the following information to law enforcement officers or 911 operators:

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

When Law Enforcement Arrives

When law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Slowly put down any items in your hands (e.g., bags, jackets).
- Raise hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times.
- Avoid quick movements toward officers, such as holding on to them for safety.
- Avoid pointing, screaming, or yelling.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, as they will be focused on finding and incapacitating the shooter. Not adhering to officers' instructions puts everyone in danger

Additional Officers and Rescue Teams

Additional officers may arrive in teams. These teams may:

- Wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment.
- Be armed with rifles, shotguns, and/or handguns.
- Use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation.
- Shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.

Information and Assembly Points

After you have reached a safe location or 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 the safe location or assembly point until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

Followup Actions

Followup actions include:

- Managing the consequences.
  - Accounting for all individuals.
  - Determining method for notifying families.
  - Assessing needs and making referrals.
- Capturing lessons learned.
  - Analyzing the situation.
  - Creating an after-action report.
- Refining Emergency Action Plan.

2. PREPARDENESS

- Have an Emergency Action Plan
  - Ensure that your facility has at least two evacuation routes.
  - Clearly post and mark evacuation routes in conspicuous locations throughout your facility.
  - Items to include in the plan are ensuring that all necessary staff have access and keys

- Conduct exercises.
  - Include local law enforcement and first responders during training exercises.

- Encourage law enforcement, emergency responders, SWAT teams, canine teams, and bomb squads to train for an active shooter scenario at your location

Emergency Action Plan

- Create with input from several stakeholders including human resources department, training department (if one exists), facility owners/operators, your property manager, and local law enforcement and/or emergency responders.
- Conduct drills and exercise the plan at least once a year. Ensure that your Emergency Action Plan includes actions for persons with disabilities and access and functional needs; guests and visitors; contains bi-lingual language; needs for all populations.
- An effective Emergency Action Plan 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 Emergency Action Plan.
  - 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

Training Exercises

Local law enforcement organizations are an excellent resource in designing training exercises. Training should include:

- Recognizing the sound of gunshots.
  - Reacting quickly when gunshots are heard and/or when a shooting is witnessed. Training should cover Run-Hide-Fight as a last resort.
- Calling 911.
- Reacting when law enforcement arrives.
- Adopting the survival mindset during times of crisis.

Facility Managers' Responsibilities

Facility managers should:

- Institute access controls (e.g., keys, security system pass codes).
- Distribute critical items to appropriate managers/employees, including:
  - Floor plans.
  - Keys, and other access-control measures.
  - Facility personnel lists and telephone numbers.
  - Daily schedule.
- Assemble crisis kits containing:
  - Radios.
  - Floor plans.
  - Employee roster and emergency contact numbers.
  - First aid kits.
  - Flashlights.

Facility managers should also:

- Ensure that the facility has at least two evacuation routes.
- Coordinate with the facility's security department to ensure the physical security of the location.
- Post evacuation routes in conspicuous locations throughout the facility.
- Place removable floor plans near entrances and exits for emergency responders.
- Include local law enforcement and first responders during training exercises.
- Encourage law enforcement, emergency responders, SWAT teams, canine teams, and bomb squads to train for an active shooter scenario at their location.
- Foster a respectful workplace.
- Be aware of indications of workplace violence and take remedial actions accordingly.

3. PREVENTION

- Being aware of indications of workplace violence and taking remedial actions accordingly.
- Fostering a respectful workplace.

Human Resources Responsibilities

- Conducting effective employee screening and background checks.
- Creating a system for reporting signs of potentially violent behavior.
- Making counseling services available to employees.
- Developing an Emergency Action Plan that includes policies and procedures for dealing with an active shooter situation, as well as after-action planning.

Recognizing Potential Workplace Violence

An active shooter in your workplace may be a current or former employee, or an acquaintance of a current or former employee

Employees typically do not just "snap," but display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. If these behaviors are recognized, they can often be managed and treated.

Indicators of potentially violent behavior by an employee may include:

- Depression/withdrawal.
- Repeated violations of company policies.
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation.
- Behavior that may suggest paranoia (e.g., "everybody is against me").
- Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace.
- Talk of severe financial problems.
- Talk of previous incidents of violence

Report violent acts or threats of violence to your immediate supervisor, security or human resources. Regardless of the type of workplace violence, the chances for prevention improve with increased awareness of potential warning signs and rapid response to a problem.

Source:

- Online FEMA course - IS-00907: "Active Shooter: What Can You Do" -
  https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-907