



The 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”.

These incidents usually involve firearms and randomly selected targets or victims. Anyone involved in an incident should call emergency 911 as soon as it is safe to do so.

While it is difficult to foresee a stranger’s actions, you can look for characteristics that a person may be planning a shooting incident.

Report any of the following observations or uneasy, “gut” feelings to your supervisor, management, and human resources:

Increased use of alcohol, drugs, and absenteeism.

Decreased hygiene and appearance.

Depression and social withdrawal.

Disregarding of work quality or company policy.

Mood swings and overly emotional responses.

Paranoid, suicidal, or doomsday behavior or discussions.

Increased discussion of violent incidents and weapons/firearms.

Often, the best choice is to evacuate the active shooter area.

For evacuations:

Always know two exits and escape routes in every building you visit.

Guide others to the escape route and prevent them from entering the shooting zone.

Exit immediately whether others follow you or not.

Don’t attempt to move wounded people.

Always keep your hands visible and follow police instructions.

Find a hideout place if you can’t escape an active shooter scenario.

Ideally, stay in or find an office with a door that you can lock and barricade.

Stay out of sight of windows.

Silence your cell phone, turn off radios, TVs, etc.

If you can't evacuate or hide, call 911 and talk to the dispatcher or leave the phone line open so they can listen and record events. Describe the shooting location, the shooter, and the weapons if possible. Remain calm, listen, and think about your next moves.

Only as a last resort, and if your life is in "imminent danger," should you take action against the shooter.

If you must, act "aggressively and overwhelmingly," attack the shooter with improvised weapons. Throw things and yell at the shooter. Law enforcement recommends that you "**commit to your actions**," so don't hesitate or stop in mid-action.

Create an emergency action plan to respond to an active shooter.

Gather emergency responders contact names and phone numbers. Include local hospitals and building managers.

Discuss how to alert employees about an incident.

Will you use a code word over the public address system, an all-call phone alert, texts, etc.?

Procure supplies such as exit floor plans, first aid kits, staff rosters, flashlights, communication devices, etc.

Once you have your response procedures in place:

Create a written emergency action plan.

Train employees on the plan and how to react when gunshots are heard.

Conduct an emergency drill around an active shooter scenario.

Enact your emergency action plan and meet at the designated spot to identify which individuals may still be in the building.

Evaluate your drill success and adjust your plan and training as needed.

Active shooter situations can be random, with rapid and unpredictable events unfolding. Thinking about and practicing the proper response now can boost your chance of survival through the event and aftermath.