

Safety Spotlight

Active Shooter: How to Respond

Active shooter situations are unpredictable, evolve quickly and, typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to the victims. Individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation before law enforcement arrives because most of these situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes.¹

How to Respond When an Active Shooter is in Your Vicinity¹

It is important to remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation. However, individuals should quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect their own life by choosing to **RUN**, **HIDE**, or **FIGHT** – in this order.

RUN

- If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises but be sure to have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Help others in the group escape, if possible.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Leave any personal belongings behind and do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Call 911 when you are safe.
- Follow the instructions of any police officers.

HIDE

- 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), and not trap you or restrict your options for movement.
- To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place, you should lock the door and blockade it with heavy furniture (if available).
- If the active shooter is nearby, lock the door, silence your cellphone, turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions), hide behind large items, and remain quiet.
- If evacuation and hiding out are not possible, remain calm, dial 911 to alert police to the active shooter's location, number of shooters, physical description(s), weapon(s), and a potential number of victims. If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

¹ "Active Shooter: How to Respond." U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 5 May 2017.



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FIGHT

- As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter. This can be done by acting as aggressively as possible against him/her, throwing items and improvising weapons, yelling, and committing to your actions.

How to Respond When Law Enforcement Arrives¹

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible and, because of this, officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard and not stop to help injured persons. Rescue teams of additional officers and emergency medical personal will follow this initial wave.

When the first set of law enforcement individuals arrives, you should:

- Remain calm and follow officers' instructions.
- Immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers, putting down any items in your hands, and keeping your hands visible at all times.
- Avoid pointing, screaming, yelling, and making quick movements towards officers (i.e., holding onto them for safety).
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering 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 told you to do so.



“ **RUN, HIDE, or FIGHT** are the three ways in which individuals should quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect their own life.¹ ”



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