

Response to an Active Shooter

Definition

Active Shooter - one or more subjects who participate in a random or systematic shooting spree demonstrating their intent to continuously harm or kill others. These situations are dynamic and evolve rapidly, demanding immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to stop the shooting and limit harm or loss of life to innocent victims.

Guidance to faculty, staff and students

How you respond to an active shooter will be dictated by the specific circumstances of the encounter, keeping in mind there could be more than one shooter involved in the same situation. If you find yourself involved in an active shooter situation, remain calm and use these guidelines to help you plan a strategy for survival.

- **If an active shooter is outside your building:** proceed to a room that can be locked or secured by some other means such as a door wedge, tables or chairs. Lock all doors and windows and turn off the lights. If possible, get everyone down on the floor and ensure no one is visible from outside the room. Call 911 and the campus police at 526-1427. Advise the call taker on what's taking place, and inform him/her of your location; remain in place until the police or a campus administrator you know gives the "all clear." Unfamiliar voices may be the shooter attempting to lure victims from their safe space; do not respond to any voice commands until you can verify with certainty they are being issued by a police officer.
- **If an active shooter is in the same building you are:** secure the room you are in by either the door lock, a wedge, tables or chairs and then follow the same procedure described in the previous paragraph. If you cannot secure the room, determine if there is a nearby location that can be reached safely and secured.
- **If an active shooter enters your office or classroom:** try to remain calm, call 911 if possible and alert police to the shooter's location. If you can't speak, leave the line open so the dispatcher can hear what is taking place. Usually the location of a caller can be determined without speaking. If there is absolutely no opportunity of escape or hiding, it might be possible to negotiate with the shooter; attempting to overpower the shooter with force should be considered a very last resort and only after all other options have been exhausted. If the shooter leaves the area, proceed immediately to a safer place. Do not touch anything that was in the area of the shooter because of possible explosives being left and crucial evidence being lost.

No matter what the circumstances, if you decide to flee during an active shooter situation, make sure you have a plan and escape route in mind. Do not attempt to carry anything in your hands while fleeing; move quickly, keep your hands visible and follow instructions given by any police officers you may encounter. Do not try to move any injured people; leave them where they are and notify authorities of their location as soon as possible. Do not attempt to drive off campus until told it is safe to do so by police.

What to Expect from Responding Police Officers

Police officers responding to an active shooter are trained to proceed immediately to the area where the shots were last heard; their purpose is to stop the shooting as quickly as possible. The first responding officers will form a contact team ideally consisting of four (4) persons; they will possibly be from different agencies and dressed in different uniforms. They may even be in civilian clothes and wearing an external bulletproof vest. Some officers may be dressed in Kevlar helmets and other tactical equipment. The officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns or handguns and might be using pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation.

Regardless of how they appear, remain calm. Do as the officers tell you, do not be afraid of them, do not touch, grab or call out to the officers. Put down any bags or packages you are carrying and keep your hands visible at all times; if you know where the shooter is, tell the officers. The first officers to arrive will not stop to aid injured victims; rescue teams composed of other officers and emergency medical personnel will follow the first team into secured areas to treat and remove injured persons. Keep in mind, once you have escaped to a safer location, the entire area is still a crime scene; police will usually not let anyone leave until the situation is under control and witnesses have been identified. Until you have been released, remain at whatever assembly point authorities designate.