



AmericanChecked INC.
Background Screening Solutions®

Active Shooter Preparedness



The Danger Is Real

In 2019, there were 417 mass shootings, up nearly 50% since 2014. Active shooter and violent incidents can occur anywhere - where we shop, worship, learn, play, relax and work.

Recent events reported in the news give the impression that these violent incidents are occurring with greater frequency. From acts of terrorism at public gatherings, tourist attractions and airports to active shooters at night clubs, office buildings, schools and a baseball field where elected representatives were practicing for a charity game, violent attacks seem to be all too commonplace.



Active shooters and violent individuals may be motivated by the following:

- Anger directed at the company/organization establishment or a person associated with or visiting the property
- Political or extremist ideology with a desire to make a shocking public statement
- Revenge against a perceived wrong, either by the establishment or someone at the establishment
- Criminal activity, such as a theft or robbery
- Untreated mental illness

This e-book provides actionable tips for developing a mindset of preparedness and survival for active shooter situations.

Active Shooter Defined



Characteristics of an Active Shooter

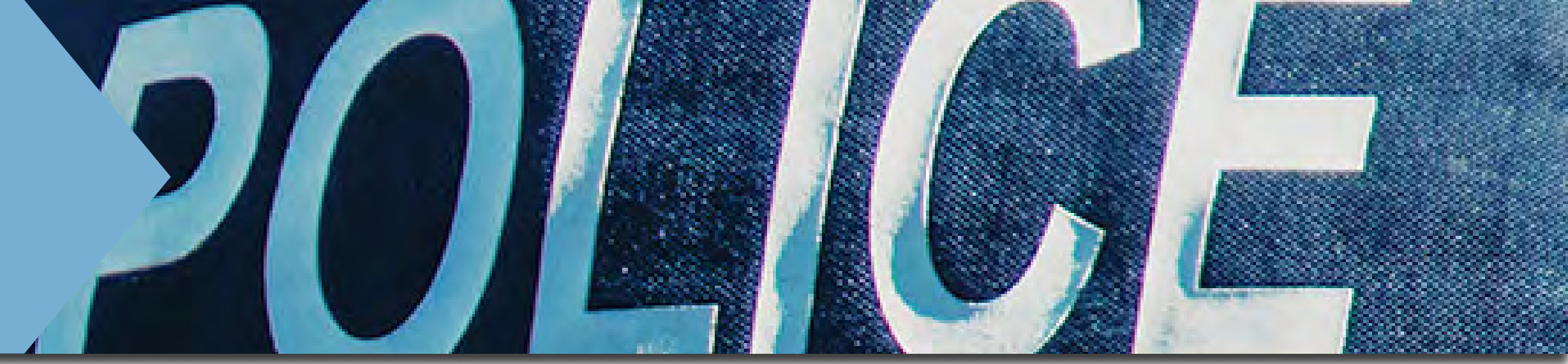
- Active shooters are likely to engage more than one target during their attack.
- Their intention is usually an expression of hatred or rage, or extremist ideology.
- Often, but not always, the attacker is suicidal.
- Active shooters are typically well-planned, well-armed and familiar with target location.
- They leverage the use of booby-traps, explosives and diversion tactics.
- The location of their attack may be chosen for the tactical advantage. The shooter is also likely to be mobile during the attack, rather than fixed in one location.

Active Shooter Profile

- An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people.
- Active shooters usually target a confined and populated area.
- Weapons used by Active shooters can include, but are not limited to:
 - firearms (most frequently used)
 - bladed weapons
 - vehicles
 - any tools that in the circumstance in which it is used constitutes deadly force
- Active shooters are typically well-planned, well-armed and familiar with target location.
- They leverage the use of booby-traps, explosives and diversion tactics.
- The location of their attack may be chosen for the tactical advantage. The shooter is also likely to be mobile during the attack, rather than fixed in one location.



Preparing for an Active Shooter Situation



Develop an Emergency Action Plan

There is no way to recreate the confusion, terror, and spontaneity of an actual active shooter or critical incident in a training scenario. Employees must program themselves to deal with the utter shock of an actual critical event to function as trained. However, creating, implementing and practicing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is the preferred method for reporting emergencies.

When compiling your EAP, do a thorough risk assessment of your property:

- Ensure there are no obstructions in your exit routes.
- Check the reliability of your security systems and correct any gaps immediately.
- Test your communication system – how will you get the word out when there is an emergency? What are your backup communication methods?

An EAP Should Include:

An evacuation policy and procedure

- At least two designated evacuation points
- Posted evacuation routes

Emergency escape procedure and route assignments

- Floor plan
- Safe areas
- Rally point

Information on local hospital(s), fire department and law enforcement agencies:

- Name
- Telephone number
- Distance from the facility

Assemble crisis kits:

- Radios
- Floor plans
- Staff roster and staff emergency contact numbers
- First aid kits
- Flashlights

Contact information for, and responsibilities of, individuals to be contacted under the EAP. When preparing an EAP consider the following:

- Human resources department
- Establishment training department
- Property management
- Local law enforcement, emergency responders, and security (if available)

Components of an effective action plan include the following:

- A dedicated method for reporting different types of emergencies
- Property evacuation policies and procedures
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments
- Contact information for individuals and agencies to be contacted pursuant to the emergency action plan
- Information concerning local area hospitals and emergency response resources
- An emergency notification protocol to alert various departments/locations of an active shooter or critical incident

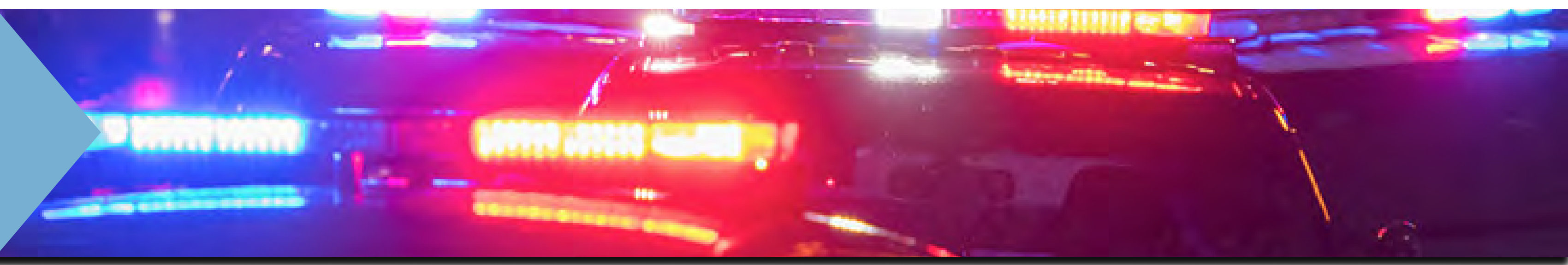
Your company address should be easily accessible to share with emergency contacts. Place removable floor plans near entrances and exits for emergency responders. Activate emergency notification system when an emergency occurs.



As with any other emergency or critical incident, it's important to have a plan in place so you're better equipped to respond. Spend time developing an Active Shooter Response Plan to supplement your EAP and practice for emergencies. You might consider including first responders in your training to help simulate and prepare for a live event.

Keep in mind, your plan should not only take staff into consideration, but customers as well. Customers and patrons will more than likely follow your staff, and staff should be prepared to serve as leaders in getting everyone evacuated safely.

The Fight or Flight Response



When confronted with a perceived harmful event, attack or threat to survival, we're often programmed to respond with the natural physiological fight-or-flight, or even freeze, response.

Fight

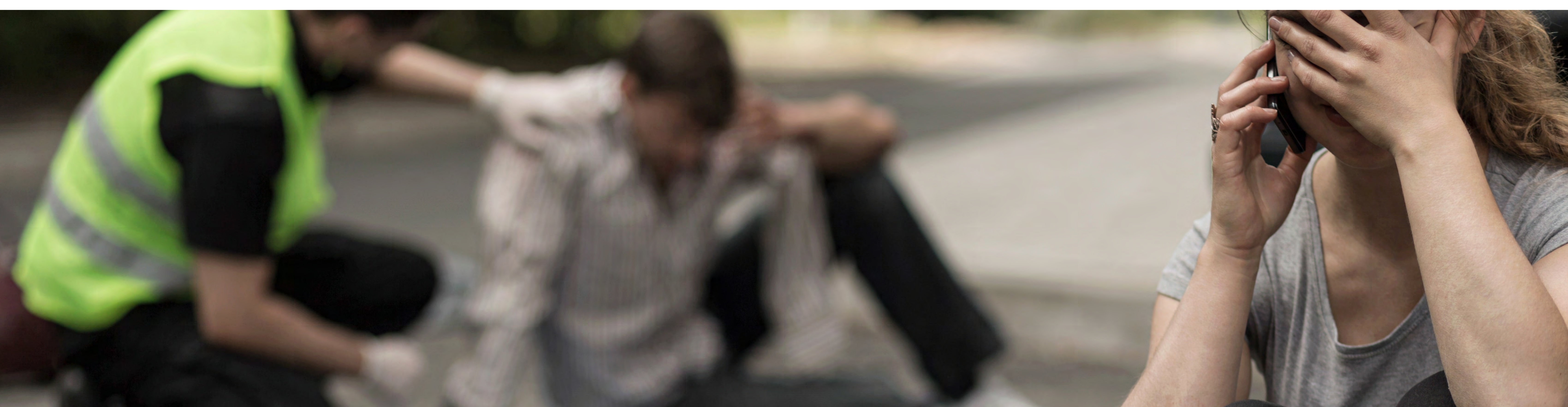
- 1.** The fight response is survival-focused -- committing 100% to fighting and overtaking whoever is threatening your life.
- 2.** During this response, you are doing whatever is necessary to survive and make it out of the threatening situation.

Flight

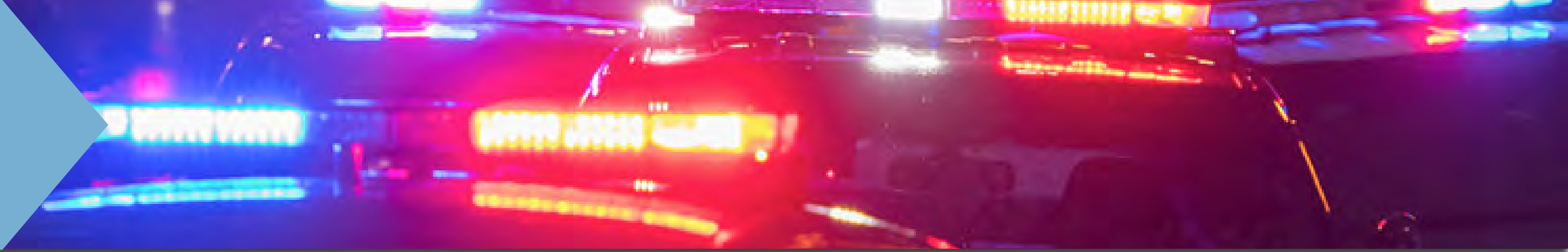
- 1.** The flight response is all about finding a smart way out of a threatening situation.
- 2.** In an active shooter incident, your flight response will allow you to commit to an escape that doesn't place you in danger.
- 3.** Securing yourself in a safe location away from the attacker may be the smartest move depending on your surroundings.

Freeze

- 1.** Instead of turning to fight or flight, sometimes we freeze in traumatic situations – turning us into “deer in the headlights.”
- 2.** When we are overwhelmed, we perceive there is no hope of surviving, so we freeze.
- 3.** Sometimes victims pass out and/or mentally remove themselves from their bodies to protect themselves from the pain or the attack. This may result in loss of memory of the trauma. Victims can then experience flashbacks or memory fragments that can haunt them for the rest of their lives.



The Fight or Flight Response



Mentally prepare yourself to react to a traumatic event in a smart way by conditioning your brain through consistent training.

Train yourself to react safely:

The fight response is survival-focused -- committing 100% to fighting and overtaking whoever is threatening your life.

- The flight response is all about finding a smart way out of a threatening situation.
- In an active shooter incident, your flight response will allow you to commit to an escape that doesn't place you in danger.
- Securing yourself in a safe location away from the attacker may be the smartest move depending on your surroundings.

Play these situations out in your head multiple times and soon your reaction will become second nature.



Responding in an Active Shooter Situation



There are three ways to respond in an active shooter situation: **Run, hide or fight.**

Run

The best course of action when an active shooter situation arises is to put as much distance between you and the threat as possible. Employees and patrons are advised to exit the property as rapidly and safely as possible, without placing themselves in the shooter's line of sight. If presented with an accessible escape path, attempt to exit the premises.

Plan your escape:

Theorizing possible locations where an active shooter situation may arise and planning escape routes helps in responding quickly if the situation arises. Mentally replaying a possible critical event over and over allows us to respond from muscle memory, rather than freezing into paralysis from the shock of the incident, losing precious time in the process.

Leave belongings behind:

A cellphone should be the only thing you take with you to contact emergency responders, but only if grabbing your phone will not delay your exit from the premises. It's important for your hands to be visible and empty should you encounter responding law enforcement officers during your exit.

Escort others as you flee:

As you flee, you may encounter shocked patrons paralyzed with fear. Customers and fellow employees you encounter may appear confused about what to do to flee danger. Grab them, push them, and do whatever is necessary to move them in the direction of the exits, but do not unnecessarily delay your exit.

Responding in an Active Shooter Situation

Run

Warn others who may be heading toward danger:

As you are fleeing danger, be sure to warn others who may be heading toward the active shooter without realizing the peril ahead. Curiosity may motivate customers or other employees to run toward the commotion to figure out what's going on. Beware of the inevitable social media cell phone recorder who may sacrifice personal safety to share events as they're unfolding.

Do not attempt to move wounded people:

Unless those you encounter are ambulatory and able to walk on their own, regardless of how heartless it sounds, do not stop to move those who may have been injured by the active shooter. Any delay in your exit from the premises, decreases your likelihood of survival.

Keep your hands visible:

To help law enforcement quickly assess the fact that you're not a threat, raise your empty hands over your head, with your palms visible, and precisely follow the directions of the law enforcement officers you encounter.



When you have reached a place of safety, dial 911 and provide the following information to emergency operators:

- Location of shooter
- Number of shooters
- Physical description of shooter(s)
- Describe weapon(s)
- Number and types of weapons
- Number of potential victims
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open to allow the dispatcher to listen. Speak only when it is safe.

Hide

If fleeing the premises is not an option because of the danger it presents, then the chosen course of action should be to hide.

Choose a secure location:

The ideal hiding place is a location that's secure, that has a locked door or can be barricaded.

Remain out of the shooter's view:

Select a location to hide where the shooter is not likely to see you. Remain as quiet as possible and silence all cell phones. Lock the door. Blockade the door with heavy furniture. Close, cover, and move away from any windows.

Find a location of cover, not just concealment:

A location that provides concealment may keep you out of the shooter's view, but it will not provide protection if bullets are fired in your direction. Barricade yourself behind items that not only conceal you but also offer you a measure of protection from bullets, such as a heavy desk or metal bookcases full of files.

Leave yourself an out:

If possible, hide in a location that has an escape route in case the suspect appears intent on entering the location where you are hiding, but be prepared to exercise the last option when confronted by an active shooter situation: **fight**.

Responding in an Active Shooter Situation

Fight

Resignation, surrender, and futility are not options. If you cannot escape or barricade yourself in a secure location, you must be prepared to do whatever is necessary to survive. Remember, the shooter is committed to taking lives. You must be committed to saving yours.

Act as aggressively as possible:

Whether motivated by crime, ideology, revenge, or mental dysfunction, the shooter has already demonstrated his or her level of aggression. If fight is our last option, be prepared to meet force with force. Commit yourself to using whatever level of force is necessary to ensure your survival.

Recruit others to join forces:

If you are with others in a situation in which confrontation with the shooter is likely, develop a plan with them to assault the shooter with as much force as you can collectively muster.

Use improvised weapons:

Locate as many objects as you can that you can throw at the shooter or use as weapons. Employ heavy objects, sharp objects, caustic objects, and whatever you can use to incapacitate the shooter.

Commit to action:

Once the decision is made to fight, commit to that course of action until you prevail and the shooter has been incapacitated. Do not stop until your survival is assured.



How to Respond When Law Enforcement Arrives

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Law enforcement will bypass victims to locate and neutralize the suspect(s) first. EMS personnel will take care of the injured after law enforcement has swept the perimeter and/or neutralized the assailant.

Know Your Zones

- Cold Zones: Safe areas
- Warm Zones: May be injured parties
- Hot Zones: Where the suspect(s) are believed to be located

What to Expect

- Officers will enter an active shooter environment with their weapons drawn.
- Officers may not know who the shooter is, so everyone is considered a potential suspect.
- When officers arrive, have your hands up so it's known you're not the threat.
- Officers may shout commands and may physically restrain or control you if they feel you are a threat or to ensure your safety.

Perimeter Security & Evacuation Assistance

NOT CROSS

During an active shooter incident, law enforcement will set up a command post. When you leave the building, head over to the command post or wherever there is concentrated law enforcement. **DO NOT LEAVE until you check-in with law enforcement.**

This is to ensure:

- You are accounted for
- Any pertinent information you have on the event/shooter is collected

How to React When Law Enforcement Arrives

1. Remain calm and follow instructions
2. Put down any items in your hands
3. Raise hands and spread fingers
4. Keep hands visible at all times
5. Avoid quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
6. Avoiding pointing, screaming or yelling
7. Do not stop to ask for officers for help or directions with evacuating



Recognition and Prevention of Violence in the Workplace

Workplace Violence Prevention

Consider the following workplace violence indicators:

- May display characteristics of potentially violent behavior
- May exhibit implied or expressed threats
- Demonstrates significant changes in behavior or extreme mood swings (i.e., normally sociable people becomes reclusive and sullen)
- Exhibits expressed concern for extreme changes in workplace or personal life

Human resource responsibilities:

- Conduct thorough background checks on all employees through a nationally accredited screening company
- Create system for reporting violent behavior and encourage reporting of employee safety concerns
- Make counseling available through employee assistance program
- Encourage coursework in OCL mental health online courses
- Develop plans for dealing with an active shooter situation and critical incidents occurring on property

Recognition and Prevention of Violence in the Workplace

Indicators of potentially violent behavior you might have considered include the following:

- Increased use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism and vague physical complaints
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
- Depression or withdrawal
- Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures
- Repeated violations of organizational policies
- Increased severe mood swings
- Noticeably unstable, emotional responses
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
- Suicidal indications; comments about “putting things in order”
- Behavior that might indicate paranoia (“they’re out to get me”)
- Increasing discussion of problems at home
- Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace
- Talk of severe financial problems
- Talk of previous incidents of violence
- Empathy with individuals who commit violence
- Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons, and violent crimes

Violent acts, threats of violence, or disturbing behavior should be reported to an immediate supervisor, human resources, casino security, or casino management. Regardless of the type or workplace violence, the chances for prevention improve with increased awareness of potential warning signs and timely intervention.



After-Action Responsibilities



The actions we take following an incident can be nearly as important as the actions we take to ensure our survival while the critical incident is evolving. The physical, emotional, and psychological damage wrought by an active shooter or critical incident can last long after the incident is over.

- Determine who is missing or injured
- Determine a method for notifying families and loved ones
- Facilitate access to resources to assess the psychological state of involved employees (keep Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act restrictions in mind)
- Identify and fill critical personnel or operational gaps within the casino
- Manage information flow to the media
- Work with department heads to develop a transition plan to reopening for business

Emergency response plan assessment:

- Document response activities during the critical incident
- Identify what went right and what needs to be changed
- Prepare an analysis of existing plan's effectiveness
- Document suggestions for plan improvement

Additional Training & Resources



Video: Run Hide, Fight. Surviving an Active Shooter Event

<https://police.utexas.edu/file/33>

FEMA Active Shooter: What You Can Do Course – No Cost

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=is-907>

DHS Active Shooter Response Pocket Card

https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_pocket_card.pdf

DHS Active Shooter Preparedness

<https://www.cisa.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>

FBI Active Shooter Resources

<https://www.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources>

Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center

<https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac/>



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