

Active Shooter Event (ASE) Recommended Actions

Run

If it is safe to do so, the first course of action that should be taken is to run. When possible, individuals should exit the building through the safest route and proceed to a designated assembly location(s) or an alternate vetted site. However, given the dynamic nature of an active shooter event, exiting the building and going to an evacuation site via practiced fire drill routes may put individuals at risk or may not be possible. If doing so is not possible or puts individuals at risk, employees may need to run out of the facility or away from the area under attack and move as far away as possible until they are in a safe location.

Despite the complexity of this situation, facility occupants and visitors at risk who can evacuate safely should do so. Recent research shows the best method to reduce loss of life in an active shooter incident is for people to immediately evacuate or be evacuated from the area where an active shooter may be located or attempting to enter.

- Leave personal belongings behind
- Put their hands in the air to signal law enforcement responders that they are unarmed
- Visualize possible escape routes, including physically accessible routes for occupants, visitors, or staff with disabilities and others with access and functional needs
- Avoid escalators and elevators
- Take others with them but not stay behind because others refuse to leave

Call 911 when safe to do so. Information to provide to law enforcement or dispatchers:

- Location of active shooter(s)
- Location of caller
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- If there is law enforcement on-site (if known)
- Physical description of shooter(s)
- Type and number of weapons used by shooter(s)
- Use or threat of explosives/IEDs
- If shooting is still occurring
- Number of potential victims at the scene

Hide

If running is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible where the walls might be thicker and have fewer windows. Likewise, for occupants that cannot run, hiding may be the only option.

In addition, occupants should do the following:

- Lock the doors and/or barricade them with heavy furniture, if possible.
- Close and lock windows, and close blinds or cover windows.
- Turn off lights.
- Silence all electronic devices.
- Remain silent.
- Look for other avenues of escape.
- Identify ad-hoc weapons.

- When safe to do so, use strategies to silently communicate with first responders, if possible (e.g. in rooms with exterior windows, make signs to silently signal law enforcement and emergency responders to indicate the status of the room's occupants).
- Hide along the wall closest to the exit but out of view from the hallway (which would allow the best option for ambushing the shooter and for possible escape if the shooter enters or passes by the room).
- Remain in place until given an all clear by identifiable law enforcement.

Fight

If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, when confronted by the shooter individuals in immediate danger should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as fire extinguishers, chairs, etc. Research shows there is strength in numbers. Studies of past active shooter events have shown that the potential victims themselves have disrupted 17 of 51 separate active shooter incidents before law enforcement arrived.

Interacting with First Responders

Facility occupants should be aware that the first priority for responding law enforcement is to respond to the threat, engage, and neutralize the active shooter as soon as possible; all other actions are secondary. One comprehensive study found that in more than half (57 percent) of active shooter incidents where a solo officer arrived on the scene, shooting was still underway when the officer arrived. In 75 percent of those instances, that solo officer had to confront the perpetrator to end the threat.

Law enforcement, firefighters, and EMS personnel (first responders) coming to an active shooter event have a daunting task. Though the objectives remain the same — protect and save lives — the threat of an active shooter incident differs from responding to a natural disaster or many other emergencies. Emergency calls can involve actual or future threats of physical violence. Information coming in may be inaccurate and conflicting. This violence might be directed not only in or at the facility and its occupants, but also at nearby buildings off-site.

Active shooter incidents are one of the most dangerous situations facing law enforcement today. If there is active shooting, officers will assemble as a contact team, enter the facility, and proceed directly to the sounds of violence (gunshots, pleas for life, etc.). If no shouts or sounds of violence are heard, a quick and methodical search of the facility will be conducted. Should the gun shots start up, or sounds of violence be heard, the contact team will stop searching and proceed directly to this source. Facility occupants should not be alarmed if officers shout commands and push individuals to the ground for their safety. The first officers to arrive on the scene will not stop to assist with injured personnel. Rescue teams consisting of additional officers and, if authorized by facility/local law enforcement agency standard operating procedure (SOP), medical personnel will follow the first wave and will enter the facility as soon as possible. Occupants should cooperate and not interfere with the response of first responders. The sooner law enforcement is able to discern the threat and react, the more lives can be saved. This is particularly true in an active shooter incident where law enforcement responds to a 911 call of shots fired. Many innocent lives are at risk in concentrated areas. This is why it is critical that facilities work with their local partners (e.g. first responders, emergency managers) to identify, prepare, prevent, and effectively respond to an active shooter incident in a coordinated fashion.

Refer to the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management (ADEM) website <http://www.adem.arkansas.gov/aem/plan-prepare/law-enforcement-services/> to the “Run, Hide, Fight” ASE informational video.