

A photograph of a large, multi-story brick and white building, likely a UAB Police Department facility. The building has several windows and a prominent brick section on the left. In the foreground, there is a green lawn with a large, white, perforated sculpture. The sky is clear and blue.

Active Shooter Response

UAB Police Department

What is an active shooter?

- An **active shooter** is a person or person(s) who appear to be actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people, most often in populated areas; and in most cases, active shooters use firearm(s) and there is no pattern or method for selection of their victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly.
- **Disclaimer:** An individual must use his/her own discretion during an active shooter event as to whether he/she chooses to run or remain in place. However, best practices for survival are listed below.
- **REMEMBER:** Law Enforcement's first priority is to confront and disable the threat.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- **RUN:** Can you safely escape?
- **HIDE:** Is there a good place to hide?
- **FIGHT:** Will you take out the shooter?
- **Run for safety:** If you can and deem it safe, get out and get to a safe place; you will have to rely partially on instinct; and leave belongings behind, but take your cell phone if it is handy.
- **Hiding in a safe place:** Find a hidden location; find protection behind furniture; find a room that locks if you can; If possible, close and lock the outside door into the room. Blockade the door with furniture or other heavy objects.

What should you do if an active shooter is outside your building or inside the building you are in?



An illuminated red "EXIT" sign is mounted on a white ceiling. The word "EXIT" is written in large, bold, red capital letters. Below the sign, the word "Evacuate" is written in a large, black, sans-serif font.

Evacuate

If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

Hide Out

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)
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement

To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door
- Barricade the door with heavy furniture

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions, hospital pagers)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- Do whatever is necessary to survive the situation
- If possible and safe to do so, report the location of the assailant.
- IF OUTSIDE WHEN A SHOOTING OCCURS:
- Drop to the ground immediately, face down as flat as possible. If you are within 15-20 feet of a safe place or cover, duck and run to it.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- Move or crawl away from gunfire, trying to utilize any obstruction between you and the gunfire. Remember that many objects of cover may conceal you from sight, but may not be bulletproof.
- When you reach a place of relative safety, stay down and do not move. Do not peek or raise your head in an effort to see what may be happening.
- Wait and listen for direction from Public Safety and law enforcement personnel.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- IF SUSPECT IS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY:
- An individual must use his/her own discretion about when he or she must engage a shooter for survival.
- Make a plan as to how you will survive the situation.
- Make a total commitment to action and act as a team with others if possible.
- Do whatever is necessary to survive the situation.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- HELP OUT:
- Warn others
- Help others escape
- Keep others away from the danger area
- Help the injured
- Help others stay calm

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- CALLING FOR HELP:
- Call 9-1-1 or 4-3535 to report the incident. Do not assume that someone else has reported the incident. Be persistent; phones may be jammed.
- Calmly identify yourself and your exact location. Remain calm and answer the dispatcher's questions. The dispatcher is trained to obtain the necessary and required information for an appropriate emergency response.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- If safe to do so, stop and take time to get a good description of the criminal. Note height, weight, sex, race, approximate age, clothing, method and direction of travel, and his/her name, if known.
- If the suspect is entering a vehicle, note the license plate number, make and model, color, and outstanding characteristics. All of this takes only a few seconds and is of the utmost help to the responding officers.

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

Take action against the active shooter

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions

**What should you expect
when law enforcement
arrives, and what should
you do?**



Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

- Officers usually arrive in teams of four (4)
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns, etc.
- Officers may use pepper spray, tear gas, or other tools to control the situation
- Officers may shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety

How to react when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets, cell phones)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 operator:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter/s
- Number and type of weapons held by the shooter/s
- Number of potential victims at the location

What to expect when police arrive:

- The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons.
- Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers.
- These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from 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 instructed you to do so.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES:
- When law enforcement reaches you, do not run at them or make sudden movements.
- The priority of the first responders will be to identify the shooter. Law enforcement will need to ensure that you are not the shooter.
- Do not scream, yell, point, or wave your arms.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- Do not hold anything in your hands that could be mistaken for a weapon (including cell phones).
- Be quiet and compliant.
- Show the officers your empty hands and follow their instructions.
- Give the number of shooters.
- Give the location and physical description of the shooter.
- Give the number and types of weapons.
- When it is safe to do so, you will be given instructions as to how to exit your location.

Training Your Staff for an Active Shooter Situation

- To best prepare your staff for an active shooter situation, create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and conduct training exercises. Together, the EAP and training exercises will prepare your staff to effectively respond and help minimize loss of life.

Components of an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

- Create the EAP with input from several stakeholders including your human resources department, your training department (if one exists), facility owners / operators, your property manager, and local law enforcement and/or emergency responders.

An effective EAP includes:

- A preferred method for reporting fires and other emergencies
- An evacuation policy and procedure
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments (i.e., floor plans, safe areas)
- Contact information for, and responsibilities of individuals to be contacted under the EAP
- Information concerning local area hospitals (i.e., name, telephone number, and distance from your location)
- An emergency notification system to alert various parties of an emergency including:
 - Individuals at remote locations within premises
 - Local law enforcement
 - Local area hospitals

Components of Training Exercises

The most effective way to train your staff to respond to an active shooter situation is to conduct mock active shooter training exercises. Local law enforcement is an excellent resource in designing training exercises.

- Recognizing the sound of gunshots
- Reacting quickly when gunshots are heard and/or when a shooting is witnessed:
 - Evacuating the area
 - Hiding out
 - Acting against the shooter as a last resort
- Calling 911
- Reacting when law enforcement arrives
- Adopting the survival mind set during times of crisis

Additional Ways to Prepare For and Prevent an Active Shooter Situation

- Preparedness
 - Ensure that your facility has at least two evacuation routes
 - Post evacuation routes in conspicuous locations throughout your facility
 - Include local law enforcement and first responders during training exercises
 - Encourage law enforcement to train for an active shooter scenario at your location
- Prevention
 - Foster a respectful workplace
 - Be aware of indications of workplace violence and take remedial actions accordingly

Reactions of Managers During an Active Shooter Situation

Employees and customers are likely to follow the lead of managers during an emergency situation. During an emergency, managers should be familiar with their Emergency Plan, and be prepared to:

- Take immediate action
- Remain calm
- Lock and barricade doors
- Evacuate staff and customers via a preplanned evacuation route to a safe area

Assisting Individuals with Special Needs and/or Disabilities

- Ensure that EAPs, evacuation instructions and any other relevant information addresses individuals with special needs and/or disabilities
- Your building should be handicap-accessible, in compliance with ADA requirements.

RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- An active shooter in your workplace may be a current or former employee, or an acquaintance of a current or former employee. Intuitive managers and coworkers may notice characteristics of potentially violent behavior in an employee. Alert your Human Resources Department if you believe an employee or coworker exhibits potentially violent behavior.

Indicators of Potential Violence by an Employee

- Employees typically do not just “snap,” but display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. If these behaviors are recognized, they can often be managed and treated.

Indicators of Potential Violence by an Employee

Potentially violent behaviors by an employee may include one or more of the following (this list of behaviors is not comprehensive, nor is it intended as a mechanism for diagnosing violent tendencies):

- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism; vague physical complaints
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
- Depression / withdrawal
- Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures
- Repeated violations of company policies
- Increased severe mood swings

Potentially violent behaviors (cont.)

- Noticeably unstable, emotional responses
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
- Suicidal; comments about “putting things in order”
- Behavior which is suspect of paranoia, (“everybody is against me”)
- Increasingly talks 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 committing violence
- Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons and violent crimes

MANAGING THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

After the active shooter has been incapacitated and is no longer a threat, human resources and/or management should engage in post-event assessments and activities, including:

- An accounting of all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine who, if anyone, is missing and potentially injured
- Determining a method for notifying families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties
- Assessing the psychological state of individuals at the scene, and referring them to health care specialists accordingly
- Identifying and filling any critical personnel or operational gaps left in the organization as a result of the active shooter

Questions

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