



ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS

# TRAINING MANUAL

THE LEADER IN PROTECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES™



**Universal  
Protection  
Service**

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Universal Protection Service  
**TRAINING MANUAL**

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**ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS**

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The Universal Protection Service Active Shooter Preparedness Training Manual represents core training regarding Active Shooter Preparedness for each Security Professional, but by itself does not constitute complete and comprehensive training.

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# ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS

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*Review questions follow each unit.*





## Unit 1 – ABOUT ACTIVE SHOOTERS

**GOAL:** By the end of this unit, you'll know what an active shooter is and the personal safety emphasis of this training.

**TOPICS:**

1. Introduction
2. What is an Active Shooter?

### 1 - INTRODUCTION

Active shooter incidents are a threat in all places where people gather. In recent years, a number of active shooter incidents have occurred, including at shopping centers. Although rare occurrences, active shooters are a very serious threat. As a security professional, you must know thoroughly protocols for active shooter incidents for your safety and the safety of the mall community you serve.

**The emphasis of this training course is your personal safety through your individual response actions during an active shooter incident and through planning your readiness for such.** Additional security practices such as emergency notifications and subsequent incident reporting are similar to those performed for other emergency security incidents.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has published a guide, *Active Shooter How to Respond*, detailing concise response practices for during and immediately after an active shooter incident.

The National Retail Federation (NRF) with the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) have published a guide, *NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters*, based upon the DHS guidelines and customized to shopping centers.

These DHS guidelines and the NRF/ICSC protocols are quoted throughout this training course. The links to these publications are below.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *The NRF/ICSC protocol are written for all employees who work within a shopping center and so frequently refer to store employees; however, the principles apply to security professionals, also.*

Knowing these guidelines and protocols is very important. Also important is to undertake a planning process whereby you look at your work location and identify in advance what actions you would take, based upon the DHS guidelines, to respond quickly and effectively were an active shooter situation to occur, no matter how unlikely you think that is.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Know what an active shooter is.
2. Know that the emphasis of this training is your personal safety.
3. Know that active shooter incidents are not common but must be prepared for.
4. Know that individuals' actions taken for safety during an active shooter incident are vital.
5. Know that additional information is available through DHS and NRF/ICSC.



## ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS – UNIT 1 ABOUT ACTIVE SHOOTERS

You are encouraged to read both the DHS and the NRF-ICSC publications. Here are links to access copies of these.

*DHS Active Shooter How to Respond:*

[http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf)

*NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters:*

[http://thehscg.com/resources/NRF-ICSC\\_Active\\_Shooters\\_Response\\_Protocols.pdf](http://thehscg.com/resources/NRF-ICSC_Active_Shooters_Response_Protocols.pdf)

### 2 – WHAT IS AN ACTIVE SHOOTER?

**According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, an Active Shooter is:**

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- An individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area;
- In most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and
- There is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly.

Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.

Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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Active shooter incidents are not common occurrences. There is no specific reason to believe such an incident will ever happen at a given location. Unfortunately, a small number of active shooter incidents have occurred in shopping centers, so we need to be prepared.

Active shooting incidents can be very lethal with numerous casualties. So every member of the public, especially people who work in areas open to the public or where there are many people, should be prepared and plan what to do were an active shooter ever in his or her vicinity.

During the active shooter event, actions taken by individuals to protect themselves are vitally important.



## **ABOUT ACTIVE SHOOTERS – REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is an active shooter, according to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)?
2. What are characteristics of active shooter situations, according to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)?



## Unit 2 – RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER

**GOAL:** By the end of this unit, you will know response guidelines for an active shooter incident.

**TOPICS:**

1. Individual's Response to Active Shooter
2. How to Recognize and Assess
3. Evacuate
4. Helping Others Evacuate or Hide
5. Helping Others who are Injured
6. Hide Out/Shelter in Place
7. Take Action Against the Shooter
8. How to Respond when Police Arrive
9. Calling 911

### 1 – INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER

During an active shooter situation, decisions must be made quickly in order to avoid harm. Having made plans to guide your response is vital. Making decisions under pressure is challenging. Having a plan that can be tailored to the immediate situation will improve your chances to act effectively.

A vital aspect of an active shooter plan is that every individual employee must know it. During an active shooter situation, individuals often find themselves having to act on their own. A supervisor or manager might not always be present to guide them. Also, given the dynamic nature of active shooter incidents, each individual might be facing a different set of conditions indicating a different and individualized response. So, training for each employee is important.

**Basic guidelines for individuals present during an active shooting incident are:**

1. **Assess the situation**
2. **React**
  - A. **Evacuate**
  - B. **Hide Out/Shelter in Place**
  - C. **Take Action**
3. **Call 911 when it is safe to do so.**

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Know the basic response objectives during an active shooter incident.
2. Know factors to assess.
3. Understand evacuation goals.
4. Know how to help others evacuate.
5. Understand hiding out and sheltering in place goals.
6. Understand the principles of *concealment* and *effective cover*.
7. Understand the principles of taking action against the shooter.
8. Know how to respond when police arrive.
9. Understand principles of calling 911 during an active shooter incident.





## 2 – HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND ASSESS

The NRF (National Retail Federation)/ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) Active Shooter Response Protocols state:

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**ASSESS THE SITUATION** – Determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Customers are most likely to follow the lead of in-store associates and management during an active shooter situation. **Do not endanger your safety or the safety of others.**

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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Active shooter situations happen suddenly and progress rapidly. If you think you hear gunfire or you observe what you believe to be an active shooter situation:

- Do not wait for an emergency notification (possibly, none will be coming) or delay by attempting to verify what is occurring. Instead, act immediately.
- *Very briefly*, attempt to determine where the situation is occurring. Listen for gunfire and shouting/screaming. Watch the direction of people fleeing the scene. This will help you decide your evacuation route.
- *Very briefly*, attempt to determine how close by the situation is. You will act immediately to evacuate (or if evacuation is not possible to hide out) no matter how far away the situation seems to be. However, the closer the situation is, the more you will need to assess in order to choose your course of action.

No one knows all the details of an active shooter situation while it is occurring. **Your assessment of the situation should include the fact that you don't know all of the facts.** For instance:

- More than one active shooter might be involved.
- The active shooter might have changed location from the incident's point of origin.
- The active shooter might be moving rapidly through the facility.
- The active shooter might be using a weapon allowing him/her to hit targets at a distance.
- The active shooter might be using a weapon allowing a high volume of shots to be fired quickly.

For reasons such as these, your assessment of the active shooter situation must be ongoing throughout the incident: ***keep attentive and watchful for what is going on around you throughout.***

## 3 – EVACUATE

The goal of evacuating is to put as much distance between you and the shooter as you can and to hopefully make it all the way out of the facility and then to as safe an area as you can find (for instance, do not stop right outside the facility's exterior doorway).

Make your priority to evacuate, moving away from where the active shooter is. Do this as rapidly as you can; but pay attention to what is happening around you.





## ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS – UNIT 2 RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER

Leave belongings behind. Do not go back for purses, bags, coats, car keys, or for any other purpose.

### The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) active shooter guidelines regarding evacuation state:

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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

(Source: DHS “How To Respond When An Active Shooter Is In Your Vicinity”)

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### The NRF (National Retail Federation)/ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) Active Shooter Response Protocols state:

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- If the shooter is in the store, and it is safe to do so, evacuate the store.
- Have an escape route and plan in mind and leave your belongings behind.
- Keep hands visible so it is clear to first responders that you are not armed.
- Run away from the sound, putting as much distance between you and the shooter as possible.
- Go to pre-established company meeting spot.

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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As you evacuate, pay attention to everything around you. Be prepared to respond to changing conditions and take a different course of action, if needed. Realize that you don't know all the details.

Select an evacuation route that best combines rapidly exiting the facility with moving away from the situation. Your evacuation route during an active shooter situation cannot be selected in advance. This is because you don't know where the active shooter will be. Knowing multiple evacuation routes is important. Selecting the best route during the incident will be vital.

Although a rapid evacuation is best, remember that using concealment (hiding from view) and effective cover (a barrier effective against fired rounds) might be necessary. If the situation demands it, you might evacuate in steps: using concealment or cover and then running, again, when the opportunity presents itself. However, **if you are clearly able to rapidly evacuate then do so and do not delay.**



Merchants may be able to use their stores to aid evacuation by closing and possibly securing the entryway and then evacuating out the back door and through service corridors.

During any evacuation through service corridors, remember to pay attention to your surroundings if you do so. An active shooter(s) can be in service corridors just as they can be in common areas or stores.

#### 4 – HELPING OTHERS EVACUATE OR HIDE

Your overarching objective during an active shooter situation should be ***to keep yourself safe.***

Help others evacuate or find a hiding place only if you can do so rapidly and without further jeopardizing your own safety.

If everyone rapidly evacuates or, if evacuation is not possible, finds effective cover or concealment, this will greatly impede the active shooter's efforts. If everyone pauses to coordinate with each other, this might actually help the active shooter's efforts.

You want people to know what is happening and rapidly evacuate or hide. Your actions, others' actions and any instructions you issue will be dependent upon the immediate situation and what best accomplishes rapid evacuation or hiding, if evacuation is not possible.

If possible, you may do the following depending upon immediate circumstances, such as the proximity of the active shooter, the proximity of an entrance way or other means of evacuation.

- While rapidly moving away from where you perceive the active shooter to be, shout simple and clear information to merchants and shoppers, "There is an active shooter!"
- You may instruct, "Run! Get out!"
- You may instruct merchants to take shoppers with them within their stores, close and lock store front doors and move to backrooms, to stay quiet and out of sight. If this is feasible (based upon immediate circumstances), merchants and shoppers rapidly evacuating the common area and closing and locking store front door has been effective in response to an active shooter.

Here are some additional guidelines:

- Prioritize your personal safety. Do not perform unsafe actions.
- The most likely and effective means of helping others is to do so while you are evacuating or moving to a place to hide, depending upon circumstances.
- Getting people out of view of and away from the active shooter rapidly is vital. Evacuation is the first priority or alternately hiding, if evacuation is not possible immediately.
- Do not issue directions that will hinder anyone's individual effort to evacuate.
- While you or merchants might help people near stores to take shelter within or escape through a store, this should not endanger, through delay, people already in the store for shelter. Do not cause a merchant to delay closing and locking the door while you instruct shoppers to enter it.
- If opportunity allows you to communicate this, instruct tenant employees to call police from a back room location to let them know they are there and how many are there with them, and to wait for police, then, to come to them unless they encounter an immediate threat.



- If you are escaping through an entrance way, encourage people to continue to move away from the entrance away from the building to areas where they feel safe.
- If you see people walking towards the entrance way, not knowing that an active shooter is within, shout to them what is happening and warn them away as you move away from the entrance way and the building.

### 5 – HELPING OTHERS WHO ARE INJURED

During an active shooter situation, you might encounter people who are injured.

Do not stop your evacuation to provide first aid to injured people if it will result in the active shooter being better able to attack you. For instance, if the active shooter is nearby you or coming upon you, stopping to help an injured person will allow the active shooter to shoot you, too, resulting then in two victims.

If you are helping an injured person, realize that the usual process of emergency medical response might not happen, especially if there are numerous injuries.

- Police will not stop to help injured people. Their goal is to neutralize the active shooter.
- Emergency responders may not be able to enter the facility immediately. When they do enter, there may be numerous injured people – more than they can help quickly.
- If you are hiding out, all of the above conditions will apply even more so. Police and emergency responders may not make it to your hide-out or even know where you are hiding out for some time.

Make decisions regarding assistance to an injured person with these considerations in mind.

### 6 – HIDE OUT/SHELTER IN PLACE

Your first priority during an active shooter situation should be to evacuate rapidly. However, in some circumstances you might find you must hide out either as one of the steps of evacuating or instead of evacuating.

**The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) active shooter guidelines for hiding out state:**

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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:



## ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS – UNIT 2 RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER

- Lock the door.
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

If the active shooter is nearby:

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

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.

(Source: DHS "How To Respond When An Active Shooter Is In Your Vicinity")

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### The NRF (National Retail Federation)/ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) Active Shooter Response Protocols state:

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- **HIDE OUT/SHELTER IN PLACE - Stay hidden** if possible and away from windows and exterior doors.
- Take staff and customers to the back area, away from exposure to glass and the mall common area or the outside area.
- Go to a secure stockroom, office, emergency stairwells, utility closet, mall corridors, etc. Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors.
- **KEEP SAFE** – Stay inside your Store, unless instructed to do otherwise by the police officials or other local authorities.
- **Do NOT open the door** for anyone that cannot provide you with appropriate first responder/security identification and/or show you a badge.

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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Be aware that just because a wall or other building feature conceals you, it does not mean that it provides effective cover from fired rounds.

- **Concealment** – Prevents the active shooter from seeing you but does not stop fired rounds. Examples of concealment include glass windows, many wooden doors, interior walls made of drywall, store gates, desks, store counters.
- **Effective Cover** – Stops fired rounds from penetrating. Examples of effective cover include cinder block walls or brick walls.



If you find yourself sheltering in a merchant store with the front gate closed and/or locked, do not believe that you are then completely safe from fired rounds.

- Do not stand in a spot in the store where rounds fired through your store front will easily strike you.
- An active shooter, seeing the store gate closed, might guess people are hiding in the store and fire into it through the store front or gate.
- Even though you might be locked in the store, be quiet and do nothing to alert the active shooter that you are within or where you might be within.
- Try to find the best effective cover (a barrier that will stop fired rounds from penetrating) in the store and go there immediately.
- Try to find effective cover that is also a secured shelter, able to be locked and barricaded against the active shooter.
- Help others in the store, both employees and shoppers, to find effective cover/shelter also.

### 7 – TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE SHOOTER

If other strategies (evacuate, hide out, shelter in place) are not available or fail and you encounter an active shooter, then take action against the active shooter directly in order to save yourself.

This is a very difficult and terrifying circumstance to contemplate and, therefore, is all the more vital to think about and plan for in advance. Be prepared to take any actions to survive when your life is in imminent danger from an active shooter.

#### **The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidelines for taking action against the active shooter state:**

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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.

(Source: DHS “How To Respond When An Active Shooter Is In Your Vicinity”)

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Let’s focus upon some of the DHS guidelines regarding taking action against an active shooter:

- **“As a last resort...”** – Prioritize all other evacuation and hiding out actions above taking action against the active shooter.
- **“...When your life is in imminent danger...”** and **“Acting as aggressively as possible...”** – Faced with an active shooter who imminently is about to use deadly force against you, any forceful response action by you will be justified. Do not hold back. As a last resort, do the best to take the shooter out by any means. It is the active shooter or you.



- **“Throwing items...”** and **“...attempt to disrupt...”** – Attempt to disrupt the shooter by throwing items if the shooter is imminently about to attack you. Throwing an item from behind concealment or cover when the shooter is not imminently about to attack you would alert the shooter to your position.
- **“...improvising weapons”** and **“...incapacitate the active shooter...”** – If you are unable to evacuate and are hiding out, do not wait for the shooter’s approach to find improvised weapons. Immediately look for items that will make the best, improvised weapon. This could be a wide variety of objects.

Some examples of improvised weapons include:

- A fire extinguisher.
- A large board or piece of wood (e.g., a 2 x 4).
- A metal pole, perhaps part of a clothes rack.
- A toilet’s heavy ceramic reservoir cover.
- A knife from a store kitchen.
- Scissors from a desk.

In the extreme circumstance of having to take action against an active shooter, think of the following:

- Attack as hard and as intensely as you can. For instance, if you are using an improvised weapon to strike the active shooter, hit with all your strength and do so repeatedly until the active shooter is incapacitated (no longer conscious or moving).
- Be ready to take action. If you are hiding out and even if you are behind a locked door, find an improvised weapon and hold it in readiness to attack.
- If you are hiding out with other people, encourage and help everyone to find and make ready an improvised weapon.
- Multiple people attacking the active shooter with improvised weapons together might be more effective than just one person or one person at a time doing so.

## 8 – HOW TO RESPOND WHEN POLICE ARRIVE

**The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) active shooter guidelines for how to respond when law enforcement arrives state:**

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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.
- Officers may use pepper spray or tear gas 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).
- 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.

(Source: DHS "How To Respond When An Active Shooter Is In Your Vicinity")

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### **Additionally, the NRF/ICSC Active Shooter Response Protocols state:**

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(Additionally):

- First-responding law enforcement will **NOT** help any of the wounded/injured until the shooter is no longer a threat.
- Rescue teams will come in later to aid the wounded/injured.
- They (you) may be treated as a suspect.
- They (you) will need to remain on the premises for a while after the shooting; the entire area is a crime scene and law enforcement will usually keep everyone in the area until they have been processed.

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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As a security professional, you will have an impulse to begin assisting police as soon as possible. However, your role during and in the immediate aftermath of an active shooter incident will be limited.

- Listen to and obey all directions by police to you.
- Do not approach the building until police have secured it and you are allowed by them to do so.
- Remember, any person in or near the building may be considered a suspect by police.

**Do not impede the emergency response of police or emergency medical professionals. Police, especially, will be wholly focused upon securing the scene, which likely will encompass the entire shopping center. Do not approach police while they are performing emergency response actions.**

Be sure to stay out of the way of the public emergency responders and well away from potential unsafe areas. Obey directions to move to any areas designated by police for members of the public present during the incident.

Make contact with security supervisors on or near the property, or other security leaders, as soon as possible. They may be attempting to locate all security professionals and ascertain everyone's condition.





You may be called upon to do some or all of the following by police or security supervisors:

- Perform traffic control duties, stopping all incoming traffic at entrance drives.
- After police have secured the building help with mall evacuation; establishing a triage area, reunion area, press area, temporary command post; assisting in coordinating tenant employees and others in returning to the building to secure store and collect personal items. However, wait upon directions from the senior on site security person prior to taking such actions.

### 9 – CALLING 911

#### **The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidelines for calling 911 during an active shooter state:**

- (When evacuating), “Call 911 when you are safe.”
- “If evacuation and hiding are not possible...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.”

(Source: DHS “How To Respond When An Active Shooter Is In Your Vicinity”)

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#### **The National Retail Federation (NRF)/International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) Active Shooter Protocols state:**

Call 911 – Be prepared to provide as much information about the shooter as possible, including physical description /location of shooter:

- Location of 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.

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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In the initial moments of an active shooter situation, calling 911 is important. The police may not be aware of the situation yet.

If you have important information regarding the active shooter’s location and can call 911 safely – without potentially alerting the active shooter to your location – the police may find this information valuable and important.

If you are sheltering in a hide-out and/or have injured persons with you, calling 911 will help the police or other emergency responders learn of your location.

However, keep in mind that:



## **ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS – UNIT 2 RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER**

- Any telephone calls can create noise that might be detected by the active shooter. Act according to your current assessment of the situation.
- Many people will be calling 911 for emergency purposes; and, so, calls to 911 should be for emergency purposes only. For instance, do not call 911 to get updates on the situation or to ask other non-vital questions.



## **RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER – REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are the basic guidelines, *1, 2 and 3*, for individuals during an active shooter incident?
2. What are the three steps of how to *react* during an active shooter incident?
3. What is the goal of evacuating during an active shooter incident?
4. What should be your overarching objective during an active shooter incident?
5. If evacuation is not feasible, what actions should you consider taking?
6. Under what circumstances should you consider taking action against the shooter?
7. What are actions to consider if you are forced to take action against the shooter?
8. What are important factors about how to react when law enforcement arrives?
9. What are principles for security professionals assisting police when they respond?
10. What information should you provide to 911 regarding the situation?



## Unit 3 – PLANNING

**GOAL:** By the end of this unit, you will know ways to increase preparedness for an active shooter incident.

**TOPICS:**

1. Pay Attention, Notice and Report
2. Planning Exercises
3. Identifying Concealment and Cover
4. Identifying Evacuation Routes
5. Identifying Sheltering Locations

### 1 – PAY ATTENTION, NOTICE AND REPORT

#### In your Workplace

Some active shooters are not employed at the facility where they perpetrate their crimes. However, in some other cases, active shooters have been current or former employees of a business where they attack.

All employees should be able to:

- Recognize signs of potential work place violence.
- Know who to contact if signs of potential workplace violence occur.

**The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidelines regarding workplace violence relative to active shooters state:**

#### 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. 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.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Know what to watch for, notice and report in your workplace and everyday surroundings.
2. Know how to identify concealment and effective cover in your workplace.
3. Understand how to select evacuation routes.
4. Know effective ways to move along evacuation routes.
5. Know how to identify sheltering in place areas.
6. Understand how to act while sheltering in place.
7. Know how to assist shoppers and tenant employees.



- 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.

(Source: DHS “How To Respond When An Active Shooter Is In Your Vicinity”)

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When any employee detects indicators of potential workplace violence, he or she should report it. Do not merely interpret such indicators as someone “blowing off steam.” Report indicators to a person in your chain of command or a Human Resources representative.

Managers should then follow up on such reports by following company guidelines.

**The NRF (National Retail Federation)/ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) Active Shooter Response Protocols state:**

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- An active shooter may be a current or former employee. Employees typically display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. Create a method for associates to notify human resources/management of this behavior.
- An active shooter may be related to an associate and or a spouse/domestic partner. Create a method for associates to notify human resources/management of domestic troubles.

(Source: NRF-ICSC Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters)

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**In your Everyday Surroundings**

Try to be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to persons and situations around you both in your store and in your surroundings no matter where you are.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) advice to everyone regarding suspicious persons or activity is, “If you see something, say something.”

What types of persons or situations qualify as suspicious?

- The concept *DLR* which means “Doesn’t Look Right” can guide you as to what to look for, notice and pay attention to and then report. If some situation, activity or behavior doesn’t look right to you, then consider you have seen something and so say something.



- Frequently after criminal attacks, witnesses who noticed the suspect in the days or moments before the attack will state something like, “When I first saw him I thought, *something doesn’t look right.*”
- However, very often, these witnesses did not act upon the moment when they realized that something wasn’t right.
- A suspicious person or situation can simply be something or someone that “Doesn’t Look Right” to you. You don’t need to be able to explain why the person didn’t look right or what the person was actually up to.

If you experience the feeling that something or someone “Doesn’t Look Right,” then:

- Make your safety your first priority.
- Do not confront the suspicious person.
- Make brief observations (physical description, location, vehicle identifiers, person’s actions).
- Immediately report it to your security supervisor and law enforcement when appropriate.

## 2 – PLANNING EXERCISES

The following sections present three *Planning Exercises* to perform as part of preparing for a potential active shooter incident. Having actually performed these exercises will help you better know options in advance and, therefore, act more decisively and rapidly in case of an actual incident.

These exercises require walking throughout your shopping center, looking for concealment and cover features and potential evacuation routes.

The three exercises are:

- Identifying Concealment and Cover – Knowing how to use concealment and effective cover to your advantage while moving along evacuation routes and, also, the limitations of concealment and effective cover as a sole means to avoid harm.
- Identifying and Moving along Evacuation Routes - Identify multiple evacuation routes from the shopping center, emphasizing both back routes through service corridors and routes to common area main entrances; and thinking about what situations would make each route preferable.
- Sheltering in Place – Identifying areas to shelter in place, identifying secure areas and areas still vulnerable to fired rounds and using initial sheltering as a means to then move towards evacuation.

## 3 – IDENTIFYING CONCEALMENT AND COVER

Why this is important.

- Concealment and cover can be effective tools when immediate evacuation or sheltering is not available.
- The priority should always be rapid evacuation. However, if this isn’t available, hiding from view or finding a barrier that protects against fired rounds can be vital.



- Concealment and cover can be momentary, temporary measures while moving along evacuation routes.

It is also important to know that you are still vulnerable while using concealment and cover, because:

- Although concealment hides you from view, the object or feature concealing you might not prevent fired rounds and will not protect you from encountering the active shooter.
- Although effective cover protects against fired rounds, it does not protect you from encountering the active shooter the way, for instance, effective sheltering or evacuation can do.

**Step 1** – Look for features that offer concealment, although not effective cover, throughout the shopping center in the in the common area and other areas where you might be, such as the security office, other offices, service corridors and the exterior around the building.

**Step 2** – Look for features that offer effective cover, throughout the shopping center property.

**Step 3** – As you do this, consider how concealment and cover might be used as momentary, temporary measures while moving along an evacuation route to avoid being detected by the active shooter or to pause momentarily to make observations (prior to moving into an area that you don't know is safe if you are unsure of the active shooter's general location).

#### **4 – IDENTIFYING EVACUATION ROUTES**

Why this is important:

Identifying multiple evacuation routes is important because:

- Evacuation, if feasible given the unique circumstances of an active shooter situation, is the first priority.
- Knowing evacuation routes in advance helps employees make decisions quickly and effectively during an active shooter situation.
- Knowing a single evacuation route is not as good as knowing multiple routes. The location of the active shooter might block a given evacuation route. Knowing multiple evacuation routes lets employees identify the best route based upon the active shooter's location.

**Step 1** – Identify as many evacuation routes for a given location or area as possible.

Questions:

- Where are the nearest main entrances?
- Where are doors to service corridors?
- Are there alternate service corridors nearby?
- Does the service corridor(s) lead to one external exit or more?
- What path(s) through the service corridor should be taken to reach the external exits?
- Are there corners, stairwells, recessed doors or other features in a service corridor which could be used by an active shooter to conceal himself?





**Step 2** – Walk along each of these evacuation routes.

Questions:

- What active shooter locations might require a given evacuation route to be selected?
- Are some evacuation routes faster than others?
- Do some evacuation routes leave you exposed even though they are nearer or faster, depending upon the location of the active shooter?

**Step 3** – Consider effective ways to move along evacuation routes. These include:

- Prioritizing moving as quickly as possible away from the suspected location of the active shooter.
- Paying attention to possible changing conditions (e.g., active shooter’s location) by listening for sounds of gunfire, shouting/screaming and the presence of a person (e.g., listening for footsteps in a service corridor) and being watchful of surroundings while moving (i.e., don’t adopt tunnel vision, look around).
- When moving as a group along a service corridor evacuation route or other routes with concealed areas, having a point person move ahead to very briefly check if the coast is clear.
- Performing the above (paying attention to changing conditions, using a point person) without unreasonably slowing down the evacuation. (Keep moving!)
- Changing evacuations routes if the selected route is found to be blocked.
- Using concealment and cover as temporary ways to pause to make additional observations or avoid detection by an active shooter while moving along an evacuation route.

## **5 – IDENTIFYING SHELTERING LOCATIONS**

Why this is important:

Evacuation should be the first priority. However, sheltering in place can be important because:

- Evacuation from the facility might not be available.
- Sheltering involves securing the location against the active shooter so he cannot easily detect or reach you.
- Sheltering can include closing and locking doors or gates. The secured location might buy time to use an escape route out a back door and through a service corridor.

**Step 1** – Consider possible steps involved when using a store, office or other such location as shelter.

- Prioritize closing and locking the store gate or door if this can be done without increasing exposure to the active shooter.
- Alert people in the store or other location and immediately outside about the active shooter situation or suspected active shooter situation. Do this while others are working to close and lock the gate or door.
- Offer shoppers or others immediately outside the gate or door the opportunity to shelter within if this can be done without causing delay, further exposing people in the store to harm due to



delay and not demanding that these people shelter in the store as they may be going to evacuate instead. Don't delay others from working to close and lock the gate or door.

- Move away from the store front, office door or wall facing the active shooter's location and seek effective cover, shelter or prepare to evacuate out a back door and through corridors. Do not stand exposed to fired rounds that can penetrate store fronts and many interior walls.
- Keep quiet. Do not make any noises that would alert an active shooter that you are within the store, office or other location.
- Help others within the store or other location to move away from the area facing the active shooter's location (e.g., store front or interior office wall), seek effective cover, shelter or prepare to evacuate, and keep quiet.
- Decide whether an evacuation route is available (e.g., out the back door of the store, office or other location and through service corridors) and, if so, whether circumstances suggest you can evacuate.

**Step 2** – Think of a number of locations throughout the shopping center, in the common area, office areas, stores and other places you work, pretend that an active shooter has just been detected. Check your answers to questions such as the following.

Questions:

- What are evacuation routes from there? Where are concealment and cover features nearby?
- If there is a sheltering in place location nearby, is a key required to lock a gate or door? Who has access to these keys?
- Are the keys available in a location from which they can be easily retrieved?
- Do you know how to close and lock the gate or door? If not, what would you do?

**Step 3** – Identify which areas within a sheltering in place location are vulnerable to fired rounds and which offer effective cover. For instance, within the security office, where would you still be vulnerable and where would you be behind effective cover?

Questions:

- What areas, were you standing there, might fired rounds still strike you?
- Are there any features in the shelter in place location that offer effective cover, that would stop a fired round from penetrating?
- If so, how many people could use the features for effective cover?
- If so, do these provide effective cover from all angles, or just from limited directions?

**Step 4** – Identify areas/spaces within the sheltering in place location that can be secured against an active shooter or who enters the location (e.g., an inner office).

Questions:

- Are there spaces within with doors that can be closed and locked?
- How many people will fit within?



- Do the walls and door provide effective cover (prevent fired rounds from penetrating)? If not, how vulnerable will occupants within the sheltering in place location be were the active shooter to fire through the wall or door?
- Are objects within the space that can be used to further barricade the door?
- Is there another way out of the space or are occupants trapped within?
- Can any objects within the space be used as improvised weapons? If so, for how many people?
- Is there a telephone line in the space? If not, do cell phones work from within?
- Is the space accessible to you at all times?

Although you may never encounter an active shooter incident, planning in advance what effective response options would be, given a variety of conditions, would be extremely valuable were such an incident to occur. Your planning efforts might save your life and the lives of others.



## PLANNING – REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are examples of indicators of potential violence by an employee, according to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)?
2. What is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) advice regarding suspicious persons or activity?
3. What is the difference between *concealment* and *effective cover*?
4. When should concealment and cover be considered as effective tools in relationship to evacuation?
5. Why is it important to identify multiple evacuation routes when planning response to a potential active shooter?
6. If guiding people to use store spaces to evade an active shooter, what are important considerations?
7. Why should people move away from storefront areas even once within the store?
8. What should you consider when identifying areas/spaces within a sheltering in place location?

