

# Active Shooter Attacks

## Security Awareness for Soft Targets and Crowded Places

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearm(s) and have no pattern or method to their selection of victims, which creates an unpredictable and quickly evolving situation that can result in loss

of life and injury. 0 U I F S B D U J W F T I P P U F S B U U B D L N F U I P E T N B Z B M T P  
J O D M V E F C M B E F E X F B Q P O T W F I J D M F T B O E J N Q S P W J T F E F Y Q M P T J W F  
E F W J D F T While law enforcement is usually required to end an active shooter situation, individuals can take steps to prepare mentally and physically for the possibility of this type of event occurring in order to save lives.

### Be Alert to Signs of Trouble

While active shooter situations are often unpredictable, paying careful attention to warning signs could go a long way in mitigating a potential incident. Some shooters demonstrate progressively escalating risk factors in their mindsets and behaviors that characterize them as violent prior to an attack. Recognizing these warning signs and reaching out for help could bring at-risk individuals to the attention of law enforcement sooner and prevent a future attack.

Potential warning signs include:

- f* Increasingly erratic, unsafe, or aggressive behaviors.
- f* Hostile C F I B W J P S C B T F E P O D M B J N T of injustice or perceived wrongdoing.
- f* Drug and alcohol abuse.
- f* \$ M B J N T P G Marginalization or distancing from friends and colleagues.
- f* Changes in performance at work.
- f* Sudden and dramatic changes in home life or in personality.
- f* Financial difficulties.
- f* Pending civil or criminal litigation.
- f* Observable grievances B O E N B L J O H T U B U F N F O U T P G S F U S J C V U J P O

You can help ensure the safety of those around you.

## What Should People Do In Case Of An Active Shooter Attack?



**"Run"** to the nearest exits, making use of available concealment while moving away from the source of hazard.



If unable to safely evacuate, **"hide"** in a secure area where access can be blocked or entryways can be locked. **BOE BT BQQSPQSJB UF "fight"**.



If no rapid escape is possible, seek cover behind any available natural or artificial objects that eliminate direct line of sight from the source of hazard.



Call 9-1-1 and remain alert for potential secondary attacks.



Render first aid when safe to do so.



Maintain situational awareness while providing assistance to others.



When help arrives, follow instructions given by law enforcement and first responders.

## Protective Measures



### Physical Security

- f* Post signage relating to emergency entry and exit points, first-aid stations, and shelter locations.
- f* Define the perimeter and areas that require access control, and identify especially sensitive or critical areas that require special access controls.



### Access, Planning, and Personnel

- f* Conduct background checks on all staff assigned to critical or sensitive areas.
- f* Review personnel files of recently terminated employees to determine whether they pose a security risk.
- f* Devise credential systems that indicate areas of access and purpose of activity on the premises.
  - Issue special identification badges to contractors, cleaning crews, vendors, and temporary employees.
  - Require that badges be displayed at all times and verified to gain access to the building.
  - Collect all badges when visits are complete.

## Additional Resources

Hometown Security Initiative: <https://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security>  
 Active Shooter Preparedness Program: <https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>  
 If You See Something, Say Something: <https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>  
 Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative: <https://nsi.ncirc.gov/>

Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) proactively engage with government partners and the private sector to protect critical infrastructure. For more information or to contact your local PSA, e-mail [NICC@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:NICC@hq.dhs.gov).