

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND DURING AND AFTER AN ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENT

Recent national tragedies remind us that the risk is real: an active shooter incident can happen in any place at any time. The best ways to make sure you and your loved ones stay safe are to prepare ahead of time and be ready. Taking a few steps now and mentally rehearsing what to do can help you react quickly when every second counts.



## TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR OWN SAFETY

### NOW PREPARE

- Sign up for active shooter training
- If you see something suspicious, say something
- Know community response plans
- Identify the exits and good places to hide
- Learn and practice first aid skills and use of tourniquets

### DURING SURVIVE

- Run
- Hide
- Fight



**You may need to use more than one option.**

### AFTER BE SAFE

- Help law enforcement
- Seek out medical help
- Help others survive
- Seek help to cope with psychological trauma



## NOW PREPARE

- Sign up for active shooter training.
- If you see suspicious activity, let an authority know right away.
- Many places like houses of worship, workplaces, and schools have plans in place to help you respond safely. Ask about these plans and get familiar with them. If you participate in an active shooter drill, talk to your family about what you learn and how to apply it to other locations.
- When you visit a building like a shopping mall or health care facility, take time to identify two nearby exits. Get in the habit of doing this.
- Map out places to hide. Solid doors with locks, rooms without windows, and heavy furniture like large filing cabinets and desks make good hiding places.
- Sign up for first aid and tourniquet training.



## DURING SURVIVE

- **RUN.** Getting away from the shooter or shooters is the top priority. Leave your things behind and run away. If safe to do so, warn others nearby. Call 911 when you are safe. Describe each shooter, their locations, and weapons.
- **HIDE.** If you can't get away safely, find a place to hide. Get out of the shooter's view and stay very quiet. Silence your electronic devices and make sure they won't vibrate. Lock and block doors, close blinds, and turn off the lights. Don't hide in groups—spread out along walls or hide separately to make it more difficult for the shooter. Try to communicate with police silently—like through text messages or by putting a sign in an exterior window. Stay in place until law enforcement gives you the all clear.
- **FIGHT.** Your last resort when you are in immediate danger is to defend yourself. Commit to your actions and act aggressively to stop the shooter. Ambushing the shooter together with makeshift weapons such as chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors, and books can distract and disarm the shooter.



## AFTER BE SAFE

- Keep hands visible and empty.
- Know that law enforcement's first task is to end the incident, and they may have to pass injured along the way.
- Follow law enforcement instructions and evacuate in the direction they come from.
- Consider seeking professional help for you and your family to cope with the long-term effects of the trauma.

## HELPING THE WOUNDED

Take care of yourself first, and then you may be able to help the wounded before first responders arrive:

- If the injured are in immediate danger, help get them to safety.
- While you wait for first responders to arrive, provide first aid—apply direct pressure to wounds and use tourniquets if you have been trained to do so. Turn wounded people onto their sides if they are unconscious and keep them warm.

## Additional Resources

### VIDEO

*Run. Hide. Fight. Surviving an Active Shooter Event*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0)

### ONLINE COURSE

*Active Shooter: What You Can Do* <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-907>

### GUIDE FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP

[www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing\\_EOPs\\_for\\_Houses\\_of\\_Worship\\_FINAL.PDF](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.PDF)

### GUIDE FOR K-12 SCHOOLS

[www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1922-25045-3850/rem\\_s\\_k\\_12\\_guide.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1922-25045-3850/rem_s_k_12_guide.pdf)

### WEBSITES

[www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness](https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness)

[www.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incident](https://www.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incident)

[www.fema.gov/faith-resources](https://www.fema.gov/faith-resources)

[www.redcross.org/ux/take-a-class](https://www.redcross.org/ux/take-a-class)