Gunman in the Workplace

Definitions

Gunman in the workplace – is the presence of an individual with a weapon making threats, taking hostages, and making demands, but not using the weapon.

Active Shooter – the presence of an individual with a weapon they are using in the workplace. Active shooters are usually associated with the location of the incident. They may be current or former employees or friends or relations of employees.

Statistics

* On average, active shooter incidents occur every three weeks.
* The majority of these incidents end before law enforcement can arrive.

Warning Signs

Before an incident, active shooters usually exhibit traits of potentially violent behavior over an extended period of time.

Know the warning signs and train employees to be aware of them.

Employees should report signs of potentially violent behavior to a manager or HR.

These signs may indicate issues that can be treated or managed with medication or therapy.

**Common traits that may be indicative of potentially violent behavior:**

* Increased use of drugs or alcohol
* Decreased attention to personal appearance or hygiene habits
* Resistance to policy or procedural changes
* Increased severe mood swings
* Unprovoked outbursts of anger or rage
* Paranoid behavior
* Talk of previous violent incidents and empathy towards individuals   
  committing them
* Increased talk of personal, financial, or domestic issues in the work place
* Increased absences with vague or no explanation
* Feelings of depression or withdrawal
* Repeated disregard for organizational policy
* Unstable or over-emotional reactions
* Talk of suicide or preparing for death
* Increased unprompted talk of firearms, other weapons, or violent crimes

Imminent Attack behavior

* Storming into a building
* Lingering without purpose
* Wearing excess coverings (i.e. sunglasses, hats, coat)
* Wearing long coat with bulgings
* Wearing excess clothing during warm weather
* Person is a male (96% of shooters are men)
* You recognize the person as former employee

During an event

* No mater what – keep calm
* call 911 ASAP
  + but only when safe to do so.
  + Do not assume someone else has made the call.
* In an active shooter incident
  + your own safety should be your firstpriority.
  + Don’t try to be a hero – you will get yourself and others killed
  + Make sure you can either evacuate the premises or find a safe hiding place before calling 911.
  + If you are unable to speak or if it is unsafe to do so, keep the line open to allow the dispatcher to listen in.

Once you can call 911

**Let the dispatcher know the following:**

* Location of the shooter
* Number of shooters (if more than one)
* Physical description of the shooter
* Number and type of weapons held by the shooter
* Number of potential victims at the location

The Department of homeland security advises the following action in order of priority:

* RUN
* HIDE
* FIGHT

RUN

* Try to determine your route before starting to move.
* Even if others decide not to follow, continue evacuation.
* Leave behind any belongings not already on you.
* If possible, help others to escape.
* Try to keep others from moving towards areas where the shooter might be.
* If you encounter any police officers, follow any instructions they give.
* Keep your hands visible.
* Do not try to move any wounded individuals.

During an event

HIDE

If you are unable to evacuate, find a safe place to hide.

**A safe hiding place should:**

* Be out of view from the shooter.
* Protect you from gunfire in your direction (e.g., an office with no interior windows and a closed, locked door).
* Allow safe access to possible evacuation routes.

**If the shooter approaches your hiding place:**

* If possible, lock and blockade the door.
* Set any mobile devices (e.g., cell phones, pagers) to silent, and turn off any other sources of noise, such as computers, TVs, or radios.
* Find a large item to hide behind.
* Stay quiet.

Last Resort

Attempting to incapacitate an active shooter is strictly a last resort. **Never** attempt to confront a shooter unless your life is in immediate danger and there are no safe evacuation routes or hiding places.

Don’t be a hero – you WILL get yourself and other killed.

**Strategies:**

If you have **no other options**, the Department of Homeland Security recommends the following strategies:

* Acting as aggressive and intimidating as possible against the shooter
* Throw items and improve weapons, the heavier the better – you WANT to hurt him, you are trying to incapacitate him
* Yell and scream
* Commit to your actions. Any hostage who has not whole-heartedly committed to defending themselves has been killed.

\*\* Remember that your goal is to **completely incapacitate** the shooter, not just to inflict harm.

When the police arrive

* Police officers may be outfitted with tactical equipment and high-powered firearms.
* Other government law enforcement may arrive (i.e. FBI, DHS)

**If you encounter police officers:**

* Officers may shout at or push individuals to make sure they are out of harm’s way. Keep calm and obey any instructions they may give you.
* Put down any items you might be carrying and raise your hands and spread your fingers. **Keep your hands visible at all times**.
* Do not make any sudden or quick movements in the direction of the officers, and avoid screaming, yelling, or pointing.
* Continue in the direction from which the officers are coming from and do not stop them for help.
* Upon their arrival, officers will proceed directly to the shooter’s last known location and **will not stop** to tend to wounded individuals.

**Once you have reached a safe location:**

Law enforcement will likely keep you at the assembly point until the incident is over and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Be patient and do not try to leave unless authorized to do so by the authorities on the scene.

**Rescue teams:**

Emergency medical personnel, as well as additional police officers, will enter the premises behind the initial police team to treat and remove any wounded individuals from the scene.

They may also enlist capable individuals at the scene to help in moving the wounded to a safe location.

Management Responsibilities after the event

* Take a count of personnel to determine whether anyone is missing and possibly wounded.
* Contact the families of those involved in the incident. In worst cases, this may include reporting casualties.
* Implement plans to provide counseling or psychological care for employees as requested or needed.
* Determine if any critical roles in the organization require filling due to the incident and reassign present personnel as necessary.
* Thoroughly document the incident.
* Document response activities.
* Identify successful actions and procedures that took place.
* Identify areas where stronger preventative measures or more training is required.
* Evaluate the existing emergency action plan’s effectiveness. Make recommendations for improvement as necessary.
* Determine what post traumatic counseling services will be made available by law enforcement, the government, and the company.

Summary

* Develop an emergency action plan.
* Hold training exercises.
* Train employees to:
* RUN, HIDE, FIGHT
* Wait until they are in a safe place before calling 911.
* Never try to engage the shooter except as a last resort.
* Follow any instructions given by police or medical personnel.
* Organize medical or psychological assessments as needed.
* Perform a thorough review of the incident.
* Recommend and implement changes.