

MINUTE FOR SAFETY

A Safety and Health Bulletin
from Gallagher National Risk Control

Minute for Safety, published by Gallagher National Risk Control, is a monthly electronic publication promoting safe work places for Clients in all industries. Each bulletin briefly highlights important safety tips that can also be shared at your facility, during team huddles. The information contained in this newsletter was obtained from sources that, to the best of the writer's knowledge, are authentic and reliable.

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Active Shooter Preparedness

The Department of Homeland Security defines an active shooter as "an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area." These incidents usually involve firearms and randomly selected targets or victims. Anyone involved in an incident should call emergency 911 as soon as it is safe to do so. Active shooter events are usually over within 10-15 minutes (sometimes before law enforcement arrives), so know how to respond if the unthinkable happens.

Active shooters may be current or former workers, family or friends of co-workers, or complete strangers. While it is difficult to foresee a stranger's actions, you can look for characteristics that a person may be planning a shooting incident. Report any of the following observations or uneasy, "gut" reactions to your supervisor, management, and/or human resources:

- Increased use of alcohol, drugs and absenteeism.
- Decreased hygiene and appearance.
- Depression and/or social withdrawal.
- Disregard for work quality or company policy.
- Mood swings and overly emotional responses.
- Paranoid, suicidal, or doomsday behavior or discussions.
- Increased discussion of violent incidents and weapons/firearms..

Often, the best choice is to evacuate the active shooter area.

For evacuations:

- Always know two exits and escape routes in every building you visit.
- Guide others to the escape route and prevent them from entering the shooting zone.
- Exit whether others follow you or not.
- Don't attempt to move wounded people.
- Keep your hands visible at all times and follow police instructions.

If you can't escape an active shooter scenario, find a place to hide out.

- Ideally, stay in, or find an office with a door that you can lock and/or barricade.
- Stay out of sight of windows.
- Silence your cell phone, turn off radios, TVs, etc. and stay quiet.



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If you can't evacuate or hide, call 911 and talk to the dispatcher or leave the phone line open so they can listen and record events. If possible, describe the location of the shooting, the shooter and the weapons. Remain calm, listen and think about your next moves.

Only as a last resort, and if your life is in "imminent danger," should you take action against the shooter. If you must take action, "aggressively and overwhelmingly" attack the shooter with improvised weapons. Throw things and yell at the shooter. Law enforcement recommends that you "commit to your actions," so don't hesitate or stop in mid-action.

When law enforcement arrives at an active shooter scene, their first priority will be to stop the shooter. They will go past wounded victims and may push people down to the ground in order to stop the violence. Listen to officer commands. Keep your hands visible, raised, with fingers spread wide. Don't shout, grab, point, or make distracting noises during officer response.

Create an emergency action plan to respond to an active shooter.

- Gather emergency responder, hospital, management, and building contact names and phone numbers.
- Discuss how to alert employees about an incident. Will you use a code word over the public address system, an all-call phone alert, texts, etc.?
- Procure supplies such as exit floor plans, first aid kits, staff rosters, flashlights, communication devices, etc.

Once you have your response procedures in place:

- Create a written plan.
- Train employees on the plan and how to react when gunshots are heard.
- Conduct an emergency drill around an active shooter scenario.
- Evaluate your drill success and adjust your plan and training as needed.

Active shooter situations can be random, with rapid and unpredictable events unfolding. Thinking about and practicing the proper response now can boost your chance of survival through the event, and in the aftermath.

For more information, response planning guides, and training resources, go to the Department of Homeland Security website on [Active Shooter Preparedness](#).

