
Active Shooter Response

On a national basis, active shooter situations have increased. This has included the threat to any facility that is open to the public such as a school or university. Events such as these are usually unpredictable and evolve rapidly, demanding response decisions that can be influenced by a number of different variables. Therefore, it is very important that faculty, staff and students immediately report any potentially threatening persons that they see anywhere on campus. This is true, even if the person is not currently engaged in an act of violence and would include anyone armed with a bladed instrument such as a large knife, sword, machete or firearm of any kind.

Background Information on an Active Shooter:

Definition –

- One or more suspect(s) who, as police respond to the scene, are actively killing or causing serious, life-threatening bodily injury to multiple victims. The overriding objective of the suspect(s) appears to be that of mass murder, rather than other criminal conduct such as robbery or hostage-taking.
- Threat is not contained and there is immediate risk of death and injury.
- Considered the greatest threat to a campus community.
- Leaves little or no time for proper planning and requires law enforcement to take immediate action.
- Active shooter situations can and often do develop into hostage situations upon the arrival of law enforcement and security.

Mentality of an Active Shooter –

- Desire is to kill and seriously injure without concern for their safety or threat of capture.
- Normally has intended victims and searches them out.
- Accepts targets of opportunity while searching for or after finding intended victims.
- Will continue to move throughout the building/area until stopped by law enforcement, suicide, or direct intervention.
- Shooters mentality is not escape. The goal is to kill and injure.
- There is no “typical profile” for active shooters.

Response Actions:

Active shooter situations are dynamic in nature and demand an immediate response to the situation by university officials and law enforcement to stop the shooting and prevent further harm to the community. In general, how you respond to an active shooter is dictated by the specific circumstances of the situation. If you find yourself in an active shooter situation, try to remain calm – your actions will influence others, trust your instincts, and call Campus Safety (Security) and/or 911 as soon as possible.

Cedarville University along with local police agencies have adopted accepted law enforcement response procedures, which are designed to contain and terminate such threats as quickly as possible.

These are the actions you are recommended to take that are based on the **Run, Hide or Fight** strategy as described by the Department of Homeland Security.

Evacuate the Building (Run) – if you are in a building where actual shooting is occurring, the experts now recommend that you leave the building immediately rather than shelter in place. If you think you can escape, then do so. Run toward law enforcement or security with your hands visible and raised above your head. If you're in a building where you have not observed a threat yet, then:

Secure the immediate area (Hide - go into lockdown) – whether a classroom, residence hall room, or office:

- If able, lock or barricade the door. Block the door using whatever is available: desks, tables, file cabinets, other furniture, books, etc.
- After securing the door, stay behind solid objects away from the door as much as possible.
- If an assailant enters your room and leaves, lock or barricade the door behind them.
- If safe to do so, allow others to seek refuge with you.
- Avoid hiding in restrooms, as they typically cannot be secured.

Protective actions – take appropriate steps to reduce your vulnerability:

- Close blinds.
- Block windows.
- Turn off radios and computers.
- Silence cell phones.
- Place signs in exterior windows to identify your location and the location of injured persons.
- Keep people calm and quiet.
- After securing the room, people should be positioned out of sight and behind items that might offer additional protection – wall, desks, file cabinets, bookshelves, etc.
- Do not sound the fire alarms. This may cause others to flee the buildings and put them at risk.
- Call Campus Safety (Security) and/or 911 if it is safe to do so.

Unsecured areas – if you find yourself in an open area (this could include a large auditorium or gym) immediately seek protection:

- Put something between you and the assailant.
- Consider trying to escape if you know where the assailant is and there appears to be a safe escape route immediately available to you.
- If in doubt, find the safest area available and secure it the best way you can.

Contacting the Emergency Dispatcher at 911 or Campus Safety – be aware that emergency systems may get overwhelmed during this type of incident, if you do not reach anyone on the first call, keep trying. Be prepared to provide as much information as possible, such as the following:

- Describe exactly what is happening.
- Where you are located, including building name and room numbers.
- Number of people at your specific location.
- Injuries if any, including the number of injured and types of injuries.
- Your name and other information as requested.
- Try to provide information in a calm clear manner so the dispatchers can relay the information to responding emergency personnel as quickly as possible.

Remember: You may reach the police by dialing 911; or Campus Safety (Security) by dialing 999 from any campus phone or 937-239-6491 from your cell. Program important numbers into your phone in advance so they are readily available when needed.

What to report. Try to note as much as possible about the assailant, including:

- What you heard – e.g., gunshots, explosions, etc.
- Specific location of the assailant.
- Number of assailants.
- Gender, race, and age of the assailant.
- Language of commands used by the assailant.
- Clothing color and style.
- Physical features – e.g., height, weight, facial hair, glasses.
- Type of weapons – e.g., handguns, rifle, shotgun, explosives.
- Description of any backpack or bag.
- Do you recognize the assailant? Do you know his/her name?

Un-securing the area:

- The assailant may not stop until his/her objectives have been met or until engaged and neutralized by law enforcement.
- Always consider the risk of exposure posed by opening the door for any reason.
- Attempts to rescue people outside a secure area should only be attempted if it can be accomplished without further endangerment to the people inside the secured area.
- Be aware that the assailant may bang on the door, yell for help, or otherwise attempt to entice you to open the door of a secured area.
- If there is any doubt about a threat to the safety of the individuals inside the room; the area needs to remain secured.

(Fight or Counter):

As a last resort if all else has failed, you may have to confront the assailant. This can be accomplished by throwing objects such as furniture, books, discharging a fire extinguisher at them or striking them with any object while they enter a door, etc. for the purpose of disrupting their actions. Others may be able to tackle the individual in order to restrain them until help arrives.

Campus Security's Goal & Response:

- Is to notify law enforcement immediately and obtain all of the details on what is occurring.
- Initiate the mass notification warning alert system, to the entire campus.
- Meet with police to disseminate necessary equipment such as building keys, etc. and establish a command center with other authorities.
- Barricade all entrances to the campus – closing it off to all persons, except for the authorities. Law enforcement, security and physical plant personnel may be used for this purpose.
- Serve as support team as necessary, especially officers who are un-armed.
- Security serves in both a supportive and active role; as it may be necessary for armed officers to take immediate action to stop the threat prior to law enforcement's arrival.

Police Goal & Response:

- Law enforcement's goal is to **locate, contain, and stop** the shooter as quickly as possible.
- Everyone in the building will be considered a suspect.
- When the team of officers makes a contact with you, do not run towards them.
- Keep your hands visible and respond to their commands.
- Officers will engage with gun fire, anyone that is armed or moves on them in what can be perceived as an aggressive manner.

- If you are near the suspects when officers make entry, the best thing to do is drop as low as you can and stay there, with your hands visible until the team commands you to get up.

Injured Persons –

- Initial responding officers will not treat the injured or begin evacuation until the threat is neutralized.
- You will need to explain this to others in an attempt to calm them.
- Once the shooter(s) is contained; officers will begin treatment and evacuation.

Evacuation –

- Safety corridors will be established by Law Enforcement. This may be time consuming to set-up.
- Remain in secure areas until instructed otherwise - the mass notification system can be used to call an all-clear and provide additional instructions.
- You may be searched – leave your personal belongings behind.
- You will be escorted out of the building by law enforcement personnel.

Final Adjudication of Incident:

Once the perpetrator has been neutralized and contained, law enforcement will declare whether the campus can be reopened. The emergency mass notification system will be used to disseminate this information to the campus community along with direct contact from the police and campus safety (security) personnel.

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