

# Merriam Insurance Guide to Active Shooter Preparedness

## ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE

LEARN HOW TO SURVIVE A SHOOTING EVENT



**RUN**



**HIDE**



**FIGHT**

**CALL 911 ONLY WHEN IT'S SAFE TO DO SO**

The following is an overview of how we counsel missions in the development of an active shooter protocol. This guide is designed to help you utilize resources in your community to craft a response plan that fits your ministry.

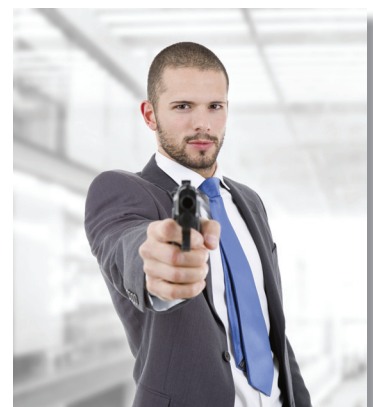
Through this guide you will learn how to:



Educate key staff on protocols the experts recommend. Draw on the knowledge and experience of local law enforcement and other first responders.



Develop and implement a crisis response plan.



Develop training appropriate for all employees and complete drills at least twice annually.

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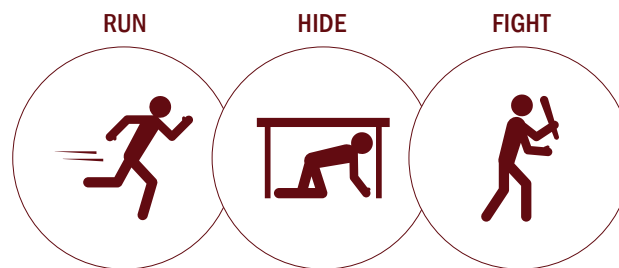
## Step One

### Research Your Active Shooter Plan

**Y**ou will need to select a point person within your organization to organize meetings with local law enforcement and first responders. This point person should be the chairperson of the committee that develops your crisis plan. You will need someone who writes well to take notes and organize the group's conclusions. As the plan is being developed, you want input from both male and female staff. We encourage you to have a group of 2–4 people who meet with first responders and develop the first draft of the crisis response plan. We also recommend you request that the mission leadership team participate in some or all of these meetings with first responders.

Ask the local police/first responders to walk your campus with you and point out potential issues they see. Note these carefully. These can include unmonitored means of egress, glass windows that could be shot out and walked through, or areas of staff vulnerability, such as your waiting area. Ask them about any safety improvements they recommend you consider.

Ask the officers/professionals with whom you consult for their recommended protocol if a shooter is identified. Most protocols contain some variation of the following possibilities:



Ask them how they prioritize these options and why. There are differences of opinion in the law enforcement/first responder community, and it is important to understand the basis of the differences of opinion.

Ask for their input on how to train your staff. Do they recommend drills with mock shooters? Do they recommend other types of drills? Do they recommend simple classroom training? How often should training take place?

Ask for guidance regarding the best methods for alerting your campus and first responders.

- Do you have an intercom system? Develop a protocol for alerting those in the building. We recommend not using a code phrase, but explaining in plain language what is happening and where, so listeners can take appropriate action.
- Do you have a video camera system? Give the local police department the access codes to your system so they can see inside the building if they are ever called to your premises.

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## Step Two

### Develop Your Active Shooter Plan

Once you have collected some in-person and written expertise on responding to active shooter situations, you must choose the protocol you want to recommend and train your staff to use. Be sure to include answers to these questions.

- Who is allowed to alert the building occupants and police?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How should that alert be communicated?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the preferred order of fleeing, hiding, and fighting? Are staff allowed to choose?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What responsibility do staff have to other staff and clients to notify them or help them leave the premises?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If people flee, where should they go?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are they allowed to break anything (like windows) if necessary?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If they hide, where should they hide?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What can they use to barricade themselves?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If they fight, what should they use?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are staff allowed to use weapons including firearms?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Once your team has developed protocols appropriate for your mission (and perhaps different ones for different campuses), they should outline the training protocol. Will you have a fake shooter? Will you simply have a PowerPoint presentation that is reviewed?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Both the protocol and the proposed training should be brought before the leadership team for discussion, revision, and approval.

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## Step Three

### Implement Your Active Shooter Plan

Once the mission leadership team has approved the protocol and the training, you need to roll it out to the staff. We recommend you meet with all the supervisors in the mission to review the protocol and proposed training. Ask for their questions and feedback. Before you have staff-wide training, we recommend each supervisor meet with his or her line staff. Make them aware of what they will be doing and why, and offer some personal insight as someone who has been introduced to the protocol. You should anticipate some of your staff may react unexpectedly to this sort of training, as it may bring up past negative experiences or fears.

We recommend you train your entire staff regularly. While some missions do a PowerPoint of the training and protocol twice annually, other missions train more frequently or less frequently. You will need to decide what protocol time frame is best for you.

Whatever you decide, it is essential that new hires are aware of the protocol and that training is done regularly. Should a shooter ever enter your mission, the majority of staff and guests may be very frightened and react instinctively. You want to help train their instincts with regular repetition of your protocol.

*Note: The Merriam Insurance Agency staff are not trained law enforcement or first responders. While we are familiar with some protocols that are used by others, we do not have an exhaustive knowledge of this subject. We encourage you to use this guide as a starting point, but not to rely on it as a sole source of information, as it is not exhaustive.*



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