

Profile of an Active Shooter

An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.

Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

Good practices for coping with an active shooter situation

- Be aware of your environment and any possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door
- If you are in a hallway, get into a room and secure the door
- As a last resort, attempt to take the active shooter down. When the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her.
- **CALL 911 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO!**

How to Respond when an Active Shooter is in Your Vicinity

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation.

Listen to announcements from the Rio Hondo College Emergency Management notification systems.

- This can include verbal directions from administrators, faculty and staff, Building Emergency Coordinators (BEC) and Building Emergency Leaders (BELS).
- Public announcements over the College's public announcement system(s)
- Automated phone messages
- Automated messages on campus computers
- Automated notification via text message or other media source

Shelter in Place

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide and sheltering in place at a location where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view

- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
- Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors (use heavy furniture to barricade the doors)
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock and/or blockade the door(s)
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

Evacuate

If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises when directed to do so. Be sure to:

- Have a preplanned escape route
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Help others escape, if possible
- Leave your belongings behind
- Prevent people from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers, firefighters, security guards or other emergency leaders
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

Take Action

Take action against the active shooter as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against the shooter(s)
- Attempt to incapacitate shooter
- Act aggressively and throw items at the shooter
- Yelling
- Communicating your actions

How to Respond When Law Enforcement Arrives

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

- Officers usually arrive in teams of four (4)
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or external bulletproof vests, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns
- Officers may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Officers may shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety

How to react when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, and follow instructions of the officers and emergency leaders
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 Operator:

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

The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises.

Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

Training For an Active Shooter Situation

To best prepare for an active shooter situation, become familiar with the college's Emergency Management Program (EMP) which includes an Emergency Operations Manual (EOM), Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and other documents as required, such as this booklet. The EMP also includes individual qualifications, training and conduct training exercises. Together, the EMP will prepare you to effectively respond and help minimize loss of life during multiple threats from all hazards.

Components of an Emergency Operations Manual (EOM)

The EOM was created with input from several stakeholders including administrators, faculty, classified, students, community partners, and local law enforcement and emergency responders. The EOM includes:

- A preferred method for reporting fires and other emergencies
- An evacuation policy and procedure
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments (i.e., floor plans, safe areas)
- Contact information for, and responsibilities of individuals to be contacted under the EOM
- Information concerning local area hospitals (i.e., name, telephone number, and distance from your location)
- An emergency notification system to alert various parties of an emergency including:-
Individuals at remote locations within premises- Local law enforcement- Local area hospitals, etc.

Components of Training Exercises

The most effective way to train for a response to an active shooter situation is to conduct active shooter training exercises. Exercises can be conducted in tabletop discussions, drills including the campus community and local agencies with First Responder responsibilities. Training should prepare you with the ability to:

- Recognize the sound of gunshots
- React quickly when gunshots are heard or when a shooting is witnessed:
 - Evacuating the area
 - Hiding out
 - Acting against the shooter as a last resort
- Calling 911
- React when law enforcement arrives
- Adopt a survival mind set during times of crisis

Additional Ways to Prepare for and prevent an Active Shooter Situation

- Preparedness
 - Ensure that your facility has at least two evacuation routes
 - Post evacuation routes in conspicuous locations throughout your facility
 - Include local law enforcement and first responders during training exercises
 - Encourage law enforcement, emergency responders, SWAT teams, K-9 teams, and bomb squads to train for an active shooter scenario at your location
- Prevention
 - Foster a respectful workplace
 - Be aware of indications of workplace violence and take remedial actions accordingly

Preparing for and Managing an Active Shooter Situation

The Director of facilities Services is responsible for the college's Emergency Management Program. This includes engagement in planning for emergency situations, including an active shooter scenario. Planning for emergency situations will help to mitigate the likelihood of an incident by establishing the responsibilities and mechanisms described below.

Human Resources Office

- Conduct effective employee screening and background checks
- Create a system for reporting signs of potentially violent behavior
- Make counseling services available to employees

Vice President of Student Services

- Create a system for students to receive information on the Emergency management program
- Make counseling services available to students

Director of Facilities Services

- Develop and manage the Emergency management Program; including policies and procedures for dealing with an active shooter situation, as well as after action planning
- Institute access controls (i.e., keys, security system pass codes)
- Distribute critical items to appropriate managers / employees, including:
 - Floor plans- Keys
 - Facility personnel lists and telephone numbers for key personnel
- Coordinate with the facility's security department to ensure the physical security of the location
- Assemble emergency response crisis kits containing:
 - Radios
 - Floor plans

- Staff roster, and staff emergency contact numbers
- BEL buckets containing First aid kits, flashlights, bullhorns, etc.

- Place removable floor plans near entrances and exits for emergency responders
- Activate the emergency notification system when an emergency situation occurs

Managers Responsibilities during an Active Shooter Situation

Employees and students are likely to follow the lead of managers during an emergency situation. During an emergency, managers should be familiar with their EOM, and be prepared to:

- Take immediate action
- Remain calm
- Lock and/or barricade doors
- Evacuate staff and students via preplanned evacuation routes to a safe area

Assisting Individuals with Special Needs and/or Disabilities

- Be familiar with the EOM's, evacuation instructions and any other relevant information addressing individuals with special needs and/or disabilities
- Know where specialized emergency management equipment is located in your area, particularly handicap-accessible routes

Recognizing Potential Workplace/Campus Violence

An active shooter in your workplace may be a current or former employee, an acquaintance of a current or former employee, a current student or former student, or an acquaintance of a current or former student. Intuitive managers, coworkers and students may notice characteristics of potentially violent behavior in an employee or student. Alert your Human Resources Department if you believe an employee or coworker exhibits potentially violent behavior; for potentially violent behavior in a student, alert campus security and/or the Dean of Student Affairs at ext. 3573.

Indicators of Potential Violence

People typically do not just “snap,” but display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. If these behaviors are recognized, they can often be managed and treated. Potentially violent behaviors by a person may include one or more of the following (this list of behaviors is not comprehensive, nor is it intended as a mechanism for diagnosing violent tendencies):

- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism; vague physical complaints
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
- Depression/withdrawal
- Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures
- Repeated violations of company policies
- Increased severe mood swings

- Noticeably unstable, emotional responses
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
- Suicidal; comments about “putting things in order”
- Behavior which is suspect of paranoia, (“everybody is against me”)
- Increasingly talks of problems at home
- Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace; talk of severe financial problems
- Talk of previous incidents of violence
- Empathy with individuals committing violence
- Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons and violent crimes

Managing the Consequences of an Active Shooter Situation

After the active shooter has been incapacitated and is no longer a threat, the college president will engage the Emergency Management Program leadership team in post-event assessments and activities, including:

- An accounting of all individuals at a designated assembly point to determine who, if anyone, is missing and potentially injured
- Determining a method for notifying families of individuals affected by the active shooter, including notification of any casualties
- Assessing the psychological state of individuals at the scene, and referring them to health care specialists accordingly
- Identifying and filling any critical personnel or operational gaps left in the organization as a result of the active shooter

Lessons Learned

To facilitate effective planning for future emergencies, it is important to analyze the recent active shooter situation and create an after action report. The analysis and reporting contained in this report is useful for:

- Serving as documentation for response activities
- Identifying successes and failures that occurred during the event
- Providing an analysis of the effectiveness of the existing EOM
- Describing and defining a plan for making improvements to the EOM



References

Rio Hondo College Emergency Operations Manual, 2006.

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