

ACTIVE SHOOTER: **SURVIVING AN ATTACK**

COURSE OUTLINE

- **All too often these days, we hear about them on the news... "active shooter" incidents.**
 - Multiple shootings committed in workplaces, nightspots, public areas.
 - Innocent people injured, and killed.
- **What if one of these situations takes place when you're there? What should you do to survive?**
 - Law enforcement groups have developed a list of proven "do's" and "don'ts" that can help you come through an active shooter attack alive.
- **An active shooter is someone who is "actively engaged" in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.**
 - In most cases, they use a firearm.
 - Their selection of victims may be completely random.
- **The place they choose for their shooting may appear random as well.**
 - But the one constant about active shooter attacks is that they're unpredictable.
 - They can occur anytime and anywhere... to anyone.
- **Most of these incidents last only 10 or 15 minutes, so they're usually over before law enforcement arrives on the scene.**
 - That means you must be able to help yourself when trouble starts.
 - You can start getting ready for it now.
- **First, you should be mentally prepared to act if an emergency strikes.**
 - Taking quick and decisive action is a crucial survival skill.
- **One of the first things you should do is to start practicing "situational awareness" wherever you go:**
 - Be aware of your environment.
 - Pay attention to what's going on around you.
 - Look for things that seem odd or out of place, or that could be dangerous.

- **Situational awareness also includes knowing at least two ways to escape from wherever you are, at all times.**
- **Studies show that the most successful way to get out of trouble in an active shooter situation is to run away, but you need to know where to run to.**
 - Make a habit of knowing how to "get out", whether you're at work or at play, in private homes, public places, even outdoors.
 - This can help you to act quickly and decisively in an emergency, and that can save your life.
- **The sound of gunfire is often the first clue that an active shooter attack has begun nearby.**
 - Would you recognize the sound of a gunshot if you heard one?
 - They can be hard to recognize.
- **There are ways to sort out gunfire from similar loud noises. Just remember this:**
 - When someone pops a paper bag... it's just a single "bang".
 - When a pack of firecrackers goes off... the "bangs" are usually very rapid, with an uneven rhythm.
- **Multiple gunshots are usually different.**
 - Fast or slow, they typically come in a steadier, more deliberate pattern, because the shooter is trying to hit specific targets.
 - Even automatic weapons fire maintains a steady rhythm, though it may come in short "bursts".
 - So multiple "popping" sounds that come in deliberate patterns are a danger signal.
- **But you could have no audible warning at all.**
 - An attack may begin when you're in the same room or general area as the shooter.
- **Where you are when shooting begins has a lot to do with what your best survival options are.**
- **Whether you're in a building or outdoors, you have the same three options for survival... run, hide or fight.**
 - You should pursue them in that order.
 - Fighting is always the last resort.

- **If, in fact, you are in the same room or general area as the shooter your main objective will be to get out of there.**
- **Remember, you must act immediately.**
 - It's natural to be afraid, but "freezing up" can get you killed.
 - The longer you hesitate, the greater the danger.
- **If you're under fire, "take cover".**
 - Get behind a wall, a car, a piece of heavy furniture, planter or other solid obstacle... something that will hide you and protect you from bullets.
- **If you think you can escape from the active shooting area, run as fast as you can away from the shooter, towards the "way out".**
 - Don't stop to grab your wallet, purse or other belongings.
 - Just go.
- **If the shooter sees you, keep running... don't stop!**
 - If possible, put some cover between yourself and the shooter as you move.
- **You can also try to make yourself a harder target by zig-zagging or crouching, but the most important thing is to run just as fast as you can.**
 - Encourage others to do the same.
 - But get out of there regardless of whether other people are running or not.
- **If you see someone who looks "frozen" or disoriented, grab them and pull them along with you if you can.**
- **As you go, you want to prevent anyone from entering the area as well, unless they are security personnel or law enforcement.**
- **Don't stop running until you are far away from the danger area.**
 - When you're safe, call 911 and report the situation.
- **"Running" to escape from a building or get away from the area outdoors may not always be possible.**
 - For instance, the active shooting area might be between you and the exit, or your escape route could be physically blocked.
 - Running may also not be an option if you have a group of children with you, or you're physically disabled.

- **Your next option is to hide from the shooter.**
- **The situation may require you to hide quickly, wherever you can, such as in a cab of a truck, in back of a cubicle partition, or behind a piece of equipment.**
 - A good hiding place will keep you out of the shooter's sight as well as protect you from gunfire.
- **Shooters are looking for easy targets.**
 - The harder you make it for them to get to you, the less likely they are to try.
- **If possible go into a room and close the door quietly behind you.**
 - If you are already in another room when the attack begins and cannot safely exit the building, stay there.
- **Lock or barricade all doors to the space.**
 - If a door has no lock, place heavy objects such as chairs, desks or other furniture against the door, so it can't be pushed open from outside.
 - If other people are hiding in the room, you can work together to get these things done quickly.
 - If a door has a hydraulic door closer, you can use a belt to tie the arms together so that it can't open.
- **Then do as many of the following things as possible to make the room safer:**
 - Turn out the lights so the room appears to be unoccupied.
 - Turn off any sources of noise, such as a radio or television that could attract a shooter's attention.
- **At that point you should call 911.**
 - If possible, tell the dispatcher where the shooter is, so they know where to send help.
 - Try to make your 911 call via a landline, so the police can determine where you are by tracing the call.
- **Look for something sharp or heavy you can use as a weapon, just in case.**
 - Possible weapons include a letter opener, fire extinguisher, wrench, scissors or hammer.
 - You could even break a mirror from inside a handbag.
- **Get behind a large object if you can, such as a partition, under a piece of furniture like a desk, or inside a closet.**
 - Remember, if you can see the shooter, they can probably see you.

- **Silence your cell phone, be still and do your best to stay calm.**
 - The sound of heavy breathing or crying can alert a shooter to your presence.
- **Then wait. Stay hidden until the police arrive and take control of the situation.**
- **If an active shooter manages to find you in your hiding place, you are going to need to fight for your life.**
 - It's not easy or pleasant to think about this situation.
 - You may not believe that you're capable of violence, but avoiding the issue will not save your life.
 - If you don't do anything when the shooter finds you, you'll more than likely be killed.
- **Don't try to "reason" with a shooter.**
 - The crime they're committing shows they're not reasonable, and not likely to be merciful.
- **Your best chance of survival is to incapacitate the shooter by fighting back.**
- **Attack the shooter physically and aggressively with whatever weapon you have, even if it's only your fists.**
 - Aim your blows at their face, eyes, neck, shoulders and arms.
- **If there are multiple people hiding with you in the room, everyone should attack the shooter together.**
 - Strength of numbers can be a significant advantage in disarming and subduing a shooter.
- **Then get out of the room and run to safety.**
- **If you're the victim of an active shooter attack, you'll naturally feel excitement and relief when law enforcement personnel arrive on the scene.**
 - Remember, the officers are highly trained professionals with specific jobs that they must do in a certain order.
 - They will have only basic information about what has happened and "who is who".

- **The first police personnel on the scene of an active-shooter situation are going to be entering a "high threat" environment.**
 - Their job is to neutralize the shooter and secure the location.
 - They are not there to help the wounded or comfort people who are distressed.
 - Those tasks will be performed by EMTs and other first responders.
- **If you go running towards a policeman they can easily mistake you for a threat rather than a victim.**
 - Don't make any quick movements toward them.
 - Don't carry anything that could be mistaken for a weapon.
- **Make sure your hands are empty and visible.**
 - Hold them up and spread your fingers.
 - Avoid pointing and screaming or yelling.
 - Do not try to hold onto the officers.
- **In a high threat situation, an officer may knock you to the ground to protect you.**
 - Under the circumstances, good manners are not a priority.
- **Answer the officers' questions.**
 - Tell them what you know.
 - Do exactly what they tell you.
 - Do not argue with them.
- **Eventually, you can proceed out of the incident area in the direction that the police came from.**
- **At that point you will most likely be held in a safe location or "assembly area" until the situation is under control, and witnesses have been identified and questioned.**
 - Do not leave the assembly area until the authorities say that you can go.

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- **There are things you can do to improve your chances of surviving an active shooter situation.**
- **Learn to anticipate an attack by developing situational awareness, and prepare yourself to act swiftly and decisively in an emergency.**
- **If you come under fire during an attack, take cover or drop to the floor and lie flat.**
- **Evacuating the active shooter area by running away gives you the best chance of survival.**
- **If you can't escape the area, hide from the shooter in another room, if possible.**
 - Lock or barricade the door.
 - Find something you can use as a weapon, and conceal yourself.
- **If a shooter finds you, fight back.**
 - Attack the shooter as violently as you can to disarm or incapacitate them.
- **When the police arrive, don't make sudden moves.**
 - Raise your hands and do exactly what the officers say.
- **An active shooter attack is terrifying, but you can survive one by doing the right thing at the right time.**
 - Knowing what to do and acting quickly can give yourself the best chance of coming through an active shooter situation alive!