



ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT

Active Shooter Training

2023

An “active shooter” is an individual who is 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.

- ❑ *Victims are selected at random*
- ❑ *Event is unpredictable and evolves quickly*
- ❑ *Knowing what to do can save lives*

Recognizing Signs of Potential Workplace Violence

Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs

Unexplained increase in absenteeism, and/or vague physical complaints

Depression and/or withdrawal from friends and social situations

Increased severe mood swings, and noticeably and unexpected emotional or aggressive responses to commonplace situations

Increasingly sharing about problems at home

Increased unsolicited comments about violence, firearms, and other dangerous weapons and violent crimes.

De-Escalation: Tactics to Consider That May Help Defuse Potentially Violent Situations

De-Escalation is a method to prevent potential violence.

Individuals are encouraged to use purposeful actions, verbal communications, and body language to calm a potentially dangerous situation.

Your safety and the safety of others is the highest priority.

Maintain a safe distance and avoid being alone with an individual who is combative or potentially violent. If there is a risk of imminent violence, remove yourself from the situation and seek safety.

Know your limits.

Keep in mind that some individuals may be more adept in applying these techniques. Know your own vulnerabilities and tendencies and recognize that sometimes the best intervention is knowing when to seek additional help.

Obtain Help.

If you feel the individual or situation is escalating and violence may occur, call for help from your security staff or local law enforcement and move yourself to a safe location.

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PURPOSEFUL ACTIONS

Remain Calm: A purposeful demonstration of calmness and composure can enable de-escalation.

Change the Setting: If possible, remove people from the area. This could involve parties to the conflict and onlookers.

Respect Personal Space: Maintain a safe distance and avoid touching the other person.

Listen: Give your full attention, nod, ask questions, and avoid changing the subject or interrupting.

Empathize: Present genuine concern and a willingness to understand without judging.

Be aware of your non-verbal communication. Ensure your tone, facial expressions, body language and gestures relay calm and empathy.

Remain respectful and courteous. Address the individual with civility and use phrases such as “please” and thank you.”

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VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Tone + Volume + Rate of speech + Inflection of voice = Verbal De-Escalation

Tone: Speak calmly to demonstrate empathy.	Instead Of:	Say...
Volume: Monitor your volume and avoid raising your voice.	"Calm down."	"I can see that you are upset..."
Rate of Speech: Slower can be more soothing.	"I can't help you."	"I want to help, what can I do?"
Inflection: Be aware of emphasizing words or syllables as that can negatively affect the situation.	"I know how you feel."	"I understand that you feel..."
	"Come with me."	"May I speak with you?"



BODY LANGUAGE

Instead Of:	Try...
Standing rigidly directly in front of the person	Keeping a relaxed and alert stance off to the side of the person
Pointing your finger	Keeping your hands down, open, and visible at all times
Excessive gesturing or pacing	Using slow, deliberate movements
Faking a smile	Maintaining a neutral and attentive facial expression

Employee Vigilance through the Power of Hello

Alert employees can spot suspicious activity and report it



Used effectively, the right words can be a powerful tool. Simply saying “Hello” can prompt a casual conversation with unknown individuals and help you determine why they are there. **The OHNO approach – Observe, Initiate a Hello, Navigate the Risk, and Obtain Help** – helps employees observe and evaluate suspicious behaviors, empowers them to mitigate potential risk, and obtain help when necessary.

The **OHNO** approach to risk prevention relies on reasonable persons to make these observations to properly detect and report terrorism/criminal-related suspicious behavior.



OBSERVE

Stay vigilant of your surroundings.

Alert employees can identify suspicious behavior, such as:

- Placing an object or package and abandoning it or leaving the area.
- A prolonged interest in or taking pictures/videos of personnel, facilities, security features, or infrastructure in an unusual or covert manner.
- Unauthorized people trying to enter a restricted area or impersonating authorized personnel.
- Loitering at a location without a reasonable explanation.
- Avoiding security personnel or systems.
- Expressed or implied threats of violence.



INITIATE A HELLO

Acknowledging a risk can deter a potential threat.

Use the Power of Hello to engage with individuals in your space by doing or saying the following (tip: active listening is key.):

- Smile, make eye contact, and introduce yourself.
- “Hello, how are you?”
- “How can I assist you?”
- “Are you looking for something or someone in particular?”
- “I will be here in case you need help.”
- Approaching a person viewed as suspicious has potential risks. In some situations it may be more advisable to report the activity to those with the authority and training to intervene.



NAVIGATE THE RISK

Navigate the risk by asking yourself if the behavior you observed is threatening or suspicious.

When observing activity or behavior that would arouse reasonable suspicion of terrorism or other criminal activity, employees should consider these questions:

- Do they appear to be legitimately patronizing the business or service?
- Is their clothing consistent with the weather or for the gathering of the day?
- Are they avoiding security?
- Are they asking questions about business functions or employee information? (e.g., “Who is closing?” or “How many people work here?”, etc.)
- Causing you to feel threatened? (If you feel threatened, calmly walk away and call 9-1-1.)



OBTAIN HELP

After navigating the risk, obtain help from management or authorities.

Using OHNO, provide the best information to first responders and security personnel.

- Call 9-1-1 for emergencies or if you feel in danger.
- To organize your thoughts to management or the police ask yourself 5W's:
 - What is happening?
 - Who is doing it?
 - Where is it taking place?
 - When did you observe it?
 - Why are they here?
- You may submit suspicious activity reports to your local law enforcement or call the non-emergency number.

For additional Power of Hello resources please visit cisa.gov/employee-vigilance-power-hello.

DHS’ “If You See Something, Say Something®” campaign provides additional information on how to recognize and report the indicators of terrorism-related suspicious activity.

The OHNO approach describes activities and behaviors that may be suspicious or indicative of criminal activity. These activities may be constitutionally protected and should be reported only when there are articulable facts to support a rational conclusion that the behavior is suspicious. Do not report based solely on protected activities, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or a combination of only such factors.

You have three options to address the situation.

ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENTS

When an Active Shooter is in your vicinity, you must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with the situation.



1

RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Leave your belongings behind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Help others escape, if possible
- Do not attempt to move the wounded
- Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Call 911 when you are safe

2

HIDE

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view
- Lock door or block entry to your hiding place
- Silence your cell phone (including vibrate mode) and remain quiet

3

FIGHT

- Fight as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
- Act with as much physical aggression as possible
- Improvise weapons or throw items at the active shooter
- Commit to your actions . . . your life depends on it

When law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm and follow instructions
- Drop items in your hands (e.g., bags, jackets)
- Raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid quick movements toward officers, such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling
- Do not ask questions when evacuating

Information to provide to 911 operations:

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters
- Physical description of shooters
- Number and type of weapons shooter has
- Number of potential victims at location

The first officers to arrive on scene will not stop to help the injured. Expect rescue teams to follow initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove injured.

Once you have reached a safe location, 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 the area until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

Resources

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

United States Department of Homeland Security