Workplace Active Shooter Guidelines For Workers



So-called “active shooter” incidents like the deadly school shooting in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia typically happen suddenly and without warning, unfolding over a 10- to 15-minute span. By the time law enforcement shows up, the carnage is already done and there’s no way to save the victims. Bottom Line: Workers on the ground need to know what to do in those crucial minutes after the shooting begins and before help arrives. Such preparation can spell the difference between death and survival. Here are template response guidelines you can adapt to prepare workers for active shooter events at your workplace.

WORKPLACE ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT RESPONSE GUIDELINES

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these Guidelines is to ensure that ABC Company personnel are prepared and know how to respond in the unlikely event that an Active Shooter Event occurs at the workplace.

2. DEFINITION OF ‘ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT’

For purposes of this Policy, “Active Shooter Event” means an incident in which one or more individuals make actual effort to kill people in a workplace or another confined and populated place, typically with firearms and on a random basis.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

ABC Company is committed to providing a safe working environment and has implemented a comprehensive program to prevent workplace violence. Regrettably, there is always a remote possibility that Active Shooter Events will take place no matter how diligently we try to prevent them. Active Shooter Events are unpredictable and unfold quickly before security and law enforcement personnel arrive on the scene. As a result, personnel must be prepared and know what to do in these situations. Such preparation may literally spell the difference between life and death.

4. ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT RESPONSE

There are three basic things you can do if you are present during an Active Shooter Event. Here are guidelines for each option (which are listed in order of preference).

Option 1. Run Away

The first—and best—option is to run away from the active shooter if you possibly can. Best practices:

• Be sure there's an accessible escape path.
• Encourage others to leave with you but don't let their hesitation or determination to stay keep you from getting out of there yourself.
• Don't attempt to take wounded people with you.
• Leave your belongings behind.
• Keep your hands visible at all times.
• Call 911 as soon as you get away.
• Keep anybody other than police, security, or emergency responders from entering the area where the Active Shooter Event is or may be taking place.

Option 2. Hide & Shelter in Place

If you can't get out of the area where the Active Shooter Event is occurring, try to find a good hiding place as far away as possible. Best practices:
• Go to the nearest room or office and lock the door (try to avoid evacuating to restrooms since they're usually hard to lock down).
• If the door doesn't lock, wedge it shut or barricade it with something heavy.
• Identify an escape route in case you need to get out of the room fast.
• Turn off the lights, close the blinds, and cover the windows.
• Call 911 if it's safe to do so and then silence all cell phones, radios, computers, and other devices.
• Stay out of sight and take cover behind furniture or other large items.
• Don't let anybody in unless they have a badge or other ID.
• Don't leave until law enforcement, security, or emergency responders tell you it's safe—and make sure it's really them and not the active shooter trying to trick you into coming out.

Option 3. Fight Back

Confront active shooters only as a last resort when no other options are available. There are three possible ways to do this and you'll have to make a judgment about which option to use based on the situation:

- Talking to Active Shooter: Active shooters are typically hell-bent on murder and don't respond to reason but that's not always the case, especially if you know something about the active shooter to suggest that they may be open to such an approach.
- Distracting Active Shooter: If verbal confrontation is too dangerous, consider throwing things, howling at the top of your lungs and, above all, moving frantically to distract the active shooter and give yourself a chance to escape or hide.
- Attacking Active Shooter: The last of the last resorts is to attack the active shooter with everything you've got aiming for the head, eyes, throat, and groin. Direct physical confrontation is most likely to work when you have a weapon, size, training, numerical, or other advantage enhancing your chances of overpowering or disarming the active shooter.

5. RESPONDING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

You must also know what to do when and if law enforcement arrives on the scene. Recognize that officers are likely to show up armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns, and other weapons and tactical equipment. They are also likely to shout orders and may even push you to the ground for your own safety.

Stay Calm and Follow the Officers' Instructions

• Put down your bags, jackets or any other items in your hands.
• Immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers.
• Keep your hands visible at all times.
• Don't make quick movements toward officers.
• Don't try to hug or hold onto officers for safety.
• Don't point, scream, or yell.
• Don't ask officers for help or direction when evacuating—just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises.

6. COMMUNICATING WITH 911 OPERATORS

When notifying 911 of an Active Shooter Event, be prepared to provide the operator the following information:

• The Active Shooter Event's location.
• The number of active shooters involved.
• A physical description of the active shooter.
• The number and type of weapons the active shooter has.
• The number of potential victims at the location.