



## **HOW TO PLAN FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER IN THE WORKPLACE: CHECK OUT THESE 5 CRITICAL CONCEPTS**

**How can you plan for an active shooter in the workplace? Most businesses have policies in place outlining responses to different types of crises. Every business follows fire codes and many have a response plan in place for critical incidents such as a bomb threat.**

The same concept of writing policies, creating a plan, training staff, and then practicing these procedures does not apply as it should regarding a violent intruder or disgruntled employee. Building a thorough plan is critical to combatting a tragedy in the workplace, such as an active shooter incident.

### **Planning for an Active Shooter in the Workplace: Execute these 5 Critical Concepts to Create a “Bulletproof” Plan**

#### **#1: Non-Emergency Lockdown Procedures [Incident Close to Facility]**

A non-emergency lockdown is implemented when there is a known **THREAT OFF-SITE, BUT CLOSE** to the facility.

An example of a non-emergency lockdown would be when police establish a perimeter close to the facility and search for a suspect.

- **SECURE** all exterior doors and fencing to keep the problem out.
- Operate as usual on the inside. **DO NOT PERMIT** entrance into the facility.
- Ensure the facility is secured from the outside.
- Create **LAYERS OF RESISTANCE** to block a potential intruder from entering the site.
- Call the police to gain information.
- **INFORM OPERATOR** that the facility is on a non-emergency lockdown (also known as “lockout” or “standard lockdown”).
- **REQUEST NOTIFICATION** when threat is clear.
- **ALL-CLEAR:** Once the incident has been deemed safe by law enforcement, operations will go back to normal.
- Keep Your Employees updated.

“Being in a non-emergency lockdown for a potential threat off-site, puts the workplace at an advantage in the event the facility moves to an emergency lockdown.”

## #2: **Emergency Lockdown Procedures** [Incident within Facility]

An emergency lockdown is described as an unwanted intruder **ON SITE** or **WITHIN the FACILITY**.

*Keep in mind that this threat may be mobile!*

- **REPORT** the incident to law enforcement as quickly as possible.
- **UTILIZE** an intercom system or other means to reach employees.
- Activating an emergency lockdown could discourage the threat from executing their plan.
- **CARRY OUT** your plan while waiting for police to arrive.
- Restricted access may cause the threat to leave or be apprehended by law enforcement.
- **WEAPONS:** Keep in mind a weapon can be concealed.

A disgruntled customer, client, or former employee should be taken seriously because the intention is unknown.

“Instead of implementing layers of resistance on the outside, the mindset needs to switch to creating resistance on the inside.”

### #3: Expanding the Run. Hide. Fight. Model – [During an Active Threat]

Below, [Steve S. Smith and his team of law enforcement professionals](#) share their expansion of the Run. Hide. Fight. model, developed by the Department of Homeland Security.

#### **RUN: Where You Should Run and When You Should Go**

##### ***Our Recommendation: EVADE and EVACUATE***

- If the decision to “Run” is made, the response should be to **EVADE** or **EVACUATE**.
- The action shall not be to blindly “Run” from the threat.
- **EVADE (MOVE)** when the threat’s location is not close to you.
- **MAINTAIN COVER** or **CONCEALMENT** if possible. Then, **EVACUATE** to safety.
- If there are no auditory sounds of a threat, it is possible that evading to a secure area, rather than evacuate, is your best choice.
- *“Work with the known.”*
- **BE AWARE** of any avenue of escape or exits.
- Take time for internal “field trips” of your work space.

People are creatures of habit and under stress resort back to training or previous experiences. Simply learning the layout of the facility can assist employees to recognize other avenues of escape.

## HIDE: How You Should Hide and Where You Should Go

### Our Recommendation: ISOLATE and SECURE

- Unfortunately, evacuation may not be feasible for all employees and they may need to **isolate** and **secure** themselves from the threat.
- In choosing to “Hide,” there should be a clear understanding of the location to hide and the material that is chosen to hide behind.
- When selecting a location to isolate, it would be most beneficial to access areas less known or regularly travelled.
- Adjoining rooms that bring one deeper into the facility and further away from the threat is a good option for isolation.
- Once the location has been chosen, secure the area by creating layers of resistance.
- A first potential layer is locking the door.
- **Simply securing the door** allows staff time to react to the situation.
- It should be noted that a locked door is sometimes all that is needed to win an active killer incident. The threat is aware of limited time to locate victims and it would be a “waste of time” to attempt to force their way into a room that may have nobody inside.
- If the threat decides to force their way through the locked door, build a barricade (the second layer of resistance).
- The barricade could be built from desks, tables, chairs, or cabinets.
- If you cannot secure in an enclosed area, than shielding oneself behind the proper material for “cover” is imperative.
- Cover is something that can stop bullets from penetrating through it.
- An example of **cover** is concrete block or a potentially a filing cabinet filled with papers.

- If cover cannot be located, then concealment would be the next option.
- **Concealment** only affords the benefit of stealth and it should be noted that bullets will penetrate through said material.
- *Examples of concealment are dry wall, most doors, desks, tables, and closets.*
- **If concealment is the only option available**, then locate a closet or material that conceals all the way around the body.

“Hiding under a table is not a good choice of concealment because most tables have visual openings that allow the threat to see one from different angles!”

## **FIGHT: When You Should Fight and How You Should Do It**

### **Our Recommendation: DEFEND**

- “**FIGHT**” may come first, last, or not at all.
- The need to **DEFEND** oneself is dependent upon the location and nature of the threat.
- If you fight, you must **COMMIT** 100% to winning that battle.
- If possible, **PROCURE a WEAPON**.
- A weapon of choice could be a sharp object, like scissors, or a blunt object, like a heavy trophy or bat.
- Position yourself in a low, aggressive stance.
- Aim for the head, rather than attempting to disarm the attacker.

### **#4: Staff Training – [Independent Decision Making in Case of a Threat]**

- **TRAIN** staff.
- **TRUST** them to make independent choices.

- We recognize that some work spaces may not have a door to close. Utilizing other layers of resistance just mentioned will need to come first.
- **EMPOWER** staff with the independence to initiate a lockdown or to call the police.

We have experienced in many schools, for instance, that teachers are taught to call the front office or the principal first. We highly encourage trusting the judgment of the teacher or staff member.

### **#5: Frequent Training – [Practice, Practice, Practice]**

1. **TRAIN FREQUENTLY.**
2. **PRACTICE an EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN.**
3. **PRACTICE** in the form of table-top exercises or actual drills in sections of the facility at a time.

(Original article: [Preparing for the Lone Wolf Attack: The Building Blocks of Planning for an Active Shooter in the Workplace](#) published in the Preferred News newsletter sponsored by Public Risk Underwriters of Florida)

### **Conclusion**

I hope that after reading this article, the audience understands that an active shooter incident or violent attack could happen at any business, school, mall, restaurant, movie theater, church, hospital, or public place.

The parents and families of the 20 children and 6 staff at Sandy Hook, the families of the Aurora, Colorado movie theater shooting, the parents of the teenagers of Columbine High School, and the families of the Post Office massacre in Edmond, Oklahoma may have never thought their loved ones would be slain while they attended school or work.

**As the list of these tragedies continues to grow, it is the duty of every business owner, city manager and principal to formalize plans now and prepare for an active shooter attack.**

Interested in learning more about how you can deal with an active shooter in the workplace incident?

Learn more about our [active shooter training for businesses](#) or book your [Workplace Violence active shooter training course](#) now!

Also [check out what other clients say about our training](#).