



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

How can you plan for an active shooter at your [workplace](#), [school](#), or [place of worship](#)? Most businesses and schools have policies in place outlining responses to different types of crises. Every business and school 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 always apply as it should regarding a violent intruder or disgruntled employee. Building a thorough plan is critical to combating a tragedy in the workplace, such as an active shooter incident.

Planning for an Active Shooter at Your School or Workplace: Execute these 5 Critical Concepts to Create a Sensible Plan

#1: Hold Procedures (Incident Close to Facility, Or Low-Level Threat on Site)

A Hold is necessary when there is a known **THREAT OFF-SITE, BUT CLOSE** to the facility. In some cases, it can be a low-level threat.

An example of a Hold 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.
- Create **LAYERS OF RESISTANCE** to block a potential intruder from entering the site.
- Call the police to request information.
- **INFORM OPERATOR** that the facility is on a Hold (also known as "Lock-Out", "Non-Emergency Lock-Down", or "Code Yellow").
- **REQUEST NOTIFICATION** when threat is clear.
- **ALL-CLEAR:** Once law enforcement says that the location is safe, operations will go back to normal.
- Keep your employees updated.

"Being in a Hold for a potential threat off-site, puts the school or workplace at an advantage in the event the facility needs to move to a Lock-down."

#2: Lock-down Procedures (Incident within Facility)

A Lock-down is necessary when a threat is **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** your mass communication system, such as an intercom to reach employees.
- Activating a Lock-down could discourage the threat from executing their plan.
- **CARRY OUT** your plan while waiting for police to arrive (See #3 below)
- **WEAPONS:** Keep in mind the threat may be concealing his/her weapon.

A disgruntled customer, client, parent 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 Department of Homeland Security's Run. Hide. Fight. model.

RUN: Where You Should Run and When You Should Go

Our recommendation: EVADE and EVACUATE

- If the decision is to "Run", consider **EVASION** and **EVACUATION**.
- 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 evacuating, is your best choice.
- *"Work in the known."*
- **BE AWARE** of any avenue of escape or exits.

"Under stress people resort back to training or previous experiences. Simply learning the layout of the facility can assist employees to recognize the 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 isolate in 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 traveled.
- Adjoining rooms that bring one deeper into the facility and further away from the threat may be a good option for isolation.

"A locked door often creates an advantage. 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.”

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 stopping the threat.
- 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 for Your Workplace, School or Place of Worship (Independent Decision Making in the Case of a Threat)

- **TRAIN** staff.
- **TRUST** them to make independent choices.
- **EMPOWER** staff with the independence to initiate a Hold or Lock-down, 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 to initiate a Lock-down.

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

- **TRAIN FREQUENTLY.**
- **PRACTICE A HOLD AND/OR LOCK-DOWN.**
- **DRILL** in the form of table-top exercises or physical 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

We hope that after reading this, you understand that an active shooter incident or violent attack could happen at any [business](#), [school](#), mall, restaurant, movie theater, [church](#), [hospital](#), or public place. It is critical to **BE PREPARED** and have a plan in place.

At Guardian Defense, we specialize in helping your workplace create a customized training plan based on its unique needs. **As the list of these tragedies continues to grow, it is the duty of every business owner, city entity and principal to formalize plans now and prepare for an active shooter attack.**

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