



Emergency Action Planning: Violence in the Workplace



Responding to Active Threats and Violent Behavior

No one expects to become a victim of workplace violence. But since most incidents of this type end before law enforcement arrives, employees should be ready with a plan for action.

Responding appropriately to a workplace violence incident requires a survival mindset and the ability to manage emotions. Panic and fear can make it difficult to think clearly and act quickly during unthinkable stress. However, trained individuals are more likely to overcome those crippling emotions and behave deliberately.

The suggestions below offers guidance for reacting to active threats and violent behavior in the workplace.

Immediate Response Action for Supervisors

Active Response

- Assess the situation.
- Believe what you see and hear.
- Move to a safer location or away from the facility.
- Once safe, have a trained/designated individual report the incident to emergency responders and then to workplace security resources.

Remember to:

- Comply with emergency responders; avoid aggressive or threatening actions.
- Use technology to monitor unresolved situations; communicate real-time updates to affected personnel and emergency responders.
- Notify those in all potential danger zones to escape or seek shelter and barricade.
- When safe to do so, provide first aid to injured.

Suggested Actions for All Employees

Remember these key phrases as part of your education and preparedness initiatives:

Get Out, Stay Out

- Move quickly. Do not wait for others to validate your decision, and don't go back in.
- Leave belongings behind.
- Survival chances increase if you are not where the shooter is positioned, and you go where they cannot see you.

Hide Out, Spread Out

- Find a place out of the shooter's view that can be locked and/or barricaded.
- Do not huddle together with others; spreading out makes it harder for the shooter to target an individual vs. a group.
- Quietly develop a plan of action in the event the shooter enters.

Call Out

- Call 911, additional authorities and/or onsite security (designated personnel to limit the number of call-ins to emergency responders).
- Inform responders of the shooter's name, description and location, as well as the number and type of weapons.
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

To develop a more comprehensive plan, [learn more about managing the threats of workplace violence.](#)

To learn more about managing risk visit cna.com/riskcontrol.