GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RESPOND TO AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION AND REACT WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONDS

Based on
How to Survive An Active Shooter, Fort A.P. Hill, U.S. Army

Cover articles can be found at:
Las Vegas courthouse shooting highlights rising threat:

St. Louis News: ABB Shooting Leaves 3 Dead, 8 Injured:

Gunman kills 8, himself at busy Nebraska mall:

Two die, four hurt in Atlanta shootings:
PROFILE OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER
An active shooter is an individual engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations often are over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR COPING WITH AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION
- Be aware of your environment and all possible dangers
- Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit
- If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door
- If you are in a hallway, get into a room and secure the door
- As a last resort, you may choose to attempt to take the active shooter down — when the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES
Law enforcement’s goal is to locate, contain and stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.
- Officers usually arrive in teams of four
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or external ballistic vests, helmets and other tactical equipment
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns and handguns
- Officers may use pepper spray or tear gas to control the situation
- Officers may shout commands and push individuals to the ground for their safety

How to react when law enforcement arrives:
- Remain calm, and follow officers’ instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (e.g., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers, such as attempting to hold on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling
- Do not ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises

Your hiding place should:
- Be out of the active shooter’s view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (e.g., an office with a closed and locked door)
- Turn off lights
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement

INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL VIOLENCE BY AN EMPLOYEE
Employees typically do not just snap but display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. If these behaviors are recognized, they often can be managed and treated. Historically, many attackers had no prior violent criminal record.

Potentially violent behaviors may include one or more of the following (this list of behaviors is not comprehensive nor is it intended as a mechanism for diagnosing violent tendencies):
- Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Unexplained increase in absenteeism; vague physical complaints
- Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
- Depression/withdrawal
- Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures
- Repeated violations of company policies
- Increased severe mood swings
- Noticeably unstable, emotional responses
- Explosive outbursts of anger or rage without provocation
- Suicidal; comments about “putting things in order”
- Behavior that is suspect of paranoia (“everybody is against me”)
- Increasingly talks of problems at home
- Escalation of domestic problems into the workplace; talk of severe financial problems
- Talk of previous incidents of violence
- Empathy with individuals committing violence
- Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons and violent crimes