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# Active Shooter/Active Threat

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## **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

In the event of an active threat, some individuals may require some degree of assistance in responding - evacuating the building, taking shelter, etc.

If you encounter someone who needs assistance during an emergency you should attempt to assist the individual, if it is possible to do so without endangering the health and safety of either yourself or the person needing assistance.

If you know or have reason to believe that you will need assistance during an emergency you should report that information to a person of authority or others close to you as soon as possible.

## **RUN, HIDE, FIGHT:**

### **Run**

- The ideal response to an active shooter situation is to evacuate:
  - Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow;
  - Leave all non-lifesaving belongings behind;
  - Help others escape, (if possible use “buddy system”);
  - Follow the instructions of law enforcement.
- **Individuals with a disability or access and functional needs.**
  - Inform persons authority regarding gaps in the organization’s emergency plans

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- Have an accessible escape route in mind specific to their respective needs

## **Evacuation Options for Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities should evacuate to the nearest exit. Persons with disabilities have four basic evacuation options:

### **Horizontal**

- Using building exits to the outside ground level
- Go to the nearest exit stair landing, and wait for emergency personnel. If you can, contact emergency personnel and let them know your location.

### **Stairway**

- Use exit stairs to reach ground level exits from the building

### **Shelter-in-Place and wait for information**

- Unless danger is imminent, remain in a room with an exterior window, a telephone, and a solid or fire-resistant door. This option should be reserved if it is too dangerous to leave the area you are located.

### **Area of Refuge**

- Go to a marked area of refuge away from obvious danger.

### **Wheelchair Users**

- Persons using wheelchairs should stay in place, or move to an area of refuge based on the emergency.
- Notification to emergency personnel should be made as soon as possible if the individual remains in the building.

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- If the stair landing is chosen as the area of refuge, wheelchair users are advised to wait until the heavy traffic has passed before entering the stairway. Stay to the side of the landing so the stairs remain open to ensure both the safety of occupants evacuating and yourself.
- Only in situations of extreme danger should untrained people attempt to evacuate wheelchair users. Moving a wheelchair down stairs is never safe.

### **Non-Wheelchair User**

- Persons with mobility impairments, who are able to walk independently, may be able to negotiate stairs in an emergency with minor assistance.
- If danger is imminent, the individual should wait until the heavy traffic has cleared before attempting the stairs.
- If the person cannot evacuate, the person may choose to stay in the building using one of the other evacuation options mentioned above.

### **Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

- Persons with hearing impairments may not hear the threat and will need to be alerted of emergency situation.
- Emergency instructions can also be given by writing a short explicit note explaining what action(s) to take.
- While a person who has a hearing impairment can take shelter or evacuate on their own, it may be necessary to assign someone to remain with them to help relay instructions on what to do as the threat progresses.

### **Blind or Low Vision**

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- Most people with a visual impairment will be familiar with their immediate surroundings and frequently traveled routes.
- Since the emergency evacuation route is likely different from the commonly traveled route, persons who are visually impaired may need assistance in evacuating.
- The buddy should offer their elbow to the individual with a visual impairment and guide him or her through the evacuation route.
- During the evacuation the buddy should communicate as necessary to assure safe evacuation.

## **Mental Health**

- Emergencies can be very stressful experiences for anyone.
- Some individuals may experience a greater level of stress when confronted with an emergency than others.
- This may cause them to not process information as clearly or correctly, and therefore not function as well during an emergency situation.
- They may become excited, confused, appear to make irrational decisions, or even appear to freeze and not move.
- These individuals may need extra assistance in comprehending information and instructions, as well as taking steps such as responding to an active threat.
- In many cases, talking the person through what is happening and helping them to safety will resolve any problems.
- It is important to remain calm, and speak at a normal tone (calm and clear).



## **Hide**

- When evacuating is not possible, individuals should hide for safety.

Everyone should consider the following:

- Hiding places should be out of the active shooter's view;
  - An ideal hiding place will not restrict any options for movement;
  - The area should provide protection if shots are fired.
- **To minimize the chances of being found:**
    - Silence cell phones (turn off vibrate);
    - Turn off any source of noise (i.e., computers, radios, televisions, assistive devices);
    - Pull down shades or coverings;
    - Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks);
    - Remain quiet.
  - **Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.**  
Some may find it hard to hide (e.g. individuals who use wheelchairs):
    - Identify areas to hide
    - Plan with “buddies” to help with concealment
    - Use assistive equipment to secure hiding spots
    - Practice self-soothing techniques to remain calm
    - Individuals should not be separated from their personal care assistant, service animal or assistive device(s).



## **Fight**

- When evacuating or hiding are not options and an individual's life is in imminent danger, the last resort is to disrupt the active shooter(s).

This action should be decisive and encompass the following:

- Improvising weapons (e.g. fire extinguisher);
  - Yelling and throwing items;
  - Fighting within their ability;
  - Having a “Not Today” attitude (deciding that today is not the day they are going to die).
- ***Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.*** Individuals should consider using all resources to attack an active shooter (e.g. a power chair to ram an active shooter).

## **WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES**

- **Law enforcement's role is to stop the shooter. Remember:**
  - Officers will usually arrive in teams of four and wear tactical gear;
  - They may be armed with rifles, shotguns, etc.;
  - Officers will shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.
- Individuals can assist law enforcement by doing the following:
  - Putting down all items;
  - If possible, raising their hands and spreading fingers;
  - Keeping hands visible;
  - Avoiding quick movements toward officers; and

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- Avoiding asking officers for help or directions.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE**

- Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.

Individuals need to understand the importance of:

- Remaining calm;
- Staying put until cleared by law enforcement;
- Utilizing self-soothing techniques
- Following officers' instructions;
- Using the "Buddy System"

## **COMMUNICATING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- Individuals with a disability or an access and functional need.
  - All witnesses will be held and interviewed.
  - When possible, communicate the following to 911 operators:
    - Description/Location/Number of shooters;
    - Type of weapons being used;
    - Number of potential victims;
    - AFN-specific needs.



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*Taken from "Active Shooter Awareness Guidance", California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, September, 2016, Cal OES Law Enforcement Division*

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