



# Responding to a Mass Attack

*Think through the steps you would take to prepare, protect yourself and help others if ever involved in a mass attack.*

## Types of Mass Attacks

- Active shooter: Individuals using firearms to cause mass casualties.
- Individuals using a vehicle to cause mass casualties.
- Individuals using homemade bombs to cause mass casualties.
- Other methods of mass attacks may include knives, fires, drones or other weapons.

## Be Informed

- **Stay Alert.** Always be aware of your environment and any possible dangers.
- **If you see something, say something** to local authorities. That includes suspicious packages, people behaving strangely, or someone using strange communications.
- **Observe warning signs.** Signs might include unusual or violent communications, expressed anger or intent to cause harm and substance abuse. These warning signs may increase over time.
- **Have an exit plan.** Identify exits and areas to hide wherever you go, including work, school and special events.
- **Learn lifesaving skills.** Take trainings such as *You Are the Help Until Help Arrives* and first aid to assist the wounded before help arrives.

## Survive During

Focus on Run. Hide. Fight. Do not worry about social distancing, wearing a mask, or reducing the spread of COVID-19 during an active shooter situation.

## Run to Safety

- Seek safety. Getting away from the attacker is the top priority.
- Leave your belongings behind and get away. It is more important to run to safety.
- Call 9-1-1 when you are safe and describe the attacker, location and weapons.

## Cover and Hide

- If you can't evacuate, cover and hide. Find a place to hide out of view of the attacker and if possible, put a solid barrier between yourself and the threat. Lock and block doors, close blinds and turn off lights. Keep silent.

## Help the Wounded

- Take care of yourself first and then, if you are able, help the wounded get to safety and provide immediate care. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

## Defend, Disrupt, Fight

- **Fight only as a last resort.** When you can't run or cover, attempt to disrupt the attack or disable the attacker.
- Be aggressive and commit to your actions.
- Recruit others to ambush the attacker with makeshift weapons like chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors, books, etc.
- Be prepared to cause severe or lethal injury to the attacker.

## Be Safe AFTER

### When Law Enforcement Arrives

- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Keep hands visible and empty.
- Report to designated areas to provide information and get help.
- **Follow law enforcement's instructions** and evacuate in the direction they tell you to.

## Monitor Communications

- Listen to law enforcement's messages for information about the situation. Share updates with family and friends.
- Utilize the Public Information Officer's expertise rather than making public statements if representing an organization.

## Consider Seeking Professional Help

- Be mindful of your health. If needed, seek help for you and your family to cope with the trauma. Engage virtually with your community through video and phone calls. Know that it's normal to feel anxious or stressed. Take care of your body and talk to someone if you are feeling upset. Many people may already feel fear and anxiety. The threat of an active shooter can add additional stress.
- Follow CDC guidance for [managing stress during a traumatic event](#) .

## Associated Content:

- [RUN, HIDE, FIGHT.® Surviving an Active Shooter Event - English](#) (Video)
- [Active Shooter Information Sheet](#) (PDF)
- [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Active Shooter Preparedness Resources](#) (Training, videos, brochures and more for individualized audiences link)
- [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Active Shooter Preparedness Resources Translated](#)
- [Protective Actions Research for Active Shooter](#)