



## ACTIVE ASSAILANT PREPAREDNESS: What You Can Do

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office wants to help you create a safe environment for yourself, your colleagues and your family by keeping you informed of the latest threats and crime trends as well as provide tools that can help keep you safe. The Sheriff's Office offers the following information to provide guidance on how to prepare for and respond to an active assailant crisis situation.

### PROFILE OF AN ACTIVE ASSAILANT:

An Active Assailant is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, Active Assailants use firearms(s) and there is no method to their selection of victims. Active Assailant situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly.

Hopefully, the immediate deployment of law enforcement will stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because Active Assailant situations are often over in minutes, sometimes before law enforcement arrives on the scene, we encourage you to read the following recommendations on how you can protect yourself.





## OPTIONS ON HOW TO RESPOND TO AN ACTIVE ASSAILANT SITUATION

Determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Please remember that the way you choose to respond (or not respond) in a leadership role may cause others to follow your actions.

### 1. RUN

- If there is a known escape path, attempt to evacuate the area under immediate threat.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Leave your belongings behind. Take your phone only if it's safe to do so.
- Once in a safe area, prevent individuals from entering an area where the Active Assailant may be.
- Keep your hands visible to responding officers.
- Follow the instructions of any police officer.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 911 when you are safe. Avoid calling others; only call 911.

### 2. RETREAT (HIDE)

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the Active Assailant is less likely to find you.

### YOUR HIDING PLACE SHOULD:

- Be out of the Active Assailant's view.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door).
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement. If you can, find a room that can provide you with an escape route.

### ONCE YOU HAVE HIDDEN:

- Lock the door.
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture or at least restrict quick entrance.
- If you don't have a cell phone with you, look for a phone to call 911.
- Turn out the lights.

### IF THE ASSAILANT IS NEARBY:

- Silence your cell phone and/or pager.
- Turn off any source of noise.
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks).
- Remain quiet.



## IF RUNNING AND HIDING ARE NOT POSSIBLE:

- Remain calm.
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the Active Assailant's location. If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

## 3. RESIST

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, you must take aggressive action against the Active Assailant. It is important to be committed to your actions. The Active Assailant is committed to doing you harm, therefore you must be equally committed to your actions by acting as aggressively as possible against him/her, or multiple assailants.

- If you are in a room with no escape, put barriers in front of the entrance to trip or confuse the assailant.
- Throw items and/or improvise weapons; work as a team if possible. Use items such as chairs, brooms, lamps, coffee pots, a large hole punch, heavy garbage cans, coat racks, or loop your belt through a heavy item to swing.
- **SPEED, SURPRISE and VIOLENCE OF ACTION** are your best chance to combat an Active Assailant. (SPEED refers to the quickness of the action, SURPRISE is the element of precise timing and effective planning, and VIOLENCE OF ACTION refers to the noise, confusion, and tactics employed by your team).
- Turn out the lights.

## HOW TO ACT WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES

Law enforcement's first purpose is to stop the Active Assailant as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area where the sounds of violence were last heard.

- Officers will arrive in small teams, or, in rare circumstances, alone.
- Officers may wear regular patrol uniforms or may be dressed in attire you have never seen before.
- Officers may be armed with rifles, shotguns and/or handguns.
- Officers may shout commands, and may push individuals to the ground for their safety.

## How to act when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions.
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets), and immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 911 when you are safe. Avoid calling others; only call 911.





## THE FIRST OFFICERS TO ARRIVE ON THE SCENE WILL NOT STOP TO HELP INJURED PERSONS:

- Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers.
- These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons.
- Once you have reached a safe location or assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control and all witnesses have been identified. If you contact family or friends, advise them you are safe, and not to come to the scene at this time.



*Note: The above information has been provided to you courtesy of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office and is a compilation of materials gathered from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security, and the New York Police Department.*