



Office of Public Safety & Security

Active Shooter Safety Guidelines

The Office of Public Safety & Security (OPSS) is establishing these guidelines as what you should do in the event of an *active shooter* on campus. Please note that *active shooter* incidents on colleges and universities are rare; however, the OPSS is aware that these incidents instill much fear and anxiety. In 2013, the OPSS provided the Saint Joseph's University community with access to two *active shooter* training videos: *Shots Fired When Lightning Strikes* on the Nest website – School Services tab, Emergency Preparedness section under Emergency Preparedness Videos. These videos provide training as to how you should respond to an *active shooter* on campus.

Due to the fact that most of these incidents are over within minutes, students, faculty and staff must be prepared to deal with the situation until first responders arrive. These situations are unpredictable, but there are a few steps that can be taken immediately to protect yourself and possibly others. These situations evolve rapidly; therefore, quick decisions could mean the difference between life and death. If you are in harm's way, you will need to decide what the safest course of action will be based on the scenario that is unfolding before you.

In an *active shooter* situation, you should quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. You should decide to respond as follows:

1. **Run:** If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises immediately
2. **Hide:** If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the *active shooter* is less likely to find you
3. **Fight:** As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the *active shooter*

Definition:

An *active shooter* is a scenario in which one or more individuals participate in a random or systematic, killing spree demonstrating their intent to kill or harm others. An *active shooter* is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined space or other populated area. In most cases, *active shooters* use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

Objective:

An *active shooter's* objective is that of mass murder, rather than committing traditional criminal acts, such as robbery, assault, kidnapping or hostage-taking.

Patterns:

Most *active shooter* situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. *Active shooters* usually will continue to move throughout a building or area until stopped by law enforcement, suicide, or other intervention. *Active shooter* attacks are dynamic incidents that vary greatly from one to another.

How to respond:

Run: If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises immediately

- Warn individuals not to enter an area where the *active shooter* may be
- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the *active shooter* may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so and Public Safety at 610-660-1111, providing:
 - Location of the shooter(s)
 - Number of shooters
 - Physical description of shooter(s)
 - Number and type of weapons held by shooter(s)
 - Number of potential victims at the location

Hide: If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the *active shooter* is less likely to find you

- Your hiding place should:
 - Be out of the shooter's view
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
 - Do not trap yourself or restrict your options for movement
- To prevent an *active shooter* from entering your hiding place:
 - Lock the door
 - Blockade the door with heavy furniture
 - Close, cover and move away from windows

- Keeping yourself safe:
 - Silence your cell phone and/or pager (even the vibration setting can give away a hiding position)
 - Hide behind large items (e.g., cabinets, desks)
 - If necessary, lay on the floor, but away from the bottoms of doors to avoid detection
 - Remain quiet
- Consider the difference between cover and concealment. Cover will protect from gunfire and concealment will merely hide you from the view of the shooter. Choose the best space that is available quickly.

Fight: As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the *active shooter*

- Active resistance is a last resort and should only be used if potential victims are trapped in a room with an *active shooter* or there are already victims and all other personal survival recommendations are no longer an option
- Persons should:
 - Act as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throw items and/or use improvised weapons (e.g., chairs, bats, letter openers)
 - Yell
 - Commit to your actions

Note: Do not attempt to reason with the *active shooter* as he/she is focused on killing or harming you; remain determined and, again, stay committed to your actions

What to expect when law enforcement arrives:

- Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the *active shooter* as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard. Other information is as follows:
 - Officers may shout commands and may push individuals to the ground for their safety
 - The first officers to arrive to 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; they may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises
- When law enforcement officials arrive, it is important that you:
 - Remain calm and follow instructions
 - Put down any items and immediately raise your hands while spreading your fingers
 - Avoid making any sudden movements
 - Keep your hands visible at all times
 - Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling

- Do not ask officers for help while you are being evacuated from the scene; rescue personnel will be in a safe area to provide assistance
- Once you have reached a safe location or an 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 and questioned.
- Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

Summary:

- Believe what you see and hear
- Trust your gut instinct
- Understand that your actions matter
- Commit to your actions
- Continually think about your next move

Action Steps:

- Call 911 when it is safe to do so
- Call Public Safety at 610-660-1111; you should store the Public Safety phone number in your cell phone
- Know where the two nearest exits are
- If you know of someone who talks about: guns, harming others or themselves, talk with admiration about suspects in *active shooter* incidents or is planning an *active shooter* event or mass killings, LET SOMEONE KNOW by calling 911 or calling Public Safety at 610-660-1111 or report the information anonymously at 610-660-1114 or by placing a message in the Tip Drop Box located in the Drexel Library on the first floor or by completing the Tip Form on the Public Safety website

You can call the OPSS at 610-660-1111 or X1111 to get more information.