Emergencies involving violence are unfortunately a real possibility in today’s workplace. This can also include encountering an active shooter on the premises. One of your job responsibilities is to be prepared and know how to respond should such an emergency occur at your workplace. Knowing the proper procedures to follow during an emergency could mean the difference between life and death.

The purpose of this program is to familiarize you with basic response practices when encountering workplace violence, practices that will help you to be prepared for and to respond to a violent emergency.

Topics include indicators of potentially violent behavior, how to respond to violent behavior, how to respond to an active shooter situation and how to react when law enforcement arrives at an active shooter scene.

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:** After watching the program, the participant should:

- What some of the indicators of potentially violent behavior are and why they should be reported;
- How to properly respond when someone displays violent behavior;
- How to respond properly to a situation involving an active shooter;
- How to react appropriately when law enforcement arrives on an active shooter scene.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE**

**GENERAL PREPAREDNESS**

- Become familiar with exits, evacuation routes, storm shelters and designated meeting places that the facility uses should an emergency force an evacuation of the premises.
- Many facilities have a trained first response team to deal with injuries and medical emergencies. Make sure you know how to summon this team if needed.
- You should also know the closest location of a phone, which will allow you to contact 911 or other offsite emergency responders.
- Training and preparation help ensure a calm response to emergencies. This is why it is so important to participate in emergency drills and response training when they occur.
- Take all of your emergency response training seriously. Ask questions and make sure you fully understand the training you receive.
- Should an emergency involving violence occur, remember to stay calm. Use your response training to work toward the best possible outcome for you and your coworkers.

**INDICATORS OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

- It is not always possible to predict when a co-worker or other person is going to become violent, but you should know the indicators of potentially violent behavior and report it to the proper authority.
- One such sign is the increased use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Another indicator is an unexplained increase in absenteeism or a pattern of vague complaints about their physical well-being.
- Depression or withdrawal is also an indicator that someone has the potential to become violent, as are severe mood swings and noticeably unstable or emotional responses.
- Workers who are susceptible to violence often talk about their problems at home and make unsolicited comments about violence, firearms, other dangerous weapons and violent crimes.
- If you notice one or more of these indicators of potential violent behavior, you should alert your human resources department or other authority responsible for handling such matters.
- Of course, it’s human nature to not want to get involved or report a co-worker to management, but doing so can get them appropriate help, if needed, and may also prevent a violent incident.

**RESPONDING TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR**

- If someone is displaying violent behavior to you directly, how you respond can help diffuse the situation.
- Remember to stay calm and keep your arms in a low, non-threatening position. Don’t cross your arms or make fists.
- Try to stay at least five feet away from the other person and avoid contact.
- If the other person grabs you, try to break free and get away. If you can’t get away, call out for help.
- When confronted, do not escalate the situation into a fight. Get away from the person by whatever means possible and immediately report the situation to your supervisor or security.

**DEFINITION OF AN ‘ACTIVE SHOOTER’**

- During the past few years, there has seemingly been an alarming increase in the number of workplace violence incidents that have involved an “active shooter.”
An active shooter can be defined as “an individual actively 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.”

In most workplace active shooter scenarios, the gunman is usually a disgruntled employee or former employee or a family member of an employee or former employee.

RESPONDING TO AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

- Knowing how to respond to the situation and then doing so often means the difference between life and death.
- If an active shooter is in your vicinity, quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life.
- If you can get out without exposing yourself to additional danger, do so as quickly as possible.
- Leave your personal belongings behind and alert others to the danger as you exit.
- Do not sound a fire alarm, as this may put others in harm’s way as they evacuate from a safe area to an area that is the path of the gunman.
- When evacuating, make sure to keep your hands visible to indicate to others that you are not the shooter.
- It may be safer for you to stay where you are and hide if you are in a secure area that isn’t under immediate attack.
- Lock yourself in a room if possible and stay out of sight. If the door cannot be locked, block the door with large, heavy objects and turn out the lights.
- Stay calm and quiet if the shooter is in the vicinity. Turn off radios, computers and cell phones and close any blinds on windows.
- If you decide to hide, spread out and do not huddle with co-workers. It is much easier for a gunman to shoot a group of people rather than individuals.
- Whether you can evacuate safely or must hide, call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so. Keep in mind that others may be doing the same and tying up phone lines, so stay patient.
- When talking to authorities, report as much specific information as possible about your location, number of other people, any injuries and a description of the suspect. Report the shooter’s identity if known and the number and types of weapons displayed.
- As a last resort, you may have to fight back in order to survive. Remember, the gunman will continue to kill unless he is stopped.
- If you are faced with this situation, and decide that your only choice is to fight, you must be as aggressive as you possibly can and do whatever it takes to survive.
- If others are with you, work together as a group to distract and overcome the attacker.
- Yell, throw objects and use whatever you can find as a weapon to disable or subdue the attacker. Remember fighting back is your last resort, but once you decide to do so you must make every effort to survive.

REACTING APPROPRIATELY WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES

- It is also important to react appropriately when law enforcement arrives on the scene. You do not want law enforcement to mistake you for the shooter or perceive you as a threat.
- When you first notice an officer, raise your hands immediately and spread your fingers.
- Remain calm and follow the officers’ instructions. Keep your hands visible at all times.
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as attempting to grab or hold onto them for safety.
- Remain calm when speaking to officers; avoid pointing or screaming.
- Don’t stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which the officers are entering the premises.
- Remember, law enforcement’s primary objective is to immediately locate and stop the gunman. Victims and the injured will be evacuated only when the threat has been eliminated.