



MEMORANDUM

To: School Staff
From: Secure/ Higher Ed Staff
Date: June 28, 2017
Re: Active Shooter Response

This memo should not be taken to mean that we have identified an immediate threat to your school community: we have not. But we believe that it is generally useful for each staff member to think about and plan for the unlikely possibility of an active shooter situation.

Each staff member should have a plan for their classroom or work area as to what to do if an active shooter event takes place. The plan should include: (1) the fastest and easiest means of evacuation if the location of the shooter is discernable; (2) a means of locking and/or barricading the door to the classroom or work area; (3) a means of obstructing the vision of the shooter if the classroom or work area has a window that is accessible to the shooter (or a place in the work area or classroom where staff and students can hide from the shooter's vision); (4) a means of counter-attacking the shooter if the lock and/or barricade fails; and (5) a means of notifying authorities that an active shooter incident is taking place.

Active shooter events are unpredictable and take place very quickly. They are often over in just a few minutes. Therefore, a small amount of preparation now can save many lives during an active shooter incident, which will be characterized by confusion and panic.

Active shooter incidents frequently begin with people hearing what they believe are firecrackers. If you hear the sound of firecrackers in the school, assume the worst and immediately implement your active shooter plan for your area.

A few tips for running:

- Run fast and straight toward cover.
- To maximize speed, run on the balls of your feet, hold the arms at the elbow at a 90-degree angle, and pump the arms at the shoulder so that your fist goes from the chin to the hip. The faster you pump your arms, the faster your legs will carry you. Breathe through the mouth. For a video demonstration of running technique, see <http://www.securehighered.com/jonathan-johnson-get-away-fast>.
- If you are physically able, practice running fast when you exercise.

A few tips for locking down:



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- The work area or classroom that appears empty may be less interesting to the active shooter, so silence (including silencing cell phone ringers) and turning off lights can be helpful.
- The heavier and larger the barricade the better, but you must weigh barricade construction (which is noisy) against the benefit of making the classroom or work area appear empty.
- Try and find a suitable escape route (e.g., through a window) should the barricade or lock fail.
- Do not assume authorities have been notified, but you must also weigh the need for silence against your present ability to give notification.

If you are forced to hide without a locked or barricaded door:

- Hide behind something that appears thick enough to stop a bullet.
- Hide behind something that obstructs the shooter's view of you.
- Hide where you have escape options should you be detected.

As a last resort, you may be forced to counter-attack. In that event, remember:

- An improvised weapon is better than no weapon at all. The best projectile (thrown) weapons found in the classroom are heavy but relatively small, such as staplers, cell phones, baseballs, and paperweights, followed by text books, hard-heeled shoes, binders, and laptops. Your classroom may contain other items that are effective. If you have time, get the best projectile weapons you have into the hands of the best throwers in the classroom (e.g., baseball or softball players or someone you know to be athletically gifted) but only if those throwers appear capable of launching a counter-attack. A weapon in the hands of someone frozen with panic will not be effective.
- Hand weapons found in the classroom include baseball bats, scissors, and bags (e.g., backpacks, book bags, purses, and gym bags) with one or more heavy and solid item inside.
- Even a Sharpie pen or magic marker is more effective than no weapon at all. Hold the pen in your fist with an end protruding from either side of your fist and drive the end of the pen like you would an ice pick, striking hard against areas where the bone is not heavily covered in muscle: the head, spinal cord, sternum, hip, and ribs, for example. Other effective areas include the eyes, throat, and groin.
- The element of surprise enhances the effectiveness of the counter-attack against the shooter.
- Counter-attacks from multiple directions enhance the effectiveness of the counter-attack against the shooter. You must weigh this against compromising the element of surprise.



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- Work with others as a team.
- Do not stop the counter-attack until the shooter is incapacitated.
- Commit to your actions and act aggressively.

When contacting 911:

- Immediately state “Active shooter at [insert school name]”.
- To the extent you know and have time, also describe the shooter(s) and their location, the location of possible hostages or people nearby the shooter(s), weapons held by the shooter(s), and the number of wounded and their locations.
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen. Turn down your receiver as the dispatcher will be asking questions and trying to get you to speak.

When first-responders arrive:

- Their first priority is to stop the shooter.
- They, like you, will be under extreme stress.
- As best you can, remain calm and follow instructions.
- Understand that help for the wounded is on the way.

Many first responders are looking for places to train personnel for active shooter situations. Volunteering your campus for this training increases the safety of your school community because the first responders will be familiar with your campus. Contact your state or local police for more information.

Obviously, no one can consider every contingency in this situation. **The most important thing is that you think about what you would do in an active shooter situation, and have some sort of plan in place to escape, lock down, hide, and as a last resort fight should one occur.**

About Secure/ Higher Ed: Secure/ Higher Ed (S/HE) provides evidence-based, age-appropriate safety training concerning how to avoid, escape, and fight back against criminal attacks. Programs are based on legal, criminological, psychological, and medical research. S/HE offers campus training and training for parents and their children. To schedule a training go to <http://www.securehighered.com> and click “Contact”.

About S/HE Staff: S/HE Staff consists of professionals in the fields of psychology, offender treatment and incarceration, law, medicine, law enforcement, Title IX and sexual harassment investigation, education, martial arts, empirical research, athletics, toxicology, military service, and survivor advocacy.