

ACTIVE SHOOTER

STATEMENT:

Wittenberg University has many processes/procedures and works continuously to provide a safe environment for our students, staff, faculty, and the surrounding community. Active shooter incidents cannot be predicted, as there is no true, reliable profile of an active shooter, therefore training regarding response is the key to mitigating loss.

DEFINITIONS:

Active Shooter: A person or persons, armed with a gun (or guns), who appears to be actively engaged in killing, or attempting to kill, people on the campus property or surrounding property. This is very different from a hostage situation. An active shooter may be a stranger, a student, staff, or faculty member, or any other person who intends on harming, and or killing people. An active shooter may employ other weapons (knives, Improvised Explosive Devices [IEDs]) to harm victims, to achieve their goals or to delay responding police and emergency staff.

Cover: A physical barrier to bullets/projectiles

Conceal: A place you can hide and not be seen.

Behaviors of concern: Examples of behaviors of concern may include a new or obsessive fascination with weapons and/or violence, veiled or overt threats of harm; intimidating others, expressing unrequited obsession with one person; blaming or dehumanizing others; withdrawing or becoming isolated; holding a grudge; demonstrating attendance, behavior or performance problems; expressing extreme desperation over financial, family, personal or current events; expressing belief that “everyone is against me.”

PROCEDURE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide people with “survivor-protector” strategies to respond to and mitigate an active shooter situation within this university. The focus must be “survive and protect.” Remember, no pre-plan will equal the wrong plan.

A. Always assess your work environment for:

1. Exits and ways you could safely evacuate
2. Places you could take cover or hide
3. Any individuals who do not appear to “belong” in the facility
4. Objects that can be used to defend yourself or used to barricade an entry point

B. Alert your supervisor, Wittenberg Police, Human Resources, Student Development and/or Academic Advisors if you believe someone is exhibiting potentially violent behavior. Indicators of potentially violent behavior include one or more of the following:

1. Increased use of alcohol or illegal drugs
2. Unexplained increase in absenteeism and/or vague physical complaints
3. Depression/withdrawal
4. Increased severe mood swings and noticeably unstable or emotional responses.
5. Increased talking of problems at home

6. Increase in unsolicited comments about violence, firearms and other dangerous weapons and violent crimes
- C. Report any behaviors or issues of concern to your supervisor or leader immediately and/or Wittenberg Police. Alert Wittenberg Police, Human Resources, Student Development and/or Academic Advisors of any personal issue of concern (e.g. personal threats of harm outside the University from a spouse, ex-spouse, relative, acquaintance) so that they may alert Wittenberg Police and others as deemed necessary for the protection of our campus.
- D. If an active shooter OR a *suspected* active shooter comes into your area, you hear gun shots (or suspect you hear gunshots), hear unusual sounds or noises that cause alarm, or hear sounds of violence, do not take time to investigate/verify the danger - immediately determine the most reasonable way to save your life. This is a decision that only you can make and can be done by remembering the FOUR A's:
1. **A**cept -that this is a real situation. Do not stop to question, discuss or confirm your suspicions with others.
 2. **A**ssess – quickly and continuously. Where is the shooter? Where are the safest exits? Where are these places to hide and barricade?
 3. **A**CT
 - a) **R**UN –away from the active shooter –suspected shooter if you can safely do so. Alert others you may encounter and encourage them to follow you but **DO NOT STOP** running.
 - i. **DO NOT** stop to gather your belongings –leave them.
 - ii. **DO NOT** stop to coax another into leaving but do request others to follow your lead as you keep moving.
 - iii. **DO NOT** stop to attend to wounded individuals you may encounter.
 - iv. **DO NOT** huddle together with other people – moving targets are more difficult to track and shoot.
 - b) **H**IDE
 - i. If you cannot safely run, then take cover and/or conceal yourself.
 - ii. Try to encourage others to follow your lead, but do not stop to try and force someone to follow you.
 - iii. Take cover – place a barrier between you and the shooter. Try to leave yourself enough room so you will not be trapped.
 - iv. Try to take cover in a room that locks and/or has something to use as a barricade. Quickly turn off the lights, close shades/blinds.

- i. SILENCE any cell phone or pager –even a vibration may alert the shooter to your hiding place.
 - ii. Stay hidden/concealed/covered until law enforcement arrives and instructs you to leave.
- b) FIGHT
- i. If you are trapped and cannot hide or escape – Do not try to negotiate or reason with the shooter. You may decide to take aggressive action against the shooter. This is a personal decision and can only be made by you.
 - ii. Think about things you could throw at the shooter. Sharp objects (Scissors), heavy objects such as a fire extinguisher, chair, or materials you can throw in the shooter’s face (e.g. hot liquid, contents of a fire extinguisher, chemicals, etc.)
 - iii. Consider if there is any way to incapacitate the shooter’s hands e.g. with a heavy object; wrap in a blanket/towel/jacket, etc.
 - iv. If there are a number of people present, consider ways to surround and bring the shooter down e.g. blanket or clothing thrown over his/her head.

4. **A**lert

- a) When you are in a safe place and it is safe to do so:
- b) Call 911. If possible try to provide the 911 operator with the following information:
 - i. Your name, location and that you have an active shooter.
 - ii. The number of and suspected location of the active shooter(s)
 - iii. Physical description of the active shooter (to the best of your ability –do not leave your hiding place to look)
 - iv. Number and type of weapons held by the active shooter(s)
 - v. Number of potential victims

5. If you are in a location distant from the active shooter:

- a) Remain calm and if evacuation is an option – take it immediately. Running/evacuating is probably the best option for survival.
- b) Warn any people in your area as you escape (but do not stop to try and convince others to leave).
- c) If escape is not possible, move quickly and go to a room (rooms) that can be locked and/or barricaded.
- d) Turn off lights, close blinds and shades.
- e) Barricade the doors.
- f) Keep yourself out of sight and down below windows.

- g) If it is safe to do so - Call 911 and try to provide the 911 operator with the following information:
 - i. Your name, building name, location and that you have an active shooter.
 - ii. The number of and suspected location of the active shooter(s)
 - iii. Physical description of the active shooter (to the best of your ability –do not leave your hiding place to look)
 - iv. Number and type of weapons held by the active shooter(s)
 - v. Number of potential victims
 - h) Consider silencing your cell phone, pager or radio. Use your judgment to determine if keeping an open line of communication is worth the risk of alerting the shooter to your location.
 - i) Remain in your hiding place until directed by law enforcement to exit.
6. Police and other law enforcement officers responding to an active shooter situation are trained to proceed immediately to the areas in which shots were last heard with the goal to STOP the shooting as quickly as possible, The first officers may be dressed in normal patrol uniforms or may be wearing external ballistic vests, Kevlar helmets and other tactical gear. They may be heavily armed with rifles, shotguns and handguns.
7. The objectives of the responding law enforcement officers are (in this order):
- a) Immediately engage or contain the active shooter(s) to stop the killing.
 - b) Identify any other threats such as explosive devices.
 - c) Identify victims and facilitate emergency medical care, interviews and support.
 - d) Investigate
8. When law enforcement arrives it is important for your safety that you react in the following way:
- Remember at that point, they do not know who you are or if you are the shooter.**
- a) Immediately raise your hands above your head with fingers spread.
 - b) Keep hands visible at all times.
 - c) Do not scream, yell, point or make any sudden moves.
 - d) Avoid making any moves towards the officers –such as clinging to them for safety.
 - e) Do not run to or attempt to move victims.
 - f) Do exactly as the law enforcement officers say.
 - g) Follow the law enforcement officer’s instructions – do not question or resist them. If instructed to do so, evacuate quietly –hands visible –proceed in the direction from which the officers are entering the area.
 - h) Do not attempt to engage the law enforcement officers in discussion. Stay alert and continue to assess the situation.

9. Remember that the violence may be over quickly but there may be an extensive crime scene to secure.
10. For the safety of yourself and any potential victims/survivors, do not speak with media until cleared to do so by law enforcement and University Communications.