



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS
Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A.,
Associated Country Women of the World
and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide Surviving an Active Shooter Event - Avoid, Deny, Defend

OBJECTIVE:

Learn how to survive an active shooter event (Avoid, Deny, Defend™), the reasons a shooter commits acts of terror, what to expect from law enforcement and medical services and prepare for the aftermath to "SURVIVE."

INTRODUCTION:

Over the years, we've seen response times shorten and the capabilities of law enforcement increase. As a result of increased public awareness, many citizens have asked what individuals can do to protect themselves and reduce the dangers faced during one of these events. [Avoid | Deny | Defend™](#) has been developed as an easy to remember method for individuals to follow - as we've seen that hiding and hoping isn't a very effective strategy.

LESSON:

What is an Active Shooter Event?

An active shooter event involves one or more persons engaged in killing or attempting to kill multiple people in an area occupied by multiple unrelated individuals.

Active shooter events continue to increase in their frequency. In some situations, it is clear that those who would conduct such a horrific act of violence against innocent unarmed victims seem to be learning from both the successes and the failures of their demented predecessors. We will attempt to identify the common traits of these murderers and what motivates them to one day wake up and commit mass murder.

The Shooter

There is no set profile of an active shooter. They come from all walks of society. Their motivations for committing such acts range from retribution for a perceived injustice, to a full-blown act of terror, to achieving a social or political goal. Regardless of their motivation to commit mass murder, their mindsets appear to be similar in most events:

Deliberate: Most are deliberate in their actions. Although all wake up one morning and initiate their murderous rampage, most have been planning or fantasizing about the act for an extended period of time.

Focused: Once the decision has been made, they are focused on the task at hand. Those who target a specific person or persons will move with great focus to murder their targets and anyone who may get in their way.

Detached: In many shooters' minds, they consider their targets as subhuman. They have dehumanized their victims in their own minds in order to accomplish their murderous rampages.

Bully: Although many who commit such acts claim to have been bullied themselves, once they take on the role of executioner, they become what they claim is the reason behind their actions.

Suicidal: Over half of the shooters commit suicide. Some appear to have taken their own lives once they murdered the target of their rage; while others appear to take actions to self-terminate once confronted by an equal or superior force.

The Location

The location of an active event varies from case to case; however, one thing is consistent: the number of victims as it relates to the shooter's motivation. A shooter who commits workplace violence usually targets a specific person or group of persons to target. While a person who targets a large number of persons usually has a grievance against society as a whole.

Active Shooter Event Locations over the last decade:

- 40% in Businesses
- 29% in Schools
- 19% Outdoors
- 12% in Other Places

When Police Arrive

The active shooter call will bring a multi-agency response. Uniformed officers will normally be the first on the scene; however, this is not always true. Detectives and other plain clothed officers will hear the radio call and respond to the call as well. Most plain-clothed officers will wear something that will identify themselves as a police officer, but these are sometimes subtle. It is important to understand this when the guy that looks like a drug dealer (because he is an undercover detective) is giving you a command and holding a weapon. Look at the person's waistband or around his neck for a badge or identification.

It is important for you to know that law enforcement works off priorities during an active shooter call. Their first priority is to move in, bypassing wounded and confronting the shooter. Once the shooter has been stopped, they will then begin providing medical aid to those most seriously injured and clearing the remainder of the building of any potential threats and injured victims.

It is also important to understand that these scenes will be chaotic. Try to understand the scene from the officers' points of view. They do not know who you are and have been trained to treat everyone as "unknown" until they have positively identified you as no threat. Officers will also be experiencing high levels of stress and, just like the general public, some handle these situations better than others.


It is vital that you respond to the officers appropriately. Keep your hands visible at all times unless otherwise ordered. Follow all commands, regardless of whether you think their commands are reasonable or not. You should be prepared to be handcuffed or restrained in your movement. If you know of another threat inside the area, notify officers of the threat as soon as practical. You may be asked to do something against your internal policy. The officer's orders trump your company or school policies. Do what they say.

Medical Issues

In most circumstances, emergency medical service personnel will not enter the scene until it has been deemed safe by law enforcement. This means that law enforcement and others trapped inside the structure will have to be the initial medical providers for many of the victims. Gunshot wounds and other penetrating trauma causes bleeding, sometimes massive bleeding that must be quickly controlled. You may be asked by law enforcement to assist. If you are willing and capable of helping, let them know and then follow their instructions.

Preparing for the Aftermath

Understand that this will be a traumatic event. Expect that even if you escape the event unscathed physically, you will more than likely experience both mental and emotional trauma. Many survivors of active shooter events report having symptoms of shock, nightmares, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and survivor's guilt. It is important that companies, schools and communities have critical incident stress management plans to deal with these often-unseen wounds that occur because of the event.

 Watch the video: Avoid | Deny | Defend on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0lt68YxLQQ>) for an overview of how to save your life in an active attack event. (11:33 minutes)

Always remember - What You Do Matters.

AVOID starts with your state of mind

- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Have an exit plan.
- Move away from the source of the threat as quickly as possible.
- The more distance and barriers between you and the threat, the better.

DENY when getting away is difficult or maybe impossible

- Keep distance between you and the source.
- Create barriers to prevent or slow down a threat from getting to you.
- Turn the lights off.
- Remain out of sight and quiet by hiding behind large objects and silence your phone.

DEFEND because you have the right to protect yourself

- If you cannot Avoid or Deny be prepared to defend yourself. •
- Be aggressive and committed to your actions.
- Do not fight fairly.

THIS IS ABOUT SURVIVAL.

Be "That Guy" In Your Community

Most of us strive to not be "That Guy." Normally the term has a negative connotation associated with it and is to be avoided at all costs. And trust me, none of us wants to see you as the traditional "That Guy." However, we encourage you to be "That Guy" when it comes to understanding civilian response to active shooter events - what to do until - and when law enforcement arrives.

We want you to be "That Guy" when people need someone to turn to for information about how to respond to active shooter events. We encourage you to read through this Avoid | Deny | Defend™ information and share it with your friends, family, neighbors and community.

We want you to be That Guy who shares this lifesaving, rational plan for Avoiding, Denying and Defending themselves when faced with an active shooter event. Remember that "hiding and wishing for it to be over" are never the most effective responses for survival.

What you do matters. Spread the word. In the Workplace. In the Community. Anywhere.

These simple steps can help increase survival in your workplace, your church, your school and other areas in your community. Please feel free to share these vital options - and remind your family and friends to:

- Know your Surroundings.
- Have a Plan.
- Use Will Power.
- Choose to Survive.


LESSON OVERVIEW:

What is an Active Shooter event, Why shooters shoot, What to expect from Police and Medical services, Prepare for the aftermath of an event and be “The Guy” in your community helping everyone to be prepared.

LESSON SUMMARY:

Hope Surviving an Active Shooter Event has given you an increased awareness of how to protect yourself and your family by knowing about the shooter’s reasons for shooting, locations where shooters target their acts of terror, what to expect of law enforcement and medical services, aftermath of the emotional trauma and be “That Guy” in the community to share these lifesaving tips with others to “Survive.”

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

 Watch the Avoid | Deny | Defend video below on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0lt68YxLQQ>) for an overview of how to save your life in an active attack event. Always remember - What You Do Matters. (11:33 minutes) Print and handout: Avoid, Deny, Defend.pdf

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SOURCES/REFERENCES: Developed by the ALERRT™ Center at Texas State University
<https://www.dontnamethem.org>

AVOID | DENY | DEFEND

Since 2002, the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT)[™] program at Texas State University has been used to train law enforcement officers across the nation in how to rapidly respond to dangerous active threat situations.

Over the years we've seen response times shorten and the capabilities of law enforcement increase. As a result of increased public awareness, many citizens have asked what they can do to protect themselves and reduce the dangers faced during one of these events. As we've seen that hiding and hoping isn't a very effective strategy, Avoid Deny Defend[®] has been developed as an easy to remember method for civilians of all ages and abilities to follow.

AVOID | DENY | DEFEND[™]

During an act of violence (robbery, hostage situation, workplace violence, active shooter, etc):

AVOID starts with your state of mind.

- Pay attention to your surroundings
- Have an exit plan
- Move away from the source of the threat as quickly as possible
- The more distance and barriers between you and the threat, the better

DENY when getting away is difficult or maybe even impossible.

- Keep distance between you and the source
- Create barriers to prevent or slow down a threat from getting to you
- Turn the lights off and silence your phone
- Remain out of sight and quiet by hiding behind large objects

DEFEND because you have the right to protect yourself.

- If you cannot AVOID or DENY, be prepared to DEFEND yourself
- Be aggressive and committed to your actions
- Do not fight fairly. THIS IS ABOUT SURVIVAL.

Call 911 when you are in a safe area.

When Law Enforcement arrives, show your hands and follow commands.



ALERRT
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Remember that **What You Do Matters.**[®]

For more information, visit **AvoidDenyDefend.org**
or email: **ADD@alerrt.org**

ALERRT at Texas State University's Avoid Deny Defend[®] training is a not-for-profit vital message and may be used at no cost provided it is distributed at no cost to the end user. We only ask that you credit ALERRT at Texas State as the creators of the Avoid Deny Defend[®] program.

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