**The 4 Outs of Survival in an Active Shooter Scenario**

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Unfortunately, hearing about a shooting incident has become all too common recently. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation there were 27 active shooter incidents in the US in 2018. These 27 incidents resulted in 85 deaths and 128 people being wounded. More recently, a shooting in Dayton, OH marked the 251st shooting incident of 2019 in only 216 days. It has become clear, people need to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. Being prepared and reacting accordingly may come down to one simple question.

“Are you responsible for anyone besides yourself?”

If the answer to the question is “YES”, the situation and response requires very deliberate and calculated action. The recommended protocol for those responsible for others follows what is called “The 4 Outs” of an active shooter situation. The 4 Outs include; Get Out, Hide Out, Keep Out, and Fight Out.

Get Out- In any active shooter situation, the first reaction should always be to try and exit the facility or area as quickly as possible. If you are not aware of the offender’s location it is best to move from point of cover to cover as you exit the building. While the situation is scary and chaotic, it is important to remain calm and quiet as you move. Only call 911 once you are in a safe location. Your first priority is your safety and the safety of those you are responsible for.

Hide Out – If exiting the area is not possible, the next solution is to hide. Find an inconspicuous place, preferably one that provides cover and try to stay out of sight. It is good to silence your cell phone as well to help avoid being detected. When hiding, think about aspects like angles and line-of-sight. Sometimes simply positioning yourself in a select location can help keep you out-of-sight.

Keep Out – Once you are somewhere separated from the offender, lock any doors and/or deadbolts. If possible, move heavy objects in front of the door, such as furniture, to block potential entry. In some situations, there may be a way to use common items such as a belt to secure the mechanics of a door in order to prevent it from being opened as demonstrated in the following photograph.

 

Fight Out – The last option in any active shooter scenario is to fight. While this is certainly intimidating, the most important aspect is to fully commit mentally to the action and continue until the threat has been completely stopped. There are a few tips that can help if you ever find yourself in this situation. First, there is strength in numbers. Try to enlist the help of others. Next, look for potential weapons of opportunity. Common items such as water bottles, extension cords or fire extinguishers may serve as effective weapons. When the time comes to defend yourself try to use the element of surprise, aggression and speed to your advantage.

Of course, it would be great if no one ever needed these tips. However, if the situation arises, hopefully they may help someone in their time of need. One of the most effective ways we can protect ourselves in an active shooter situation is to think about, plan and discuss a calculated response. Being mentally prepared for an event such as this is crucial. That mental preparedness requires planning, thought, discussion with family, your co-workers, and of course, your determination to survive!

This article was written by Cal McCarty, disaster preparation and recovery expert with ServiceMaster Recovery Management in conjunction with Glenn Nixon of Sorensen Wilder & Associates. Glenn has over 23 years in law enforcement and is a firearms and use of force expert witness.