

Active Shooter Training for Citizens

By
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The recent shootings at Trolley Square, Virginia Tech and the Omaha Mall remind us that violence can strike at any time and in any place. These types of events are not unusual. They occur everywhere. They happen in churches, malls, schools and workplaces. They will happen again. Have a plan.

Whether you carry a gun or not, these are some precautions that everyone can take to be better prepared if it happens to you.

Family Emergency Plan - BEFORE any emergency occurs, develop a Family Emergency Plan. This plan may be used for any emergency. Keep it simple, such as developing a rendezvous point in the event you are separated. Have an alternative plan. No matter where you are, a simple plan is better than no plan.

Situational Awareness - Be AWARE of your surroundings and situation. NOT paranoid, just aware. Keeping the cell phone jammed in your ear 24/7 is not being AWARE. Even if you see something that does not seem right, leave and call police.

Find an EXIT - When out in public, look for and know how to get to the nearest TWO exits. Don't concern yourself that they may be marked EMERGENCY, EMPLOYEE ONLY or ALARMED. You are going to use them anyway in an emergency.

Breakage - If you are trapped in an active shooter situation and there are no door exits but windows are available, BREAK THEM! Use whatever is available up to and including your firearm to break glass doors or windows to escape the threat!

Move - If you hear gunfire or see the shooter, immediately go to the nearest exit and AWAY from the shooter. The farther away you get, the safer you will be.

Lock It - If you are trapped in a location that has no exit, lock yourself and others inside. Use belts, electrical cords, rope or whatever is quickly available to secure the door. Barricade the door with furniture, desks or store displays. Be quiet and stay away from the doors. Do NOT open the doors for others once you are secured. Shooters have been known to pound on the doors pretending to be victims, begging for entry.

. Stay put until the police break in to rescue you.

Fight Back! If you are trapped, cannot escape and the shooter makes entry into your location, FIGHT BACK! Immediately ATTACK with chairs, tables, fire extinguishers, books or whatever you have on hand. Everyone in the room must ATTACK, tackle him, bite, claw, stab or choke. If you do not fight back, savagely and with overwhelming force he will methodically kill everyone.

Armed Citizens - If you are armed with a firearm at the scene of an active shooter, your FIRST responsibility is to get your family to safety. Help others along the way if you can but immediately MOVE your own family out of the area first.

Call 911 - ASAP, get on the phone and give 911 the shooters description, location and type of weapon, if known. Give the dispatcher YOUR location and description. Make certain to tell the dispatcher that YOU ARE ARMED. The dispatcher may try and get you to put your weapon away. REFUSE and tell dispatch you will remain armed as long as the threat is active.

Take Cover - Place yourself between the shooter and others that may be with you. Have someone else talk on the phone. Your focus needs to be on the shooter.

Police Confrontations-If you are confronted by the police, keep your weapon muzzle pointed down. Raise your non-shooting hand up near your face in the SURRENDER position. Yell loudly at the officer “I am NOT the shooter”! Do EXACTLY and IMMEDIATELY whatever the officer orders you to do. Expect to be taken down at gunpoint and treated like the bad guy. Be thankful they didn’t shoot you. Don’t take it personal. What actions you took can be sorted out afterwards. If an officer asks you to help, comply and do as you’re told.

Additional thoughts:

1. Carry a good small flashlight whether you carry your gun or not.
2. Carry enough ammo.
3. Carry a working cell phone
4. Know trauma care. That is to say, know how to treat gun shot wounds and other injuries with whatever is on the scene. The police are trained to go straight to the shooter. They will NOT stop to help until after the shooter is stopped. You will be left to help yourself and others.
5. Be a good witness. Be prepared to give a coherent statement to the police about the incident.

6. Keep your mouth shut if you were forced to use deadly force. Only give a generic statement such as “he tried to kill me/us and I was forced to defend myself/us”. Stick to the 5th Amendment until you have a lawyer by your side. Remember, there will most certainly be a civil lawsuit coming. Keep your mouth shut. Protect your own civil rights. If you need to discuss it with someone, tell your lawyer or your clergy. Those are protected communications.
7. When you write your statement look up Utah law regarding use of force and include the exact same words that match what action you were forced to take. “I reasonably believed the force was necessary because...”
6. You have the **RIGHT** to keep and bear arms. You have a **RESPONSIBILITY** to train and become proficient with your firearm.

USE OF FORCE

76-2-402 Utah Code Annotated

Force in defense of person

Reasonably believes force is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury:

1. Actions must be reasonable.
2. Force must be necessary.
3. Must show a significant threat of death or serious bodily injury.

A person is not justified:

- (a) If he initially provokes the use of force.
- (b) Is attempting or committing a crime.
- (c) Was the aggressor.

These events happen. They happen in churches, malls, schools and work places. They will happen again. If you are going to carry a firearm, be responsible and BE PREPARED.

About the author-Dennis Kennedy is Director of Training for the Counterterrorism Institute of America, LLC. Dennis is a 25 year veteran law enforcement Instructor and military special operations weapons NCO. He is a Utah POST certified Firearms Instructor as well as NRA Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor and Utah BCI Concealed Firearms Permit Instructor. He can be contacted via his company web site at www.combat-terror.com .