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CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

# PLAIN LANGUAGE ACTIVE SHOOTER GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

How We “Run, Hide, and Fight!”

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JULY 2022



An Active Shooter Awareness Guide for People with Disabilities by the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) with adaptations from the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Active Shooter Awareness Guidance, September 2016

[scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2016/09/Cal-OES-Active-Shooter-Awareness-Guidance-2016-update.pdf](http://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2016/09/Cal-OES-Active-Shooter-Awareness-Guidance-2016-update.pdf)

AND

Cal OES Active Shooter Awareness Guidance PowerPoint, created for ADA National Network/FEMA Webinar Series, January 2017.

[adapresentations.org/doc/1\\_12\\_17/LVT%20-%20Active%20Shooter%20-%20Pacific%20ADA%20Center%20webinar-Final.ppt](http://adapresentations.org/doc/1_12_17/LVT%20-%20Active%20Shooter%20-%20Pacific%20ADA%20Center%20webinar-Final.ppt)

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## INTRODUCTION

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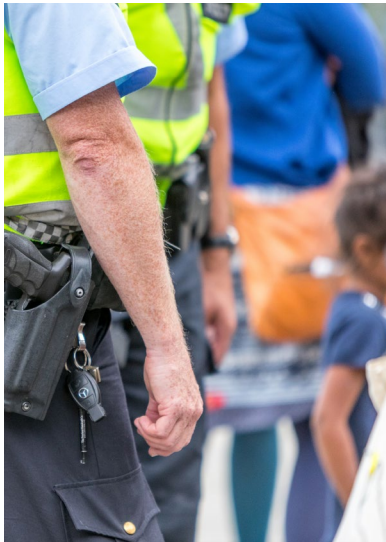
Situations involving active shooters have become frequent news stories in recent years. These situations can happen anywhere, including schools, markets, malls, places of worship, office buildings, outdoor venues, or college campuses. Active shooter situations are very scary. This guide is about how you can protect yourself if you are ever in this situation. It is written for people with disabilities and for anyone with limited access and functional needs.

You will learn about the three actions you can prepare for: **RUN, HIDE, and FIGHT**. Not all tips work for all people. Select the tips and actions from this guide that will work for you. Awareness and preparedness can help keep you safer.

# WHAT IS AN ACTIVE SHOOTER?

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- An active shooter is a person with one or more guns who is trying to kill many people.
- The shooter may not care who they shoot.
- It usually happens in a crowded place.
- It happens very quickly.
- There may be lots of screaming, yelling, gunshots, and fire alarm sounds.



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IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION, THERE ARE THREE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:



**RUN**



**HIDE**



**FIGHT**

Let's discuss these one at a time.

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# RUN

THIS IS THE BEST CHOICE IF YOU CAN.

- Run, walk, or wheel out to a safe location as fast as you can.
- Leave your personal things (like purses or backpacks). You can get them later.
- Keep your hands up if you can. That helps police know you are not the shooter.
- Call 911 when you are safe.
- Follow instructions from police, firefighters, or other first responders.

## PLANNING AHEAD TO RUN

- Where will you run to? (Your escape plan.)
- Which door will you go out?
- Practice leaving quickly with your hands up if you can.
- Who will help you? Plan a buddy system.
- Practice being safely carried if your wheelchair is not nearby.
- Make a plan for work and other public places. (Note where exits are for the mall, movies, restaurants, etc.)



## HIDE

- If you cannot get out, hide in a place where the shooter can't see you.
- Lock the door if you can.
- Block the door with heavy things like a bookcase, file cabinet, or chair.
- Make sure you have enough room to move around.
- Put cell phones on "silent."
- Turn off any other noises like computers, radios, televisions, and assistive devices.
- Put down shades or close drapes; turn off lights if possible.
- Hide under or behind large items such as cabinets or desks.
- Stay calm and quiet. (Breathe deep or use other relaxation ideas that you have practiced.)

### PLANNING AHEAD TO HIDE

- Where will you hide? (under a desk, in a closet, etc.)
- Can the door be locked?
- What furniture can be moved to block the door?
- Who will help you?
- Practice opening and closing the drapes or blinds.
- Practice ways to calm yourself (such as breathing, counting, imagining pleasant images, etc.)



## FIGHT

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IF YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER AND YOU CANNOT RUN OR HIDE, YOU MAY NEED TO FIGHT.

- Use crutches, fire extinguishers, a stapler, or other hard things to throw at the shooter.
- Use all your energy and strength.
- Be forceful. Your life depends on it.

### PLANNING AHEAD TO FIGHT

- What do you have that you could throw at the shooter if you had to? (Things like a crutch, a heavy picture frame or vase, scissors, a stapler, ramming them with your wheelchair, etc.)
- Take a self-defense class. This can teach you ways to fight to protect yourself, based on your physical and mobility needs, and the tools you have.



# WHEN POLICE ARRIVE

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THEIR FIRST JOB IS TO STOP THE SHOOTER.

- Follow their instructions.
- If you can, raise your hands and spread your fingers.
- Do not move quickly.
- Do not scream.
- Understand that police might shout or push people to the ground for their safety.
- Don't ask police for help unless you are injured. They are either looking for the shooter or for injured people.
- Use a buddy system if you have one.
- Tell police not to separate you from your Personal Care Assistant (PCA), service animal, equipment, or assistive device. Explain that you have a disability and what type of help you need.
- Don't leave until police say you can go. They will usually want to talk to everyone who was there.



# BEING PREPARED

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An active shooter situation is scary. Knowing ahead of time what to expect can help you to manage the stress.

There may be:

- Loud alarms
- Flashing lights
- Water from sprinklers
- Sounds of gunfire
- Screaming
- Sirens
- Yelling
- Officers in military-style uniforms
- Smoke that limits vision or hurts your eyes and throat
- You may be pushed to the ground.

It can help to become familiar with hearing and seeing these sights and sounds by watching YouTube videos or using Google. That way, they might not be as frightening if you are ever in real danger.

Another important part of being prepared is planning a buddy system. If you will need help, choose someone you trust who understands your disability, how to communicate with you, and how to help you. Practice the running and hiding tips on the earlier pages with that person.

Most people will never be in an active shooter situation. However, it is important that you prepare with a buddy and follow the “Planning Ahead” tips in this booklet for your greatest safety and the best chance of saving your life.

# ONE FINAL NOTE

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After an active shooter situation ends, many people experience ongoing feelings of fear, depression, anxiety, or trauma. This is common to experience, but this can feel overwhelming and can interfere with your daily life. Talk to someone about it. Get help from family, friends, a therapist, clergy, a service coordinator, or another trusted person. Support and care can make a difference.

# RESOURCES

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California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Active Shooter Awareness Guidance (Sept. 2016)

[scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2016/09/Cal-OES-Active-Shooter-Awareness-Guidance-2016-update.pdf](https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2016/09/Cal-OES-Active-Shooter-Awareness-Guidance-2016-update.pdf)

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Active Shooter Awareness Guidance PowerPoint, created for ADA National Network/FEMA Webinar Series (Jan. 2017)

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CA Warm Line (Peer Run non-emergency resource for anyone in CA seeking mental and emotional support):

[www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline/](http://www.mentalhealthsf.org/peer-run-warmline/)

Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Pocket Card Information

[www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_pocket\\_card.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_pocket_card.pdf)

Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter How to Respond Booklet

[www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf)

Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Event Quick Reference Guide

[www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/active-shooter-pamphlet-2017-508.pdf](http://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/active-shooter-pamphlet-2017-508.pdf)

Federal Bureau of Investigation Active Shooter Event Quick Reference Guide

[www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-event-quick-reference-guide\\_2015.pdf/view](http://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-event-quick-reference-guide_2015.pdf/view)

Self-Defense Classes for People with Disabilities – the listings here are for information only and do not imply endorsement by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities:

Get Safe, [www.getsafeusa.com](http://www.getsafeusa.com)  
714-834-0050

Peace Over Violence, [www.peaceoverviolence.org](http://www.peaceoverviolence.org)  
213-785-2684

Contact your local regional office of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, independent living center (ILC), or regional center.



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