

# Civilian Active Shooter Preparation and Response



Prepared by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Active Shooter Unit  
Office, and SA Richard R. Stallings VCTF

# Teaching Points

- Define *active shooter*
- Analyze statistical data related to active shooter events
- Provide a brief history of active shooter events
- Discuss planning for an active shooter event
- Explain what to do if involved in an active shooter event
- Discuss working with first responders
- Discuss medical considerations
- Discuss organizational planning
- Discuss pre-attack behavioral indicators

# Active Shooter

- The FBI defines an active shooter as “an individual actively engaged in killing, or attempting to kill people in a populated area.”

## 2000-2018 Active Shooter Events

231 events



## Total Casualties

846 killed

1,433 wounded



## Highest Casualty Las Vegas, NV

58 killed

546 wounded



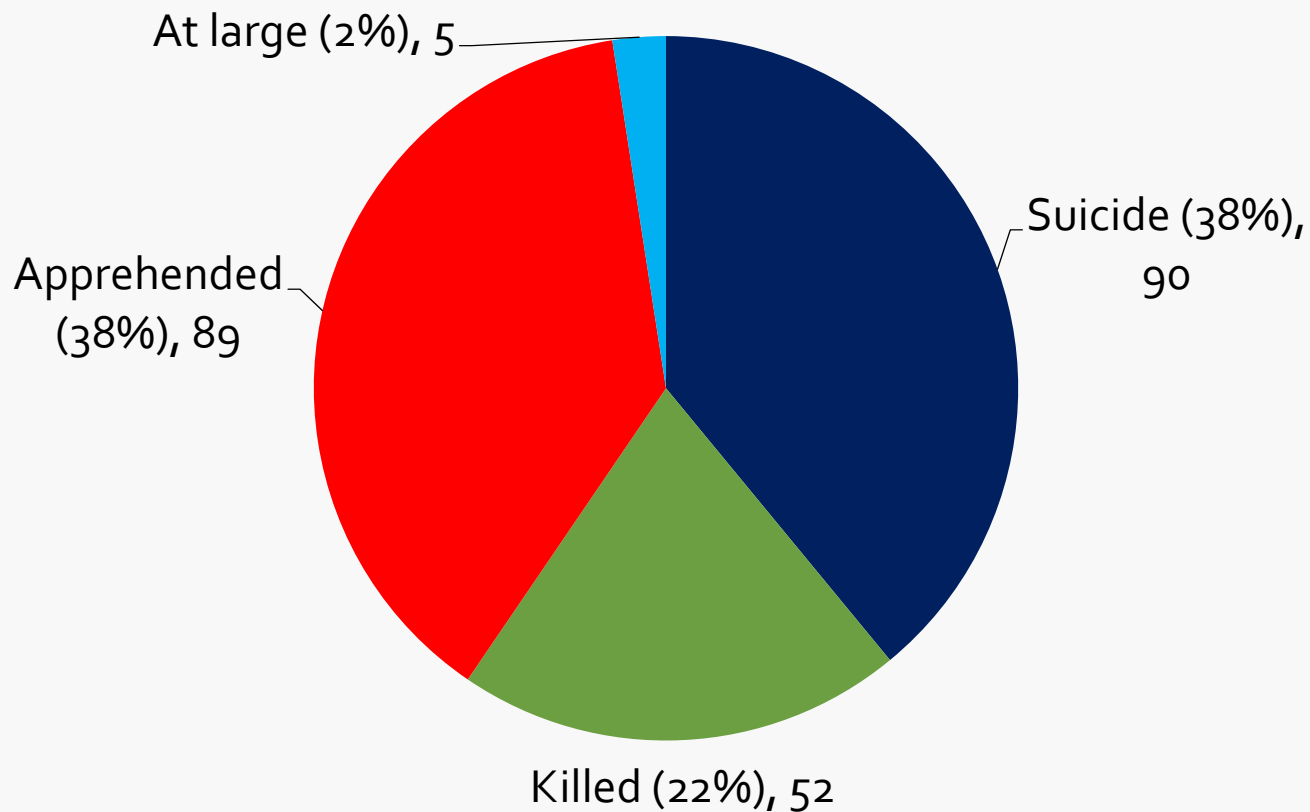
## Highest Fatality Site Las Vegas, NV

58 killed

546 wounded

# 2000-2018 Active Shooter Outcomes

231 Events/236 Shooters



# History of Active Shooter Events

- University of Texas, 08/01/1966
  - 18 Dead 31 wounded
- McDonalds San Ysidro, Ca 07/18/1984
  - 21 Killed 19 wounded
- Luby's Cafeteria Killeen, Tx 10/16/1991
  - 23 Killed 27 wounded

# History of Active Shooter Events

Columbine High School

April 20, 1999

- 13 Killed
- 24 Wounded

Virginia Tech

April 16, 2007

- 32 Killed
- 17 Wounded

Fort Hood Texas

November 5, 2009

- 13 Killed
- 32 Wounded

Sandy Hook Elementary

December 14, 2012

- 27 Killed
- 2 Wounded

Pulse Nightclub

June 12, 2016

- 49 Killed
- 53 Wounded

Las Vegas

Oct 1, 2017

- 58 Killed
- 546 Wounded

Texas First Baptist Church

Nov 5, 2017

- 26 Killed
- 20 Wounded

Parkland HS

Feb 14, 2018

- 17 Killed
- 14 Wounded

Thousand Oaks Nightclub

Nov 17, 2018

- 12 Killed
- 22 Wounded

# Active Shooter Events

- **Do not** have an “it will never happen here mindset.”
- **Do** have a plan.
- **Do** develop the plan before the event
  - Plan must be flexible.



# What can you do?

Run

Hide

Fight



# Run, Hide, Fight

- The below is the link for the video on YouTube. Please copy the link and paste it into the YouTube search bar.
- <https://youtu.be/5VcSwejU2Do>

# Considerations

- Situational Awareness
  - Exits
  - Ability to Hide
  - Ability to Barricade
  - Availability of Weapons (improvised or otherwise)

# Run

- Have an escape route/plan.
- Leave belongings behind.
- Get others to go with you, and don't delay.
- Be prepared for police response.
- Be prepared to change route/plan if you encounter gunman.
- Only call 911 when it is safe to do so.

# Hide

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view.
- Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors.
- Silence your cell phone, etc...
- Turn off lights.
- Have a plan if found by the shooter or law enforcement.
- What is your endgame?

# Virginia Tech Survivor Video

- <https://youtu.be/sGBq92s51SY>
- The above link is for the video on YouTube. Please copy the link and paste it into the YouTube search bar.

# Fight

- As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger.
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
- Act with physical aggression and throw items at the shooter.
- Attack the weapon or the shooter's ability to kill.
- You must fight like your life depends on it; it does.

# When Police Arrive

- First priority is to stop the killing.
- Will move directly to the threat.
- Will not render aid until the killing has stopped.
- Remain calm and follow instructions.
- Drop any items in your hands (i.e. bags, jackets).
- Raise hands and spread fingers.
- Keep hands visible at all times (free of cell phones which are commonly mistaken for weapons).
- Avoid quick movements towards officers such as holding on to them for safety.



# Providing Information to the Police

- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling.
- Location of shooter.
- Number of shooters.
- Physical description of shooters.
- Number and type of weapons held by shooters.
- Number of potential victims at the location and where are they located.
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating.

# Medical

- Hartford Consensus
- If possible, provide care.
- Take action as soon as possible. It is critical!
- There won't be enough emergency personnel to care for all of the wounded.
- It gets you involved with helping people survive.

# Organizational Planning

- Have a plan
- Be specific to your location and structure
- Should be flexible
- Train the plan
- Plan must not be dependent on hierarchal structure
- [Homeland Security, Emergency Action Plan guide, Active Shooter Preparedness](#)

# Organizational Planning

- Blueprints
  - Where are they kept?
- Closed Circuit Camera Systems
  - Where can they be accessed from?
- Utilities
  - Is there a plan to turn them off if needed?
- Unattended Items
  - How will they be returned?
- Continued Operations
  - How will you maintain operations if denied access to your building for an extended period of time?
- Plan, Organize/Equip, Train, Exercise, Evaluate Improve

# Pre-Attack Indicators

- No real base line identifiers.
- Contextually inappropriate actions or interests.
- Dealing with four or more stressors. Relationships, Job issues, Deaths, social miscues, etc....
- Mental health Issues vs Mental Health Diagnosis.
- Few have criminal history. Weapons purchased legally

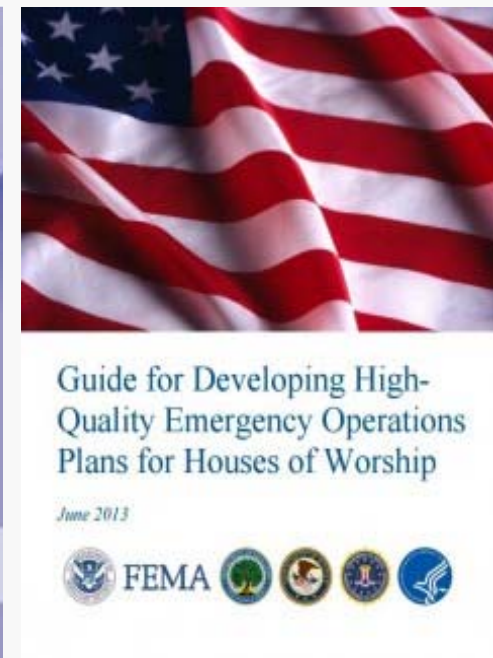
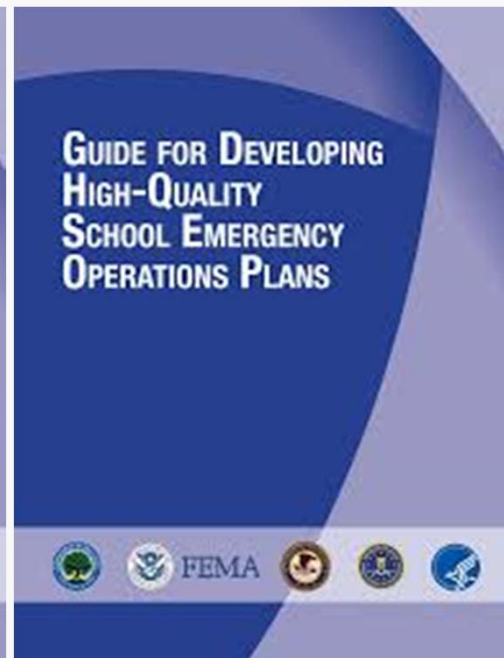
# Pre-Attack Indicators

- In many of these events at least one person knew that the attacker was thinking about planning the attack.
- Most of the noted irregular behavior was noted by family, coworkers, or friends.
- *If you see or hear something, say something.*

# Key Findings of the Phase II Study

- The active shooters examined in this study did not appear to be uniform in any way such that they could be readily identified prior to attacking *based on demographics alone*.
- Active shooters take time to plan and prepare for the attack, with **77%** of the subjects spending a week or longer planning their attack and **46%** spending a week or longer actually preparing (procuring the means) for the attack.
- A majority of active shooters obtained their firearms legally, with only very small percentages obtaining a firearm illegally.
- The FBI could only verify that **25%** of active shooters in the study had ever been diagnosed with a mental illness. Of those diagnosed, only three had been diagnosed with a psychotic disorder.
- Active shooters were typically experiencing multiple stressors (an average of **3.6** separate stressors) in the year before they attacked.
- On average, each active shooter displayed **4 to 5** concerning behaviors over time that were observable to others around the shooter. The most frequently occurring concerning behaviors were related to the active shooter's mental health, problematic interpersonal interactions, and leakage of violent intent.
- For active shooters under age 18, school peers and teachers were more likely to observe concerning behaviors than family members. For active shooters 18 years old and over, spouses/domestic partners were the most likely to observe concerning behaviors.
- When concerning behavior was observed by others, the most common response was to communicate directly to the active shooter (**83%**) or do nothing (**54%**). In **41%** of the cases the concerning behavior was reported to law enforcement. Therefore, just because concerning behavior was *recognized* does not necessarily mean that it was *reported* to law enforcement.
- In those cases where the active shooter's primary grievance could be identified, the most common grievances were related to an adverse interpersonal or employment action against the shooter (**49%**).
- In the majority of cases (**64%**) at least one of the victims was specifically targeted by the active shooter.

# Planning Guides





# Resources:

- **Active Shooter Online Training**
- This one-hour online course (IS-907 Active Shooter: What You Can Do) provides an introductory lesson on the actions that may be taken when confronted by an active shooter, as well as indicators of workplace violence and how to manage the consequences of an incident. To access this course, please visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Management Institute online training website at <http://www.training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx> and type Active Shooter in the search bar.
- **Active Shooter Preparedness Workshop Series**
- These scenario-based workshops feature facilitated discussions to inform participants on the best practices associated with preparing for and responding to an active shooter incident. Through a dynamic exchange of information, these workshops provide participants an understanding of how to plan and aid in the development of an initial draft of an emergency action plan for their organizations. For more information on these workshops, please contact the Active Shooter Preparedness Program at [ASworkshop@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:ASworkshop@hq.dhs.gov).
- **Active Shooter Online Resources**
- There are additional resources available online to inform individuals on how to prepare for active shooter incidents. These resources range from booklets and pocket guides, to a 90-minute webinar that explains the importance of developing an emergency action plan and the need to train employees on how to respond to an incident. To access these resources, please visit <http://www.dhs.gov/activeshooter>.
- **Contact Information**
- For general information regarding the Active Shooter Preparedness Program, please email [ASworkshop@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:ASworkshop@hq.dhs.gov).
- FBI Link for resources: <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incidents>

## Helpful Delivery

- I am so sorry.
- This is harder than most people think.
- Most people who have gone through this react similarly to you.
- People can experience many different feelings at the same time.
- This is one of the most difficult times in your life.

## Statements to Avoid

- I know how you feel. (You don't.)
- Time heals all wounds. (It doesn't.)
- You need to be strong. (They don't.)
- You'll get over this someday. (They won't.)
- He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.
- You must go on with your life.
- You will find closure.
- He didn't know what hit him.
- It's best to remember him the way he was.
- You don't need to know that.
- You don't want to see him/her.
- It must have been his/her time.
- Think of all of your memories.
- Religious phrases.

## Introduction

Families want and deserve the truth about their loved one's death. Every death notification has a long lasting impact on family members. How a death notification is provided can positively or negatively affect family members. It can significantly affect the family's cooperation with any investigation. While delivering a death notification can be an extremely stressful experience for all individuals involved, there are methods to ensure the notification is provided to family members with professionalism, dignity, and compassion.

There are four key elements to providing a death notification. They are planning, preparation, delivery, and follow up.

## Planning

## Follow Up

- Contact NOK at the agreed upon time. Ensure you follow through on the promise to contact them;
- Utilize this as an opportunity for NOK to ask additional questions;
- Be prepared to discuss decedent's personal effects;
- Provide guidance for family members speaking to the media, if requested;
- Answer questions about the release of their loved one to a funeral home of their choosing;
- Provide additional resources.

## FAQ's

- Who died and how was the victim identified?
- What happened?
- Where did the death occur?
- When did the death occur?
- Where is my loved one now?
- May I see him/her?
- What is an autopsy and why is it necessary?

Lord, J. & Stewart, A. (2008). *I'll never forget those words: A practical guide to*

[www.deathnotification.psu.edu](http://www.deathnotification.psu.edu)

*We Regret to  
Inform You...*

Guide for Professionals  
Delivering Sensitive  
Death Notifications with  
Professionalism, Dignity  
and Compassion



This material has been developed between the  
Federal Bureau of Investigation and Penn State University.

## Delivery

- Know the details of when, where, and how the death occurred;
- Be prepared to provide accurate details regarding the death, assuming specific details can be released;
- Where is the decedent now?;
- Ensure that the Support Guide is available.

## Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with death notification protocols within your jurisdiction.
- Know the process in your jurisdiction for NOK to view their loved one;
- Check with dispatch for any medical concerns or safety issues at the NOK's location;
- If a concern exists, request

addressing the autopsy process and providing written material;

- Confirm identity of person with whom you are speaking and their relationship to the decedent;
- Introduce yourself, present credentials and provide business card with contact information;
- Ask to come inside and encourage family member to sit down;
- Provide a one sentence statement to prepare the family for the notification (i.e. "I'm sorry to have to share this information");
- Use decedent's name. Do not refer to "your son's body," "your mother's remains," or "the corpse";
- Provide notification immediately following preparation statement, using clearly understood words such as died, death or dead. Do not use phrases such as passed on, lost or expired.

answering all questions honestly. Provide only information you know to be true and that you can release;

- Ask if there are other family members who should receive official notification;
- Do not leave NOK alone. Ask if you can call anyone for them and wait until the person(s) arrives;
- Ask if you can follow up within 24 hours;
- Provide written material whenever possible, to include the autopsy process, if applicable.

## Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule: A Guide for Law Enforcement

### What is the HIPAA Privacy Rule?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule provides Federal privacy protections for individually identifiable health information, called protected health information or PHI, held by most health care providers and health plans and their business associates. The HIPAA Privacy Rule sets out how and with whom PHI may be shared. The Privacy Rule also gives individuals certain rights regarding their health information, such as the rights to access or request corrections to their information.

### Who must comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule?

others, hired by covered entities to perform services or functions that involve access to PHI.

### Who is not required to comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule?

Many entities that may have health information are not subject to the HIPAA Privacy Rule, including:

- employers,
- most state and local police or other law enforcement agencies,
- many state agencies like child protective services, and
- most schools and school districts.

While schools and school districts maintain student health records, these records are in most cases protected by the

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act A Guide for First Responders and Law Enforcement

### What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all educational institutions and agencies (termed "schools" below) that receive funds under any U.S. Department of Education program. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a postsecondary institution. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

*FERPA protects the rights of parents or eligible students to:*

- inspect and review education records;
- seek to amend education records;
- consent to the disclosure of information from education records, except as specified by law.

### What information can schools provide to law enforcement?

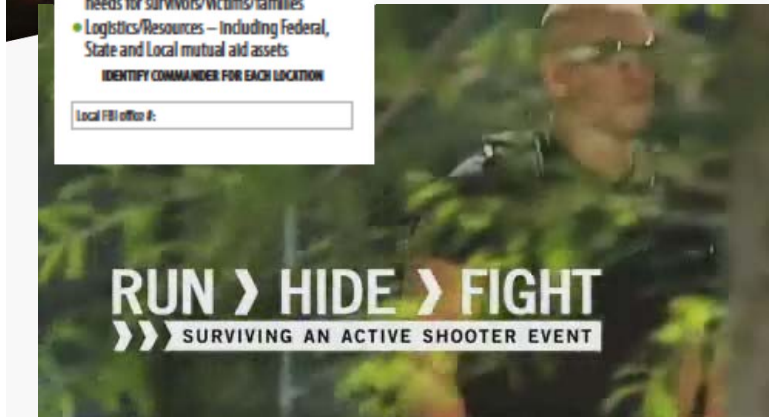
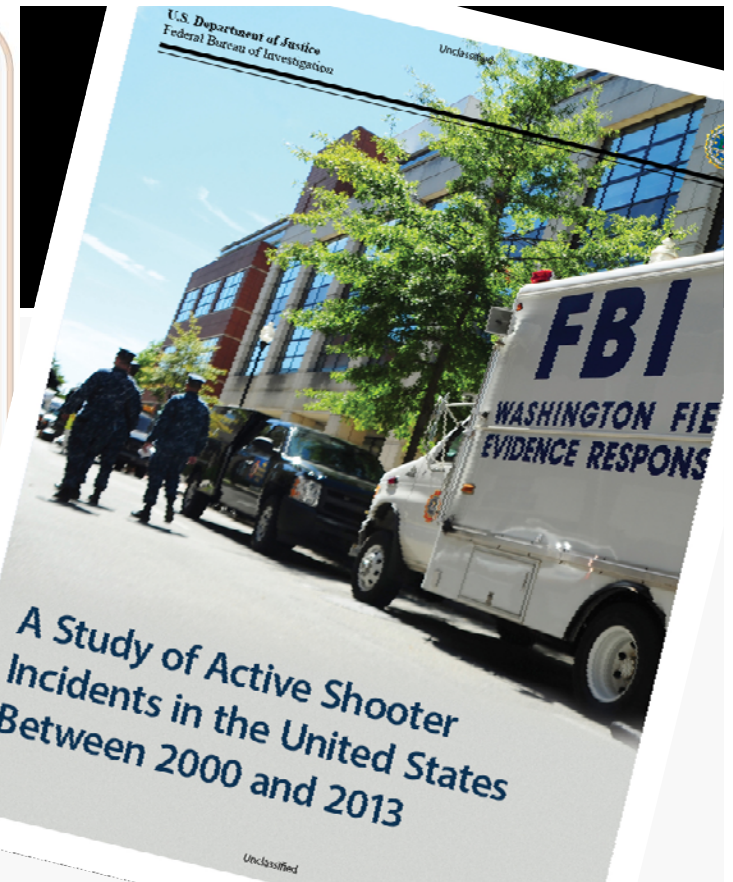
Generally, schools may disclose personally identifiable information (PII) from students' education records to outside parties, including local law enforcement, only if the parent or the eligible student has provided prior written consent. "Education records" are defined as those records that are directly related to a student and maintained by a school or a party acting for the school, and include student records such as transcripts, disciplinary records, immunization records, and other similar records.

However, there are exceptions to the definition of "education records." One of these exceptions is for school "law enforcement unit (LEU) records." These records are defined as records that are (1) created by a LEU; (2) created for a law enforcement purpose; and (3) maintained by the LEU. These records are not protected under FERPA and can be disclosed according to school policy or as required by law. Education records that are in the possession of the LEU do not lose their status as education records and must continue to be protected under FERPA.



Train The FBI and the Penn State  
University's free, online training program  
that can be found at:  
[www.deathnotification.psu.edu](http://www.deathnotification.psu.edu).





## FBI Tools App for State and Local Law Enforcement on the FBI's Incident Command Commander Pocket Guide

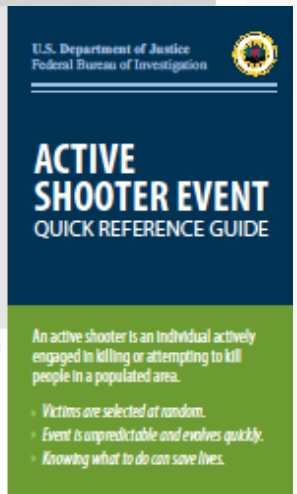
- When law enforcement arrives:**
- Remain calm and follow instructions.
  - Drop items in your hands. (e.g., bags, jackets)
  - Raise hands and spread fingers.
  - Keep hands visible at all times.
  - Avoid quick movements toward officers, such as holding on to them for safety.
  - Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling.
  - Do not ask questions when evacuating.
- Information to provide to 911 operators:**
- Location of the active shooter.
  - Number of shooters.
  - Physical description of shooters.
  - Number and type of weapons shooter has.
  - Number of potential victims at location.

**For questions or additional assistance contact:**  
Your local FBI Office:

FBI Headquarters National Press Office: (202) 324-3691



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535



An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.

- Victims are selected at random.
- Event is unpredictable and evolves quickly.
- Knowing what to do can save lives.



# Questions?

# Additional Information

- For additional information related, please contact your local FBI field office or local Police Department.
- Washington Field Office, FBI 202-278-2000
- FBI Headquarters, 202-324-3000
- FBI Public Access Line: FBI.gov,  
1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324)