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Did You Know?

*NFPA
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Active Shooter Best Practices Stay Aware, Stay Alive

Recently, as I sat at my desk merrily working away, an email notification popped up in the corner of my screen. Most emails I get aren't urgent, garnering a passing glance before fading away to await further attention. This pop-up was different. It was marked urgent, and even more striking was the subject line:

ACTIVE SHOOTER! NOW!

The shooting was in a building a few blocks away from my office and the police quickly had the scene secure. Thankfully, the threat was minimal to myself and those in my building. Others weren't so lucky.

What if there is a next time? What if the shooting took place in my building?

This incident was still close to home, so to speak, and gave me pause. I looked around my office, both my individual working space and the office suite...surrounded by windows, back to my office door. Where are the stairwells, the elevators? Will the security systems my firm has in place hold up?

Unfortunately, these things must be real concerns in today's society. We can't prevent violence in our work places but we can take action to mitigate our personal risk.

The [US Department of Homeland Security](#) has multiple resources for training and preparedness. It's guidance is based in experience and is straightforward.

Awareness of a potential threat may prevent escalation. Take notice of a coworker who has been sympathizing with violence in the news or empathizing with those who have committed that violence. Take notice of and report a suspicious individual who has been hanging out in the lobby or the parking lot. Listen to your instincts.

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[West Bend Mutual Insurance Company](#) outlines three options when faced with an active shooter.

The best option is to evacuate. In order to safely and effectively evacuate, you need to have previous awareness of your escape routes. If possible, have more than one route planned. When facing evacuation, resist the urge to grab your personal belongings. Looking for your cell phone and zipping up your purse will take time you may not be able to spare.

If you are unable to evacuate, hide. You should stay quiet and attempt to go unnoticed until law enforcement arrives. Silence your cell phone, stay away from windows.

If all else fails and you are put in a position where you must fight, act quickly, throw items at the shooter, yell, distract the shooter.



More information is available at: **[RUN. HIDE. FIGHT.®](#)** **[Surviving an Active Shooter Event](#)**. This video produced by Ready Houston provides detail and additional information.

I hope none of you reading this will experience such a life threatening situation as an active shooter in the work place. Unfortunately, the possibility is there, the threat is real. Preparedness is key.

By Tanya Patterson

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN ARTICLE??

Have you already written an article?

Submit your ideas to

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