

# What is an Active Shooter?

An active shooter is an individual (or group of individuals) actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. Active shooter events can occur in open outdoor environments or confined spaces. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve rapidly.

## The Division of Law Enforcement and Safety

We are professionals in law enforcement, compliance and professional standards, environmental health and safety, and risk management working diligently—24 hours a day, 365 days a year—to protect the people and property of the University of South Carolina. Our values—human life, integrity, excellence and accountability—are your assurance of our commitment to provide a safe and secure environment.

### Helpful Resources

View the online videos at [les.sc.edu](http://les.sc.edu) to help you better prepare for an active shooter incident. Our presentation, “Community Response to an Active Shooter” is available for your organization, classroom, or event. To schedule a presentation, contact Maj. Geary at 803.777.0507 or email him at [iageary@maibox.sc.edu](mailto:iageary@maibox.sc.edu).

Learn more. Find more crime prevention and safety resources online at [les.sc.edu](http://les.sc.edu).

### Rave Guardian Safety App

**Download our free mobile app that turns your cell phone into a personalized protection network, connecting with University Police during an emergency and giving us important information we need instantly.**

[les.sc.edu/RaveSafetyApp](http://les.sc.edu/RaveSafetyApp)



### Division of Law Enforcement and Safety

1415 Henderson Street  
(1600 Hampton Street Annex)  
Columbia, SC 29208

24 hour phone number: **803-777-4215**

Emergency: **911**

[les.sc.edu](http://les.sc.edu)

University of South Carolina

**Division of Law Enforcement and Safety**

## The Active Shooter

Be aware.

Be prepared.



# Important Information:



While perpetrators may have a range of underlying motives (e.g. retribution for a perceived injustice, sending a political or religious message, or even terrorism), the goal is the same – mass casualties. Too many factors exist for us to give you a formula for effectively responding to an incident such as this.

Our goal is to provide you options that you must then apply, using your best judgement based on the specific circumstances with which you are faced. You should do what you believe is in your best interest.

## Response Protocols (Avoid, Deny, Defend)

### Avoid

The most successful strategy for surviving an active shooter event is to avoid the situation altogether. This includes prevention strategies such as early identification, intervention, and awareness. If you believe that someone may pose a threat to themselves or others, call for help immediately. If the situation has not reached a critical stage, you may opt to call our non-emergency number (803-777-4215), let us know via the Rave Guardian Safety App, or use a referral system such as the university's Behavioral Intervention Team ([www.sc.edu/bit](http://www.sc.edu/bit)). Always pay attention to your surroundings.

***If something doesn't seem right, act on your intuition and leave the area, if possible.*** Use your best judgement to avoid the threat by determining whether it would be safer to evacuate or remain inside. If the threat is imminent or the attack has already begun, do not hesitate. Call 911 as you proceed to the safest location based on your assessment of what's happening around you. The more distance and barriers you can place between you and the threat, the better. Do not activate fire alarms, as you may endanger others who would be safer remaining in their present location.

### Deny

***If getting away is difficult or impossible, you should still create distance and barriers between you and the threat.*** Secure yourself inside the most fortified room available and use anything available to barricade the door. If you can't barricade the door, use objects such as belts, clothing, or chairs to secure the door as best you can. Make yourself a "hard target", by turning off the lights, remaining out of sight, and being quiet. Call 911 even if you can't speak and are only able to leave an open line. Do not respond to requests to open the door or come out unless you are absolutely sure that it is law enforcement.

### Defend

***If you cannot Avoid or Deny, be prepared to Defend yourself using whatever means necessary.*** This is about your survival – do not fight fairly. Do anything you must to survive. Do not stand still – movement makes you a harder target to hit. Throw objects. Use weapons of opportunity (e.g. fire extinguishers, laptops, chairs, keys, pens, etc.) to attack sensitive areas such as the eyes, throat, and groin. If you have others with you, coordinate your attack from multiple points of opposition.

Be aggressive and absolutely committed to your actions until you are sure the suspect no longer poses a threat to you or others.

## When police arrive



***Show your hands and follow all commands.*** An active shooter call will likely trigger a multi-agency response. While it is likely that uniformed officers will be the first on scene, that is not always the case. Plain clothes officers or officers wearing different colors and styles of uniforms may respond. While some officers may not be in uniform, there will likely be some type of visual indication that they are law enforcement, such as a police badge located on a belt or a patch on the arm or chest.

Responding officers will be operating on a set of priorities. Their first and primary concern will be to engage and neutralize any active, ongoing threat that exists. They may bypass wounded people or others seeking assistance in order to achieve their primary mission. If you encounter law enforcement, drop any weapons or other objects you may be holding. Hold empty hands up in the air and follow all directions provided. Do not resist being taken into custody. It is imperative that you cooperate and follow instructions from police and other emergency responders.