



Division of Capitol Police

Commonwealth of Virginia

“Critical Incidents and Response Strategies For State Employees”

Violent incidents, including but not limited to, acts of terrorism, active shooters, assaults, or other incidents of workplace violence, can occur in the Capitol District or in close proximity with little or no warning. An “active shooter” is considered to be a suspect or assailant whose activity is immediately causing serious injury or death and has not been contained.

The Division of Capitol Police has adopted nationally accepted law enforcement response procedures to contain and neutralize such threats, as quickly as possible. The following information will help you to take appropriate protective action for yourself and others. Try to remain calm, as your actions will influence others. The following instructions are intended for “critical incidents” i.e., those that are of an emergency nature (i.e., imminent or in progress).

Immediate Action

1. Secure the Immediate Area:
 - Lock or barricade the door, if able. Block the door using whatever is available—desks, tables, file cabinets, other furniture, books, etc.
 - After securing the door, stay behind solid objects away from the door as much as possible.
 - If the assailant enters your room and leaves, lock or barricade the door behind them.
 - If safe to do so, allow others to seek refuge with you.

2. Protective Actions. Take appropriate steps to reduce your vulnerability:
 - Close blinds.
 - Block windows.
 - Turn off radios and computer monitors.
 - Silence cell phones.
 - Place signs in exterior windows to identify your location and the location of injured persons.
 - Keep people calm and quiet.
 - After securing the room, people should be positioned out of sight and behind items that might offer additional protection—walls, desks, file cabinets, bookshelves, etc.

3. Unsecured Areas: If you find yourself in an open area, immediately seek protection:
 - Put something between you and the assailant.
 - Consider trying to escape, if you know where the assailant is and there appears to be an escape route immediately available to you.
 - If in doubt, find the safest area available and secure it the best way that you can.

4. **Call 786-2120.** Emergency situations should be reported to law enforcement by dialing **786-2120**. You may hear multiple rings - stay on the line until it is answered - **do not hang up**. Be prepared to provide the dispatcher with as much information as possible, such as the following:
 - What is happening?
 - Where you are located, including building name, floor and room number.
 - Number of people at your specific location.
 - Injuries, if any, including the number of injured and types of injuries.
 - Your name and other information as requested.
5. Try to provide information in a calm, clear manner so that the dispatcher can quickly relay your information to responding law enforcement and emergency personnel.
6. What to Report. Try to note as much as possible about the assailant, including:
 - Specific location and direction of the assailant.
 - Number of assailants.
 - Gender, race, and age of the assailant.
 - Clothing color and style.
 - Physical features- e.g., height, weight, facial hair, glasses.
 - Types of weapons- e.g., handgun, rifle, shotgun, explosives.
 - Description of any backpack or bag.
 - Do you recognize the assailant? Do you know their name?
 - What exactly did you hear- e.g., explosions, gunshots, etc.
7. Treat the Injured. The dispatcher will notify law enforcement and other emergency service (EMS) agencies - fire and rescue. EMS will respond to the site, but will not be able to enter the area until it is secured by law enforcement. You may have to treat the injured as best you can until the area is secure. Remember basic first aid:
 - For bleeding, apply pressure and elevate. Many items can be used for this purpose- e.g., clothing, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, newspapers, etc.
 - Reassure those in the area that help will arrive- try to stay quiet and calm.
8. Un-Securing the Area:
 - The assailant may not stop until his objectives have been met or until engaged and neutralized by law enforcement.
 - Always consider the risk of exposure by opening the door for any reason.
 - Attempt to rescue people only if it can be done without further endangering the persons inside of a secured area.
 - Be aware that the assailant may bang on the door, yell for help, or otherwise attempt to entice you to open the door of a secured area.
 - If there is any doubt about the safety of the individuals inside the room, the area needs to remain secured.

Law Enforcement Response

The Division of Capitol Police will immediately respond to the area, assisted by other local law enforcement agencies, if necessary. Remember:

1. Help is on the way. It is important for you to remain inside the secure area.
 - Law Enforcement will locate, contain, and stop the assailant.
 - The safest place for you to be is inside a secure room.
 - The assailant may not flee when law enforcement enters the building, but instead may target arriving officers.
2. Injured Persons. Initial responding officers will not treat the injured or begin evacuation until the threat is neutralized and the area is secure.
 - You may need to explain this to others in order to calm them.
 - Once the threat is neutralized, officers will begin treatment and evacuation.
3. Evacuation. Responding officers will establish safe corridors for persons to evacuate.
 - This is time consuming.
 - Remain in secure areas until instructed otherwise.
 - You may be instructed to keep your hands on your head.
 - You may be searched.
 - You may be escorted out of the building by law enforcement personnel - follow their directions.
 - After evacuation, you may be taken to a staging or holding area for medical care, interviewing, counseling, etc.
 - Once you have been evacuated, you will not be permitted to retrieve items or access the area until law enforcement releases the crime scene.

Summary

We cannot predict the origin of the next threat. Assailants in incidents across the nation have been employees and non-employees alike. In many cases, there were no obvious specific targets and the victims were unaware that they were a target until attacked. Being aware of your surroundings, taking common sense precautions, and heeding any warning information can help protect you and other members of the community.