

**Holy Cross College**  
**Safety Tips and Guidelines for Responding to an Active Shooter on**  
**Campus**

An active shooter is a person who uses deadly force (usually with a firearm) in a populated area on campus. They tend to display no pattern or method for selection of their victims. These situations are very fluid and changing. It is impossible to anticipate exactly how the situation will evolve, or to provide absolute guidelines. Thinking through possible actions now may give you an important advantage that will improve your survival chances. Active shooter incidents can happen at any location where people gather and usually start quickly and without warning. Call 911 as soon as you can do so with relative safety.

**You are in a hallway when shooting is heard**

- Get into a room that is not already secure, and secure it.
- Unless you are very close to an exit, if possible, avoid running through a long hall to escape. You may encounter a gunman or hostage taker.
- In general, the more distance you can put between yourself and the shooter, the better. Do not move toward the sound of gunfire to investigate and/or try to help. Get away from the area. Try to be a moving target until you are in a secure area.
- Call 911, and Campus Security (239-8312).
- Do not activate a fire alarm. People may become targets by leaving a building in an orderly fashion and gathering outside.

**You are in an open area when shooting is heard**

- Stay alert and look for appropriate cover locations. Brick walls, large trees, retaining walls, parked vehicles and any other object which may stop firearm penetration may be used as cover.
- Look for a means to escape. Be sure you are not moving toward a shooter.
- If in doubt, find the safest place available and if possible, secure it.
- Call 911, and Campus Security (239-8312)

**Shooting is heard outside your Classroom or Office**

- Hearing gunfire may be your first indication that something is wrong. Assess the situation as best you can and take action.
- Remain calm.
- If you are in a classroom or office, stay there. Secure the door.
- Heavy furniture may also be used to barricade the door.
- Cover all windows and, if you can, turn off the lights.
- Depending on the gunman's location, consider evacuating through a window (first floor). Have someone watch as you get as many students out the window as calmly as possible.
- If windows won't open, or can not be broken, or you are not on the ground floor, get out of sight from the door. Stay low and quiet. Remain out of sight. Get

behind things that may offer protection such as walls, desks, file cabinets. Silence cell phones. Turn off computer monitors and radios.

- If a fire alarm sounds while you are locked down, assess the situation before leaving your shelter. Consider that the alarm may have been set off by the shooter. However, if you smell smoke or see fire, exit the building.
- Have ONE person call 911, and Campus Security (239-8312). Keep in mind that circuits may be busy.
- What to report:
  - Your location (Building name, room number)
  - Number of people at your location
  - Any injury information
  - Assailant information
    - Specific location
    - Number of assailants
    - Clothing description
    - Physical features (race, gender, height, weight, hair, glasses, etc)
    - Type of weapon (rifle, handgun)
    - Do you recognize the shooter? If so, give name.
    - Any explosions besides gunshots heard?
  - Do not hang up.
- Things to consider before opening the door, perhaps to allow others to seek refuge with you:
  - Consider the risk of exposure by opening the door.
  - Attempts to rescue people should only be made if that can be done without further endangering those inside the secured area. If there is any doubt, the area needs to remain secure.
  - Keep in mind that the shooter may bang on the door and yell for help in order to entice you to open the door. Do not respond to voice commands until you can verify with certainty that they are being issued by a police officer or college official.
- After calling police, convey to others that help is on the way.

### **You are trapped with a gunman**

- Do not do anything to provoke the gunman. If there is no shooting, do what he says, and do not move suddenly. Only you can draw the line on what you will or will not do to preserve your life or the lives of others.
- If shooting has begun, evaluate the situation as best you can before following any directions from the shooter. You need to make a choice (at this point, it is your choice):
  - Stay still, or “play dead” and hope you don’t get shot. Ducking for cover may leave you a partially exposed, passive target.
  - Run for an exit while zig-zagging (keeping in mind that a moving target is harder to hit than a stationary one),
  - If there appears to be no possibility of escape or potential for negotiation, then consider attacking the shooter with books, pencils, chairs, fists, and legs. This is very dangerous, but may not be more so than doing nothing. If you are going to fight, fight hard. Absolute resolve and total commitment

are necessary. A multiple person attack has a greater likelihood of success. Lone gunmen tend to not like resistance, and may be caught completely off guard by being attacked by an unarmed person. If the shooter is not completely subdued, only fight as long as needed to get away.

- You are responsible for keeping yourself safe.
- Apply basic first aid to the injured. For bleeding, apply direct pressure and elevate.
- Call 911, and Campus Security (239-8312). This may need to be done discretely.
- Be observant so as to provide as much information to authorities as possible.

## **Law Enforcement Response**

- Convey to others that law enforcement is on the way.
- Remain inside a secure area.
- Law enforcement's goal is to locate, contain and stop the shooter.
- Do exactly and immediately what police tell you to do. Do not run toward police. Consider carefully before doing anything that may cause you to be confused with the suspects. All present are potential suspects, and you may be treated brusquely and told to lay on the floor, or to keep your hands on your head. Remain calm and follow directions exactly.
- The shooter's mindset may not be to escape when law enforcement arrives. It may be to continue to shoot as many people as possible.
- Response to injured people:
  - Initial responding officers may not treat injuries or begin evacuation until the threat is neutralized.
  - You may need to explain this to others in an attempt to calm them.
- Evacuation:
  - Corridors for safe evacuation will be established. This may take some time.
  - Remain in secure area until instructed to do otherwise.
  - You may be searched.
  - You will be escorted from the building by law enforcement.
- The investigation:
  - Information will be released as quickly as possible
  - The entire area will be treated as a crime scene
  - Once you have evacuated, you will not be permitted to retrieve items, or access the crime scene.
  - After evacuation, you will be taken to an area for medical care, interviewing, counseling, etc.

## **College Emergency Response Team**

The Emergency Response Team will disseminate information, as soon as possible as it becomes available to the campus community. This will be done through the *Alertify* system (voice and email announcements) and web posts.