



Brock University

Active Shooter Protocol



You Can Prepare Yourself

You can make a difference simply by imagining various scenarios playing out in the places you take classes, study or work. Where are the exits? Do the doors lock? What would make a good barricade? What would make a good weapon? Ask yourself “What if...?” This kind of thinking is helpful in preparing for all kinds of emergency, wherever you may go.

Active Shooter Defined

An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no apparent pattern or method to how they choose their victims. Active shooter situations evolve quickly and there is no way to anticipate their course. Typically, the immediate deployment of police is needed to stop the shooting and mitigate harm. Active shooter situations can be over within 10 to 15 minutes. For this reason it is important that you are prepared to act quickly to protect yourself.

Get Out – Hide – Fight

Research has shown that most active shooter events end within minutes and active risk is often over before first responders arrive on the scene.

This is not a replacement of Brock’s existing “Lock-down/Shelter-in-Place” procedure, although applicable to an Active Shooter emergency, this is also applicable to many other emergencies that prevent us from evacuating classrooms, buildings or the campus.

- **Get out:**

- Getting out is by far the best option if you believe you can escape safely. This is why it is a good idea to make mental notes of means of escape wherever you may be on campus. If you hear something that could be gunshots, don’t wait: get out.

- **Hide:**

- Hide if you don’t know exactly where the shooting is happening or it’s too late to escape safely. Get behind a lockable door if you can. Barricade the door. Improvise with any object you can to prevent someone from entering.
- Once you are hidden, silence your phone, turn off the lights and stay quiet. If your spot is secure, be prepared to remain there until the police come to you with the all clear.

- ONLY in situations such as this should a building fire alarms be ignored; occupants will NOT evacuate unless otherwise informed by-way of the voice communication system, emergency notification system or the emergency services.
- **Fight:**
 - Fighting is your absolute last resort. You would only confront an active shooter if you somehow became trapped in a space with no escape. Active shooters typically don't respond to reason so you must assume they intend to harm you. Find an object you can use to strike the shooter with; trip them with a chair; be as aggressive as you can; do anything you can to stop them.

You will need to decide if you can do this. Remember, it is your decision.

About the Police

Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS), like other police response agencies has an active shooter program in place and it is called School Police Emergency Action Response (SPEAR). SPEAR is a program that designs and distributes school tactical evacuation plans. It is an effort between the community and police to make schools a safer place for attendees and staff. SPEAR safety plans prepare police, firefighters, paramedics, and school staff, for violent and hazardous events at or near a school.



You might be surprised by the actions of the police in an active shooter situation; to be clear, their first and primary priority will be to find and stop the shooter. Second, the police might not know exactly what the shooter looks like so they have to consider you a possible threat until ruled otherwise. For that reason, if you encounter police, don't run toward them. Remain calm. Keep your hands visible. Follow instructions.

Identifying a Person at Risk

There is no way to accurately predict who is on the way to becoming an active shooter, but there are behaviors that can indicate someone is in trouble. Be aware of the signs.

Behavioral changes: angry outbursts, agitation, poor hygiene, visible weight change, intimidation and bullying, altercations with others, intoxication or substance abuse, uttering hostile or offensive remarks, strange or disturbing behavior

Performance: repeated absences, missed deadlines, significant drop in performance, inappropriate or incoherent writing, frequently interrupting, and disruptive behavior

Social/Emotional: significant problems interacting with others, isolated or withdrawn, extreme or prolonged sadness, emotional outbursts, devoid of any emotions, erratic mood swings, excessive fatigue.

Reporting a Concern

If someone is committing violence, or about to commit violence, at the university, you can call 911, Campus Security at ext. 3200 or activate any emergency phone on campus.

If you are worried about something you observe, contact Campus Security Services at 905-688-5550, ext. 3200 OR simply dial 3200 from any internal phone.

Questions and Answers

1. Why are you promoting this kind of education when the scenario is so unlikely?

- There are three reasons for bringing this information to you:
 1. Post-Secondary Education (PSE) emergency planners believe this material could save a life, whether on a campus or anywhere else people may travel.
 2. Emergency planners are frequently asked for this information and we are responding to that request. People with this information often report that it brings a sense of empowerment and peace of mind.
 3. Finally, the information can be generalized. You can employ the thought process to prepare for any kind of emergency. This information encourages you to ask that powerful “What if” question.

2. Usually we're taught to just phone the police and wait when there's a crime. You're telling me to actually take actions. This is very different.

- Active shooter events happen very fast. They evolve quickly and are typically over in a matter of minutes. The police will come, but you need to think about those few minutes before they arrive, and you should have an idea of what to do when they do arrive.

3. Are you really suggesting attacking a person who has a gun?

- Keep in mind this is the last resort. Active shooters almost always continue until something happens to stop them. If you are trapped with nowhere to go, it might be your only choice. Nobody can force you to take this step, but you should at least be aware it is an option. What you do in such a situation is your own decision.

4. As a student, I move around all day. I'm in several different rooms and spaces. Am I supposed to have a detailed plan for everywhere I go?

- No, it's not practical to have a detailed plan for every situation. But you can take a moment in various locations to ask, “What if?” It will prompt you to make a mental note of exits and possible hiding places. That small amount of forethought could make the critical difference in how you react in a real emergency.

5. Are instructors expected to take the lead in an actual emergency such as this?

- It is impossible to predict how anyone will react in such an extreme event. Any one of us is capable of becoming a leader with the presence of mind to remember what to do and to take action. It might be an instructor, a member of administration, a member of support staff or a student. With this education, we are all equally prepared to make informed decisions for ourselves.

6. I've never heard a gunshot in real life. How will I know one if I hear one?

- The sound of gunfire can vary a lot. Sometimes it can sound like a firecracker. Sometimes it's more like a pop or a loud bang. Gunshots sound different inside and outside. It probably won't sound like you expect it to sound. The sound of gunfire on your campus, however, will be out of the ordinary. Listen and look for other clues and if there's any doubt in your mind, treat the situation as though it is gunfire.

7. Am I expected to save others from a shooter, such as people that might have mobility issues or freeze up, for example?

- You are not expected to be a hero. You must do what is right for you. If you are confident you can help others without putting yourself in unnecessary danger, you may choose to do so.

8. Does this education only apply when I'm on campus?

- No, the principles are the same wherever you are.

9. I've just watched the video and now feel anxious and upset. What do I do?

- It is okay to be upset. It can be helpful to talk to someone about your response. Most people find it helpful to talk with friends or colleagues. If the subject matter is especially distressing to you, however, there are resources available:
 - a. If you are a Brock University student, you can contact the [Student Wellness & Accessibility Centre \(SWAC\)](#), located in the Schmon Tower, ST400 or in [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#) building, located in Harrison Hall
 - Between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. contacts are as follows:
 - SWAC (Schmon Tower – ST400) call 905-688-5550 ext. 3240
 - Student Health Services (Harrison Hall) call 905-68-5550 ext. 3243
 - Access help from our urgent support **1-833-276-2533 (1-833-BROCK33)** or **001 416 382 3257** when out of the country
 - These and other 24/7 contacts and resources can be found on Brock's [Mental Health & Wellness](#) site.
 - b. If you are a member of Brock University staff/faculty, you can contact [Human Resources](#).
 - c. You also have the option of the anonymous, 24-hour support available through Ontario Mental Health Helpline. [Find information here about the Mental Health Help Line](#) or call directly: 1-866-531-2600.