

Policy Name: Active Shooter
Section: 3000 Operational: 3100 Administrative
Policy Number: 0000

Purpose: To ensure the safety of park patrons, class participants, employees and others by specifying how to respond in the event of an active shooter incident on park premises.

Reference: U.S. Department of Homeland Security website, www.dhs.gov

Definition:

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area, typically through the use of firearms.

Policy

The intent of this policy is to provide general guidelines on what to expect in the event of an active shooter on park premises, and how to best protect the lives of park patrons, class participants, employees, and any others at the scene of the incident.

Because incidents involving active shooters are unpredictable and evolve very quickly, often times before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with active shooter situations.

Training:

It is the view of the District that training and exercises are the best activities to help employees to react quickly and effectively in emergency situations. Active Shooter Emergency Action Plans will be prepared for those District facilities that are determined to be most at risk for an active shooter incident, and will be located in the District's Accident Prevention Plan. Active shooter drills will be conducted in these facilities on a regular basis.

In addition, general staff training will be provided to all District employees in order to develop awareness of active shooter situations and educate employees on how to best respond in the face of them.

Emergency Notification System:

A standardized communications plan is necessary to ensure all responding agencies are able to communicate effectively in the event of an active shooter incident. The District will have in place a predetermined communication plan that should be reviewed with all agencies that may respond to an active shooter incident.

Partnerships and good working relationships with agencies as well as the news media are encouraged, and should be developed beforehand. District managers should be taught how to communicate effectively in the face of an active shooter event so prepared when and if such an event should occur.

General Response for when an Active Shooter is on Park Premises:

When gun fire is heard or someone announces that an active shooter is on park premises, staff members will call 911 immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so. The following information should be provided:

- An active shooter is on the grounds
- Location of premises and shooter
- Number of shooters, if more than one
- Physical description of shooter if possible
- Approximately how many people are on the site (number of potential victims)

In the event of an active shooter incident, the following steps should be taken:

RUN: If it is safe to do so, the first course of action should be to run. All belongings should be left behind, and hands should be visible to show they are not armed. Staff should be trained to visualize possible escape routes.

HIDE: If it is not safe to run, or if unable to get out, the next course of action should be to hide. Any doors or entries to hiding area should be locked and barricaded. Lights should be turned off and windows covered. Cell phones and electronic devices should be turned off so they do not give away the hiding area. Anyone hiding should be very quiet.

FIGHT: As a last resort, when trapped, unable to run or hide, and life is in imminent danger, fight. Keep moving, throw objects to distract the shooter, act with physical aggression to incapacitate the shooter with the help of others when possible.

Staff members should be aware that this will be a highly charged situation, and that it will be important to stay calm and think.

General Response for when Law Enforcement Arrives:

In most active shooter situations, the immediate deployment of law enforcement will be needed to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. When law enforcement arrives, staff members should remain calm, keep hands visible and fingers spread if asked to show their hands to avoid giving any reason for officers to suspect they are the shooter. Staff members should not pick up weapons.

Staff members should be aware that officers may be armed and will do what is necessary to take control of the situation. This could involve commands that are shouted, pushing individuals to the ground for safety, or using pepper spray, tear gas, or weapons. Any instructions given by law enforcement should be followed.

Staff should be aware that the first priority for responding law enforcement is to respond to the threat, engage, and neutralize the active shooter as soon as possible. All other actions such as assisting injured persons are secondary. Additional officers and emergency medical personnel will follow the initial officers to assist in these areas.

After the threat has been neutralized, staff members should assist the first responders in any way that is needed. This could involve evacuating the area, identifying participants, and providing first aid within the scope of an employee's practice.

Interaction with Media:

Staff members should not provide information about the incident to anyone outside of the first responders and Park District managerial staff. Management should be notified of the incident if this has not already been done.

All external communications about the incident will be coordinated and released by the Executive Director or his/her designee. An emphasis should be placed on getting accurate information out early to avoid misinformation due to social media.