

## **ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: SCHOOL SAFETY – ACTIVE SHOOTER**

### **What is an Active Shooter?**

The term active shooter began to be used in the wake of the Columbine High School Massacre. The United States Department of Homeland Security describes an active shooter as “an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined space or other populated areas. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.”



### **How to Prepare for an Active Shooter Situation**

Since active shooter situations develop so quickly and provide little or no warning, it is difficult to prepare for them, but developing, discussing and practicing basic steps can make a difference in saving lives until law enforcement arrives.

- **The Best Option – Run**
  - The best option in an active shooter scenario is to flee the premises and remove yourself from the shooter’s path. Unfortunately, this is not always a viable option as escaping could put you in greater danger if it brings you closer to the shooter. If after assessing the situation you determine you can safely evacuate:
    - Call 911 if you can do so safely.
    - Warn any individuals you encounter to not enter the area.
    - Leave your personal belongings behind.
    - Have your escape route planned in your mind.
    - Resist the urge to move or evacuate wounded people.
    - If possible, assist other able-bodied people in fleeing.
    - Comply with all law enforcement requests.
    - Raise hands, keep them visible and spread your fingers.
- **Hide**
  - If the shooter is at the entrance of a building, you may not be able to get out safely so hide quickly.
    - Aim for an enclosed room with locks but try to avoid bathrooms since they are easily accessible.
    - Quickly and quietly barricade the door and grab anything that could be a useful weapon.
    - Make sure you are hidden or out of sight.
  - Remain silent.
    - Silence your phone until you are sure the danger has passed.
    - Don’t make any noise.