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AfriForum

Active shooter

More and more active shooter incidents are happening internationally and the risk is real. Taking a few precautionary steps now can help you react quickly when every second counts. In South Africa guns are regulated by strict law, but you must always prepare for the worst.

An active shooter is an individual engaged in attempting to kill people in a confined space or populated area. Active shooters typically use firearms and have a pattern to select their victims. This can happen anywhere and any time.

If you are involved in an active shooter incident:

- If you see something, say something.
- Before you run, know the exits.
- Find a place to hide.
- Learn first aid skills so you can help others.
- Help law enforcement.
- Seek help to cope with trauma.



How to stay safe when an active shooter threatens:

Prepare now

- If you see suspicious activity, let the authorities or your AfriForum neighbourhood watch know right away.
- Different places, such as your school, workplace, or house of worship may have plans in place to help you respond safely. Ask about these plans and get familiar with them. If you participate in an active shooter drill, tell your family about what you learned and how to apply it to other locations.
- When you visit a building such as a shopping mall, healthcare facility or any public facility, take time to identify two nearby exits. Get in the habit of doing this.

- Map out places to hide. In rooms without windows, behind solid doors with locks, under desks, or behind heavy furniture such as large filing cabinets can make good hiding places.
- Sign up for first aid training. Learn how to help others.

Surviving during

- **Run:** Getting away from the shooter or shooters is top priority. Leave your things behind and run away. If it is safe to do so, warn others nearby. Call the authorities and AfriForum's neighbourhood watch when you are safe. Describe each shooter, their location, and weapons.
- **Hide:** If you cannot get away safely, find a place to hide. Get out of the shooter's view and stay very quiet. Silence your electronic devices and make sure they won't vibrate. Lock and block doors, close blinds, and turn off the lights. Do not hide in groups – spread out along walls or hide separately to make it more difficult for the shooter. Try to silently communicate with police or your AfriForum neighbourhood watch – through text messages or by putting a sign in an exterior window. Stay in place until law enforcement gives you notice that all immediate danger has been cleared.
- **Fight:** Your last resort when you are in immediate danger is to defend yourself. Commit to your actions and act aggressively to stop the shooter. Ambushing the shooter by using makeshift weapons such as chairs, fire extinguishers, scissors, and books can distract and disarm the shooter.

Be safe after

- Keep hands visible and empty when you are on the move.
- Know that law enforcement's first task is to end the incident. They may have to pass injured persons along the way.
- Follow law enforcement's instructions and evacuate in the direction they tell you, keeping your hands visible and empty above your head.
- Consider seeking professional help for you and your family to cope with the long-term effects of trauma. AfriForum has a trauma unit that can assist.

