



PSCINST 5532

16 JUN 2014

PERSONNEL SERVICE CENTER INSTRUCTION 5532

Subj: PSC ACTIVE SHOOTER GUIDANCE AND RESPONSE PLAN

Ref: (a) Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Educational Booklet  
(b) Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Pocket Card

1. PURPOSE. This instruction provides guidance on the nature of active shooter situations, recommended response actions and emphasizes the role of all individuals working at PSC in maintaining collective security.
2. ACTION. Personnel assigned to PSC shall familiarize themselves with this guidance and regularly rehearse responding to an active shooter emergency.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None
4. DISCUSSION. This directive provides primary guidance on active shooter situations to all PSC members and supplements information provided in references (a) and (b).
5. CONCEPT. The Department of Homeland Security defines an active shooter as an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in confined and populated areas. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter incidents throughout the country have been on the rise. Because of the sudden and rapidly developing nature of these situations, PSC personnel need to thoroughly rehearse response actions to an active shooter scenario ahead of time to ensure the collective security of all employees. A response plan does not need to be complicated, but should be considered prior to an active shooter attack taking place.
6. RESPONSIBILITIES. All personnel are responsible on an individual level for maintaining the collective security of PSC; to ensure the safest possible work environment, every member should maintain an awareness of their surroundings. All personnel shall take note of and query visitors not displaying proper ID cards; alert supervisors if someone seems disturbed or unstable and never accept situations that just "don't feel/look right." Early recognition and detection is a critical defense against an active shooter situation, and maintaining proper vigilance is the surest way to maintain a safe and productive work environment.
7. RESPONSE. In the event of an actual active shooter, PSC personnel shall remain calm at all times and take the following actions:
  - a. PRIMARY ACTION: EVACUATE.
    - 1) During an active shooter event, any personnel who can safely evacuate the building should do so. Review possible escape routes and choose the route furthest from danger in an actual emergency. Do not try to gather up belongings; doing so will only delay your escape to safety. Escape if possible, even if others choose to stay and hide. Remember to keep your

hands visible during evacuation to ensure law enforcement personnel can easily recognize you as a non-threat.

2) If you are not in the building when you receive notification that an active shooter situation is underway, remain away from the site until you have confirmation that the danger has passed. Do NOT return to the building to assist or for the sake of accountability; use whatever means possible to notify your chain of command that you are safe and in a secure location.

3) After evacuating, personnel should do what is necessary to keep unaware persons from entering into the building and possible danger.

4) PSC will not have a pre-established muster location for an active shooter evacuation to prevent gathering Coast Guard personnel in a location that could be affected by a secondary attack, such as a vehicle explosive or additional shooter(s). Active shooter situations vary in nature and are unpredictable. Personnel should follow the directions of law enforcement officers upon evacuating the building.

**b. SECONDARY ACTION: HIDE.**

1) Preventing an active shooter from finding you will also ensure your safety in an emergency. Quickly hide under a desk, in a closet, or any area you will not be readily seen, preferably behind material that can stop a bullet. If possible, turn off lights, lock the door to the space, and barricade the entry with heavy objects. Remain quiet to avoid attracting attention. Remember to silence your cellular phone or any other electronic devices with you.

2) Remain hidden and quiet until law enforcement arrives to clear your space or you are notified that the active shooter threat has been neutralized.

**c. TERTIARY ACTION: FIGHT BACK.**

1) Only as a *last resort* and only when *your life is in imminent danger*, take action against the shooter. If taking action is your only option, improvise weapons with materials available, work with others in your space to act together, commit to your plan, and act with as much physical aggression possible to incapacitate the shooter.

d. As it is possible an active shooter situation could occur while personnel are away from their desk or primary place of work, consideration should be made for the above plans for other spaces such as restrooms, break rooms, conference spaces, and hallways.

e. If a guest(s) is in the building when an active shooter event happens, personnel who are familiar with the layout of the spaces and evacuation routes should assist the guest(s) to evacuate or hide, whichever option being the safest. If a guest runs into danger against the advice of local personnel, it is not the responsibility of PSC personnel to try to save them.

8. **NOTIFICATIONS.** Rapidly disseminating the details of an active shooter situation is critical to ensuring people have the time to evacuate, hide or take whatever action is necessary to keep PSC safe. Alerting law enforcement is just as critical. The vast majority of active shooter incidents have required active law enforcement intervention to end the emergency. Notifications shall not take the place of ensuring personal safety and the safety of those in the immediate vicinity, but if possible, PSC members shall strive to make the following notifications (in order of importance) in the event of an active shooter situation:

- a. Immediately alert those in the immediate vicinity of an active shooter by any means available. Do NOT pull a fire alarm.
- b. Alert the entire PSC Command by email if possible using the ARL-DG-AllArlington email address. Even a blank email with “active shooter” and the location in the subject line will suffice.
- c. Any personnel with access to the Coast Guard Alert Warning System (AWS) should activate the system with an “Active Shooter” message. The AWS is designed to spread information and take personnel accountability if necessary through cell phones, pagers, and email addresses. The standard “Active Shooter” message will be set up to broadcast that an active shooter event is in progress to ALL personnel attached to the Ballston office complex. PSC will work with other units collocated at Ballston so all personnel in the building are in the AWS. It is the responsibility of all personnel to ensure their information is up to date in the system.
- d. *When you are in a safe position*, call 911 to alert law enforcement and increase their ability to respond as quickly as possible. When notifying emergency response, any details regarding exact location of the shooter(s), type of weapons used, physical description and the number of perpetrators involved will greatly assist response efforts.
- e. *When you are in a safe position*, alert the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) Washington Field Office at 703-872-6700. Their offices are on the 7<sup>th</sup> deck. CGIS armed field agents who are already in the building will have the quickest response time possible to mitigate damage caused by an active shooter and possibly save lives.
- f. *When you are in a safe position*, notify the building management office in the basement at (703) 243-6346 or building security at (703) 243-2292 (direct to security personnel radios). The Ballston office public announcement system can be accessed from the building management office to spread information through the building and the security force can assist with evacuations.

Notification to PSC personnel not in the vicinity of the active shooter will depend on the situation and may come via the Ballston public announcement speaker system, email, phone or text message. Notification from the Command will include directed actions and the most expeditious means of escape. When notified to evacuate because of an active shooter situation, do so immediately without worrying about retrieving personal items, logging off of workstations or any other actions that could delay getting to safety.

9. INTERACTING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT. Law enforcement intervention is key to successful resolution of an active shooter incident. In addition to providing key incident details when initially notifying authorities, PSC members need to be aware of how to interact with response personnel when they arrive. All law enforcement personnel in an active shooter situation will have a heightened response posture. Enabling law enforcement to easily discern between fleeing innocent people and a shooter engaging in violence is vitally important to staying safe. Adhere to the following principles when law enforcement personnel arrive:

- a. Remain calm and follow any instructions given by responders. Do NOT run toward officers, wave wildly, yell, or scream. These noises and actions could alert an active shooter to the presence or location of law enforcement.
- b. Avoid making any rapid gestures and keep hands raised and visible at all times to avoid being mistaken for carrying any type of weapon.

c. Do not stop officers to ask questions. If you have relevant information regarding the active shooter such as location, weapons or movements, provide it to a nearby officer calmly and quickly then continue your evacuation to a safe location.

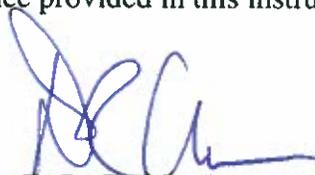
d. It is important to note that first responders are NOT medical personnel. Law enforcement officers' priority is to find and neutralize the active shooter threat, NOT provide medical assistance. As soon as law enforcement determine an area or floor is safe from threat, medical personnel will respond to those who are injured.

10. REPORTING. Any known or suspected active shooter situation shall be reported to the Coast Guard Investigative Service Washington Field Office even if they are not part of the response.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES. If you have any questions regarding this authorization, please seek guidance from your chain of command or the Command Security Officer.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this instruction and have been determined to be non-applicable.

13. FORMS/REPORTS. All divisions within PSC shall display copies of the Active Shooter Response Guide (enclosure 1) within applicable work spaces to remind personnel of response actions and encourage review of the guidance provided in this instruction.



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Commander, Personnel Service Center

Encl: (1) PSC Active Shooter Response Guide



# Coast Guard Personnel Service Center Active Shooter Response Guide



Initial Notification and Directed Action for an Active Shooter may come via the internal Ballston speaker system (1MC), e-mail, txt, or phone call.

## Primary Action - EVACUATE

- Rehearse escape routes ahead of time
- Leave your belongings behind
- Keep your hands visible
- **Secondary Action - HIDE OUT**
- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view (under a desk, in a closet, etc.)
- Block entry to your hiding place, lock the doors and silence your cellphone

## Tertiary Action - TAKE ACTION

- Only as a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
- Act with physical aggression to incapacitate the shooter

## WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES

- Remain calm and follow instructions
- Put down any items in your hands
- Raise hands and keep them visible
- Avoid quick movements toward officers or any pointing, yelling or screaming
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or directions while evacuating

## INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR 911 OPERATOR

- Location/# of shooters/Physical description of the active shooters and weapon types
- # and location of potential victims

**If you are the first to identify an Active Shooter event please make a notification when able to one of the following:**

-Alert CGIS Washington Field Office at 703-872-6700 or 911 when safely possible.

-Alert PSC personnel w/an all-hands email, subject "Active Shooter" stating the location in the body of the email if safely possible. Distribution list: ARL-DG-AllArlington

-Verbally alert personnel in your workspace and in your path of evacuation.