

FORCE PROTECTION ADVISORY & INFORMATION

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Purpose: Provide situational awareness and recommendations on Force Protection areas of concern.

SHOPPING MALL SHOOTER – A DEFENSIVE RESPONSE

An “Active Shooter” is an armed person who has used deadly force against other persons, and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.



Examples of active shooters include:

- 22 July 2009 – Fort Lewis PX (Single target)
- 2 June 2009 – Wal-Mart Lakewood, WA
- 4 April 2009 – Fort Bliss PX (Single Target)
- 23 November 2008 – Tukwila, WA – Mall Shooting
- 5 December 2007 – Omaha, NE – Mall Shooting
- 12 February 2007 – Salt Lack City, UT – Mall Shooting
- 24 December 2006 – Boynton Beach, FL – Mall Shooting

As can be seen from the above examples, there is a real possibility of being involved in an active shooter incident in shopping malls and other areas where large numbers of people gather. The shooter maybe after a single target but it could escalate into multiple targets of opportunity or in their mind necessity. Being aware of your surroundings and the possibility of danger is your best defense. Be alert, and stay aware (but don't become paranoid).

If you are in a shopping mall or similar area and hear gunfire the following tips can aid in your survival:

- Always know where the TWO nearest exits are in any building you visit.



- If you hear gunfire or see an active shooter – seek cover immediately.
- Move to the nearest exit that takes you away from the sound of gunfire and away from the active shooter. – Be aware of the risk from a panicked crowd; all trying to escape through a single exit. – Don't forget about using fire exits, delivery areas, and “employee only” exits to escape an active shooter.
- If you can't get out of the building your next best option is to lock yourself in a room separate from the active shooter and wait for law enforcement.
- If you are armed do NOT engage the active shooter unless your life is in immediate danger. (One of the victims in the Tacoma Mall shooting unsuccessfully attempted to engage the active shooter – and was shot for his attempt.) Only trained Law Enforcement personnel, following department policy, should take offensive action against an active shooter.

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