



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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PERSONAL SAFETY— WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

For the most part, as you go about your day, you do not fear being attacked, robbed or assaulted. When compared to property crimes, crimes to the person (robbery, assault, domestic violence) are dramatically fewer. In its annual report for 2014, the Sheriff’s Office reported a total of 4,402 violent crimes compared to 12,111 property crimes (burglary, malicious mischief, theft, vehicle theft) for unincorporated portions of Snohomish County.

As you go about your day, however, it’s always a good idea to be prepared. Driving to and from work or the grocery store, walking in a parking garage, or walking down a city street are situations that can provide opportunity for an attacker.

By having an attitude that you can survive an attack, being aware of your surroundings, and carrying yourself in a confident manner you can deter a potential attack.

Another situation that unfortunately we have become more aware of in the last 15 to 20 years is the “active shooter.” The shooting at Marysville-Pilchuck High School last year made clear the pain to a community that an active shooter incident can cause. The potential for this type of violence is not limited to our schools. It can also happen at work, in malls, or in government spaces.

Law enforcement agencies around the country have changed their tactics in responding to active shooter calls. They also have changed their advice to citizens on what they should do in an active shooter situation.

Their recommendations now encourage citizens to Run, Hide, Fight in that order of priority. The strategy is important in that most active shooter incidents occur quickly and only last an average of 12 minutes. According to the FBI, thirty-seven percent last less than 5 minutes. Forty-three percent of the time the crime is over before police arrive, while fifty-seven percent of the time an officer arrives while the shooting is still underway.

Planning is important to avoid becoming injured. Knowing the nearest escape routes will help in escaping the situation. Also, being aware of furniture or equipment in your immediate workspace to block entrances, or to help hide from the attacker can help your survival. Finally, having a basic plan to attack the shooter will help to disrupt if not stop the shooter.

While the chance of violence is low, planning for it will help to avoid a potential violent situation, or help you successfully survive an attack.



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PERSONAL SAFETY– STATES OF AWARENESS

- **White**– *You are completely unaware of what is going on around you. Predators look for people in this state.*
- **Yellow**– *You are aware of what is going on around you. You are relaxed but alert to your surroundings. While in this state, you can evaluate how safe you are, play “what if” and plan escape routes, and take in enough information to “go with your gut” in taking action.*
- **Orange**– *You have detected a potential threat to you. You should make a plan to protect yourself.*
- **Red**– *You are actively protecting yourself. This is when you are in a “fight or flight” mode.*
- **Black**– *You are so overwhelmed that you become a complete victim.*

PERSONAL SAFETY– PREVENTING AN ATTACK

You can deter an attack by keeping the following in mind:

An “I will survive” mindset. Your mind set should be that you will do anything to survive. Ultimately, you need to be ready to handle any situation that you encounter. You don’t have to be an expert in judo, boxing, or shooting a gun. You just have to know that you will not allow yourself to be victimized.

It all depends on the situation. The actions that you need to take can be as simple as shoving an assailant and running away. It can be as drastic as kicking, punching, biting, and gouging eyes to protect yourself. You have to make up your mind ahead of time that you will survive.

An awareness of your surroundings.

Pay attention to what is going on around you whether you are driving or walking. Keep your phone in your pocket. Look around you as you travel.

How You Carry Yourself. As you go about your day, your body language can project confidence.

Your body language should project confidence. Criminals may prey on those who they sense lack confidence. They stay away from people who seem confident.

As you walk on the street, walk with purpose. Act like you know where you

are going. Don’t be distracted with your smartphone or music player. Look at people as you go down the street.

Personal Boundaries. Part of self defense is knowing your boundaries. Boundaries are limits that you set between yourself and other people. Boundaries can be expressed in thoughts, activities or possessions. They are restrictions on what others can do to you or with you. You set boundaries to protect yourself physically, mentally and emotionally.

By knowing your boundaries and being confident in your boundaries you can sense where you should be (or should not be), you can evaluate your interactions with other people, strangers and friends.

If someone gets into your "zone" or crosses your boundaries, protect yourself. you can protect yourself verbally, with movement or with a gesture.

ACTIVE SHOOTER- STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

It is unthinkable to imagine that someone would enter a school, church, workplace, or mall and randomly shoot people. The shock of such an action often freezes people who have not prepared in advance.

While not 100% preventable, an active shooter incident can be thwarted when people around the potential shooter are aware of his behavior and take action.

Some considerations:

- No one demographic profile makes up an active shooter.
- Many active shooters show pre-attack behaviors that if recognized can be disrupted before a planned attack.
- The underlying motivations for an attack often involves an unresolved real or perceived grievance coupled with the perception that a violent resolution is justified.
- A person who makes a threat is rarely the same as the person who poses a threat.
- Friends and family of the shooter have the opportunity to detect and recognize the potential for violence. They have the best chance to determine if an individual has initiated a plan to commit violence. While sophisticated mental health and behavioral analysis may be needed, the potential shooter can be stopped.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "Active Shooter, How to Respond" recommends that good practices for coping with an active shooter situation include:

- Being aware of your environment and of any possible dangers in it.
- Taking note of the two nearest exits in any facility that you visit.

If you find your self in an active shooter situation, you need to evaluate if you should, run, hide or fight:

Run. Evaluate if it is safe for you to escape to safety:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep you hands visible.
- Follow the instructions of police officers.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 911 when you are safe.

ACTIVE SHOOTER-RESOURCES

You can find more information about active shooter situations at:

US Department of Homeland Security ,
"Active Shooter, How to Respond"

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf

FBI:

Active Shooter Incidents

<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incidents>

"Active Shooter Event, Quick Reference Guide"

<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incidents/active-shooter-event-quick-reference-guide-04-29-14>

ACTIVE SHOOTER- CONTINUED

Hide. If it is not safe to run, hide.

- Your hiding place should:
 - Be out of the active shooter's view.
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e. an office with a closed and locked door).
 - Not trap you or restrict your options for movement.
- To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:
 - Lock the door.
 - Blockade the door with heavy furniture.
- If the active shooter is nearby:
 - Lock the door.
 - Silence your cell phone and/or pager.
 - Turn off any source of noise (radios, televisions)
 - Hide behind large items (cabinets, desks)
 - Remain quiet.
- Remain calm.
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location (this may be where texting 911 is useful).
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- **Fight.** As a last resort, disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter:
 - Act as aggressively as possible against him/her.
 - Throw items and improvised weapons.
 - Yell.

When law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, follow officers' instructions.
- Put down any items in your hands.
- Immediately raise your hands and keep them visible at all times.
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling.

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

Online Tips: <http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477