



An open letter to campus about active threats

Dear Colleagues, Students and Guests,

It is impossible to miss this stark reality: almost weekly, we see news of random, active attacks on communities. There is no denying that we find ourselves in a world of ever evolving types of mass casualty violence by guns, vehicle, bombs and other devices. These incidents often target workplaces, universities and schools, and public locations such as events, malls, bars and restaurants.

While none of us want to think that it could happen to us, here on campus or anywhere, we must face that possibility.

I'm writing today to ask you to make a plan.

Plan now to survive, and research shows that you are more likely to live through an active assailant attack.

It's difficult to think about. But, your plan does not have to be elaborate:

Run, Hide or Fight.

If you can, run.

- Have an escape route in mind. While you're walking to class or your office at the beginning of each semester, think about where you'd go if an incident occurred. Check out exits in other public places, and practice situational awareness.
- Leave your belongings behind. If you can, take your cell phone with you, but don't risk your life for it. Help others if possible, but do not place yourself in further harm by attempting to convince others to follow you.
- Keep running until you are far away from the threat and are in a safe place.
- Once you are safe, call 911. In Larimer County, you also can send a text. Try to give as much information as you have to assist first responders
- Keep your hands visible if police are already responding. They need to see you don't have a weapon.

If you cannot run, consider the option of hiding.

- Hide in an area out of threat's way. Under a desk, behind a bush alongside a building foundation, in a copy or meeting room, or closet. Anywhere you can get to quickly.
- If you are hiding inside, block the entry of the room, turn off the lights, radios or TVs, and computer monitors and lock the doors and windows.
- Close blinds or curtains if you can.
- Keep calm and out of sight
- Silence your cell phone and other electronic devices.
- Call or text 911 when it is safe to do so.

If hiding does not work or is not an option, then you must be prepared to fight.

- As a last resort, and ONLY when your life is in imminent danger, fight.
- Try to incapacitate the threat. You must be prepared to fight for your life.
- Act with physical aggression and improvise weapons from your surroundings. Chairs, fire extinguishers and other items are good weapons.
- Use everything you have – call upon all of your strength and commit 100 percent to your actions. Plan to take the assailant out.

There is no set formula, and being mentally prepared with your options and what you might do within your most common environments is the best defense to an active assailant. Your decision must quickly calculate nuances such as your proximity to the situation and your judgment about whether or not you can get away or hide.

One of the harshest realities is that active threats are over within minutes, long before police have a chance to fully understand what or who the threat is, where it is, and what is happening. We won't know immediately if the assailant is working alone or there is more than one. It takes time for law enforcement agencies to understand the full extent of an active threat – time you won't have while determining your plan. It important to know that initial information that reaches police is almost always incomplete or inaccurate. Reporting parties – those who call 911 when an incident is occurring -- are under extreme stress – and they may misspeak when giving information, they only know a part of the big picture of information, and we may receive conflicting information. Complete and accurate information always comes after the threat is over in the hours, days and sometimes weeks of its aftermath.

This is why the best advice is to remember your options: run, hide or fight. Think about them while going about your daily life. What would you do?

Finally, and perhaps one of the most important points, is that the best response to an active threat is prevention. In virtually every situation, someone knew something wasn't right before an assault occurred. Even if you have limited information, we may have additional information from other sources that we can put together with what you tell us, and create a better picture of a concern.

- Use Tell Someone if you sense that someone who is a CSU student or employee is struggling with mental health issues and may need help, or if their actions seem “off” to you.
- Call 911 immediately – do not wait – if you see something that doesn't seem right to you.
- If a situation doesn't feel right, leave it.

You are the best prevention to an active threat, when you are engaged in reporting as soon as possible things that do not seem right or are of a concern.

Make a plan. Run. Hide. Fight.



Sincerely,
Chief Scott Harris
CSUPD

CSUPD is constantly preparing for, training for, and mindful of circumstances that would indicate any active threats that may be on or impact campus.

We offer group trainings to any interested parties on campus, such as student groups, residence halls, offices, and even classes.

Here's a link to more information, as well as to a video anyone can watch at any time that provides the best advice for individuals. We use this video during our group training for students and employees <https://police.colostate.edu/active-shooter-resources>.

We also encourage all students and employees to pay attention to emergency alerts. The university will send email and text alerts when there is an ongoing threat to campus. Those alerts go to students and employees. Everyone automatically receives an email, but students and employees must enroll in text messages. For more information about how to do that, see this webpage (<https://safety.colostate.edu/communication-during-emergencies>).