

UMBC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESPONSE GUIDE

ACTIVE ASSAILANT SURVIVOR ACTIONS

Updated: 01/22/2024



IMPROVE YOUR AWARENESS

FIREARMS ARE PROHIBITED AT UMBC

- ❑ UMBC prohibits firearms on the University campus and at all University facilities and grounds.
- ❑ Call UMBC Police at **(410) 455-5555** if you witness a firearm in a prohibited location.
- ❑ Pay attention to your surroundings. Avoid "autopilot" and know at least one other emergency exit route than the one you are most familiar with.

COMMON TYPES OF ATTACKS

- ❑ Attackers may **PUSH** into your area...commit a blunt-force attack to crash through security.
- ❑ Attackers may **SMUGGLE** a weapon...attempt to get closer to potential victims before attacking.
- ❑ Attackers may gain **ACCESS** through an unlocked exit to avoid detection and set up an ambush.
- ❑ Attackers may **BARRICADE** exits and attempt to prevent people from escaping.
- ❑ What do gun shots sound like? Expect them to be **RAPID, SUCCESSIVE, REPEATING, and LOUD.**

LEARN SURVIVAL SKILLS

- ❑ You must have a strategy to survive the **FIRST 3 TO 5 CRITICAL MINUTES** of an attack before police arrive.
- ❑ **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.** At the first sign of an attack, do not ignore what is happening. Act with intention and do not waste time.
- ❑ **RESIST FREEZING.** You will experience panic and paralysis. Command yourself to "MOVE."
- ❑ **COMBAT BREATHING** can lower your heart rate to reduce panic. Breathe in counting 1, 2, 3, 4. Visualize each number as you count. Hold your breath counting 1, 2, 3, 4. Exhale counting 1, 2, 3, 4 and repeat.
- ❑ You will experience **DENIAL & DISBELIEF** ("This isn't happening") and **DELIBERATION** ("What do I do?"). Push through to your **DECISIVE MOMENT** ("Let's go!") to act quickly and commit to your decision.
- ❑ **WHAT YOU DO MATTERS.** Understand how **RUN - HIDE - FIGHT** and **AVOID - DENY - DEFEND** are different and what each strategy means for you.

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

REPORT YOUR CONCERNS

- ❑ Report any threatening activity, including online activity, to UMBC Police at (410) 455-5555.
- ❑ **DO NOT IGNORE BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN.** Report behaviors that make you feel uncomfortable, seem inappropriate, disturbing, or feel unsafe. You have the power to walk-away and disengage.
- ❑ Prevent unauthorized entry to buildings through doors that have been propped open or have broken locks.
- ❑ If you find an inoperable or propped open emergency exit, try to secure it and inform UMBC Police.

CALL FOR HELP

- ❑ If you are on campus during an attack, call UMBC Police at **(410) 455-5555.**
- ❑ Expect extremely high call volume. You may not get through immediately...keep trying.
- ❑ When off campus, ensure you are safe, then dial 911.

WATCH FOR ALERTS

- ❑ If UMBC Police receive reports of an attack on or near campus, expect to see this alert:

"ACTIVE ASSAILANT ATTACK REPORTED ON CAMPUS. LOCKDOWN YOUR AREA. RUN-HIDE-FIGHT IF YOU ARE IN DANGER."

- ❑ **THIS IS A CONFIRMED THREAT.** You may also hear sirens and loudspeaker messages outdoors.
- ❑ **LOCKDOWN** means deny access to potential intruders. If there are no obvious signs of danger in your immediate area, lock the entrances to your work areas, classrooms, and living spaces.
- ❑ **RUN - HIDE - FIGHT** instructs you to escape and survive. Take action if there are obvious signs that you are in immediate danger, like the sound of gunshots.
- ❑ **DO NOT EXPECT TO BE TOLD THE LOCATION.** We may not know the exact attack location, attackers will move, and adding a location to the message takes away from your 3 to 5 minutes of critical survival time.
- ❑ UMBC Police will send a follow-up alert as soon as possible but expect this to take some time.

POLICE RESPONSE

- ❑ Police priorities are: 1) stop the attacker; 2) rescue survivors; 3) clear the area of any other threats.
- ❑ Police may shout commands, pull you away from threats, or push you to the ground.
- ❑ Be compliant. Drop everything. Leave belongings behind. Do not have anything in your hands that police may mistake for a weapon... even your phone.
- ❑ Remain in areas of safety as instructed by police. Expect to be held there until the scene is cleared.

LOCKDOWN

DENY ACCESS TO INTRUDERS

- ❑ If you receive an active assailant alert and there are no obvious signs of immediate danger, like the sound of gunshots, secure your building to prevent access.
- ❑ Anyone who recognizes an immediate threat in their building or area can initiate a lockdown. Take initiative and once you are safe, call UMBC Police.
- ❑ Most campus buildings have exterior glass. Locking exterior doors may not provide protection and the act of locking exterior entries may put people at risk.
- ❑ **COMPARTMENTALIZE**...secure interior access points to lockdown multiple adjoining rooms or suites.
- ❑ Only a few buildings on campus have remote lockdown. Most buildings must be locked manually.

IDENTIFY SAFE-HAVENS

- ❑ Rooms that protect from an attacker. Ideally, these:
 - Have working door locks you can lock from inside.
 - Provide some protection from gunfire.
 - Conceal you from being seen or heard.
 - Have no interior windows.
 - May have exterior windows to allow you to signal rescuers, but this may impact protection.
- ❑ You may have to relocate to a safe-haven on a lower floor. Avoid going up to a higher floor...this puts you further from escape routes.
- ❑ Get to a safe-haven quickly. If you cannot reach one before it is locked, you must find other protection.
- ❑ Lead people in your area to safety. If the threat is not immediate, give people the time needed to reach safety before closing and locking the doors.
- ❑ Secure all entrances once people are inside.
- ❑ **DO NOT OPEN FOR ANYONE OR ANY REASON UNTIL AFTER POLICE ISSUE THE ALL-CLEAR.**
- ❑ If police require entry before the ALL-CLEAR, they can gain access using their keys.
- ❑ You can also call UMBC Police at (410) 455-5555 to verify the identity and location of police offices.
- ❑ If there is no threat in your room, police can take the time necessary to confirm their identity.

EMPOWER YOURSELF

CHANGE YOUR THINKING & BEHAVIOR

- ❑ Maintain situational awareness and avoid distractions, like your phone, when occupying public spaces.
- ❑ Take personal responsibility for your own safety and security through knowledge and preparedness.
- ❑ Also visit <https://police.umbc.edu/emergency-preparedness/active-assailant-awareness/>.

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RUN-HIDE-FIGHT & AVOID-DENY-DEFEND

WHAT YOU DO MATTERS

- ❑ **NEVER PULL THE FIRE ALARM!** This will create additional confusion and put more people in danger.
- ❑ Evaluate these strategies along 3 dimensions: 1) the danger involved, 2) how much time you have, and 3) the physical and mental effort each requires.
- ❑ **RUN - HIDE - FIGHT** assumes people will be reactive and act out of fear.
- ❑ **AVOID - DENY - DEFEND** requires you to be more proactive to improve your knowledge and develop better situational awareness.
- ❑ **RUN** and **AVOID** both get you out of danger quicker and require less time and effort. **RUN** is an instinctive reflex. **AVOID** requires awareness and planning.
- ❑ **HIDE** and **DENY** may not take you out of attack range. Both require more time and effort. **HIDE** requires protection and concealment. **DENY** requires placing obstacles and distance between you and the attacker to prevent them from accessing you.
- ❑ **FIGHT** and **DEFEND** both guarantee life-threatening danger. Winning a **FIGHT** often depends on luck and strength. A successful **DEFENSE** requires planning and a commitment to violent, overwhelming force.

UNDERSTAND THE RISK

- ❑ Attempting to escape may expose you to the attacker.
- ❑ Hiding keeps you within the danger area and does not guarantee survival.
- ❑ Fighting guarantees life-threatening danger.

NOT A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

- ❑ These survival actions are not linear. *Running OR hiding OR fighting* could be necessary at any time depending on the situation.
- ❑ You may have to *defend yourself* immediately. You may have to *deny access*, then *avoid danger*, and find *protection* again before you are able to fully escape.
- ❑ Know the risks of each action. Be prepared to decide, act, move, and adjust based on the situation.

FIND HELP IN AN ACTUAL EMERGENCY

- ❑ This QR code will be posted around campus.
- ❑ Scan it for our webpage that provides instructions for an actual attack emergency. You will find:

- *Instructions for AVOID - DENY - DEFEND.*
- *Ways to deny entry to rooms with doors you cannot lock.*
- *Methods to deny entry if your door opens IN to the room or OUT to the hallway.*



RUN - HIDE - FIGHT

*SURVIVORS UNDERSTAND THIS IS NOT LINEAR

Running OR hiding OR fighting could be the best response depending on the circumstances.

RUN - AN INSTINCT & A REFLEX

- ❑ Run if you have a safe escape path. Be careful around blind corners. Move at right angles from the attacker instead of running away in a straight line.
- ❑ Run even if others don't want to follow. Help others, if possible, but do not compromise your survival to help others. Your own survival is your first priority.
- ❑ Go to areas of safety as police officers instruct. Do not leave until police allow.
- ❑ If an attack occurs outdoors, get inside and find cover.
- ❑ **WHERE DO YOU RUN? HOW FAR?** If police don't order you to a safe area, use your own powers of observation to determine when you are out of danger.

HIDE - REQUIRES PLANNING & AWARENESS

- ❑ Attackers are unlikely to spend time and effort searching for hard-to-find targets. They will concentrate on those who are easy to find and access.
- ❑ People panic. Try to remain still, calm, and quiet.
- ❑ Good hiding places provide **PROTECTION**. If an attacker or their weapons cannot gain physical access to you, you are less likely to be targeted.
- ❑ Good hiding places provide **CONCEALMENT**. If an attacker cannot see you or does not believe you are present, you are less likely to be targeted.
- ❑ **DO NOT HIDE UNDER A DESK OR TABLE** in large open areas like libraries, cafeterias, or large classrooms that are not designated safe-havens. This **WILL NOT** provide you protection or concealment.
- ❑ **DO NOT TRAP YOURSELF**. If your hiding place fails, you must be ready and able to fight, escape, or move to other nearby places with better protection.

FIGHT - YOU HAVE THE RIGHT

- ❑ **COMMIT YOURSELF TO VIOLENT ACTION**. Shift your fear to anger...you are fighting for your life.
- ❑ Do not assume that the risks associated with fighting an attacker are always higher than the risks from running or hiding. Fight for your life if you must.
- ❑ You may have to fight to escape. Remember that fighting guarantees life-threatening danger.
- ❑ Winning the fight will often depend on strength and luck...you may not have these on your side.
- ❑ Knowing how to fight takes years of training and experience...you may only have a few minutes.
- ❑ Most people are not mentally conditioned to confront violent behavior. Fight the freeze using combat breathing and commanding yourself to "MOVE!"

AVOID - DENY - DEFEND

*SURVIVORS UNDERSTAND THIS REQUIRES EFFORT

Avoiding AND denying access AND defending require situational awareness, planning, and training.

AVOID AN ATTACK

- ❑ Maintain situational awareness and knowledge of your surroundings, to include the location of the attacker and their direction of movement.
- ❑ Have an exit plan before entering any building and know multiple ways to escape. Recognize the source of potential danger and stay away.
- ❑ Use available floorplans to learn about the buildings you occupy. Floorplans illustrating designated emergency exits should be posted at each stairwell.
- ❑ If you can access exterior windows on the ground floor, can you open or break them to escape?
- ❑ **WARNING:** Avoid escaping through windows higher than the ground floor. This is extremely dangerous!
- ❑ Below ground levels can be confusing. Know the layout of these areas to avoid getting lost or trapped.

DENY AN ATTACKER ACCESS

- ❑ **A LOCKED DOOR IS YOUR BEST DEFENSE**. Find rooms with solid doors that can be locked from inside.
- ❑ Delay the attacker, give police time to respond. Make the attacker waste time finding and accessing targets.
- ❑ Put more distance and obstacles between yourself, the attacker, their weapons, and their bullets.
- ❑ Physical barriers help, but bullets can still go through windows, doors, and even walls.
- ❑ If a door can't be locked, find ways to block entry. Use heavy furniture or large objects as barricades or use a belt, cable, or other available means to secure doors.
- ❑ Doors that **OPEN OUT** to a hall are more difficult to defend than doors that **OPEN IN** to the room.
- ❑ Attackers are likely to pass by rooms that appear unoccupied, so make yourself invisible.
- ❑ Silence phones. Turn off lights, computers, radios, and televisions. Stay low, find cover, limit movement.

DEFEND YOURSELF

- ❑ Plan a counter-attack that is **UNEXPECTED AND VIOLENT**. Work as a team if you are with others.
- ❑ Improvise weapons from anything available in your environment. Use overwhelming force to injure and immobilize the attacker.
- ❑ **TAKE AWAY THE GUN AND CONTROL IT**. Disarm the attacker but beware of using the gun against them. You risk being seen as a threat by police.
- ❑ Beware that the attacker may have multiple guns other concealed weapons such as knives.

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