

## The 5 Stages of an Active Shooter

### 1. Fantasy Stage

During this stage the shooter has daydreams of the shooting. He fantasizes about the news coverage. He idolizes other shooters. He might draw pictures of the event and make Web postings.

Would-be Active Shooters in the Fantasy Stage will often discuss their desires with friends and foes alike. If news of these fantasies are shared with you, believe them and pass them on to law enforcement. If police can intervene prior to the suspect acting on their fantasy there may never be a head line.

### 2. Planning Stage

The suspect is deciding on the "who, what, when, where and how" of his day of infamy. He will put his plans down in writing. He will quite often discuss these plans with others and sometimes seek out an accomplice. He will plan the time and location to ensure the most victims, or in some cases to target specific victims.

He will determine the weapons he will need and where he will get them. He will decide how to travel to the target area and how to dress to conceal his weapons without arousing suspicion.

If the police are tipped during this stage, once again, intervention can be made prior to people dying and families crying.

### 3. Preparation Stage

The suspect may be obtaining gunpowder for his improvised explosive devices. He might break into grandfather's house to steal some weapons and ammunition for the event. He might stockpile or pre-position weapons and explosives for the assault. He might train with the weapons by shooting regularly and testing explosive devices. He might conduct surveillance of the target location. Active Shooters have been known to call friends and tell them not to go to school or work on the scheduled day of the attack in an effort to keep them out of the line of fire.

If one of these friends calls the police about their concerns, this citizen intervention may prevent multiple funerals.

### 4. Approach Stage

This is a very dangerous stage. The suspect has made his plans and decided to act. He will be walking, driving, or riding toward his intended target, armed with his tools of death.

Contact with the soon-to-be active shooter could come in the form of a traffic stop, a citizen call, or a stop and frisk. A thorough investigation can still lead to an arrest of the suspect before he brings down a multitude of victims in a needless shooting or bombing.

### 5. Implementation Stage

Once the shooter opens fire, immediate action needs to be taken. The Active Shooter will continue to kill until he runs out of victims or ammunition, or is stopped. This suspect is unique, because he is fully dedicated to going for the "top score," which is measured in kills.



The sooner an on- or off-duty officer or citizen intervenes with an effective, efficient act of courage, the fewer casualties there will be. In past incidents, active shooters have been thwarted by police officers, security guards, school teachers and students. One principal recently died successfully stopping an active shooter in a Wisconsin school. There is a risk in doing something, *but the greatest risk lies in doing nothing.*