

PLAYERS HEALTH

# ACTIVE SHOOTER IN SPORT GUIDEBOOK

FOR COACHES, SPORT ADMINISTRATORS, AND PARENTS



# A LETTER FROM PLAYERS HEALTH

Dear Sport Administrators, Parents/Guardians, and Coaches,

We at Players Health are deeply saddened by the far-too-frequent reports of mass shootings in our country and worldwide. While statistically, these incidences are still relatively rare, they are not insignificant. They shake our confidence, shatter lives, and destroy our sense of safety.

Many resources are available on responding to an active shooter situation in workplaces, schools, and places of worship. There is much less information, if any, available for sport programs. Players Health seeks to close this gap for community sports through this simple, practical guide.

Players Health exists to ensure athletes have the safest possible environment to enjoy the sports they love. We've put together this guide because we want you to have the tools to take preventative actions that minimize risks and equip you with strategies to keep sport safe from active shooters. We hope you never have to experience such a situation; with this guide we are together taking one small step toward making sport safer for our children.

Sincerely,

**The Players Health Team**

**October 2022**





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# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS AN ACTIVE SHOOTER?

An Active Shooter is an armed individual actively attempting to kill or killing people in a confined and populated area. While law enforcement is usually required to end an active shooter situation, coaches, parents, volunteers, and program administrators can take steps to prepare mentally and physically for the possibility of this type of event occurring. While these situations are relatively rare, especially in the context of sport, being prepared can save lives. See the statistics below about active attacks.

## Statistics about active attacks

ALERRT Active Attack Data 2000-2021

[www.activeattackdata.org/allattacks](http://www.activeattackdata.org/allattacks)

## THIS GUIDE WILL COVER TWO MAIN TOPICS:

### → SECTION 1: PREVENTION

How to proactively prevent an active shooter situation

### → SECTION 2: RESPONSE

What to do in the event of an active shooter situation in the context of sport

*This guide is meant to provide an overview and compiled directory of best practices and resources for preventing and surviving an active shooter situation; it is for informational purposes only. Each sport program is responsible for the appropriate application of the information herein. Many variables are not, and cannot, be addressed in this brief publication. This guide does not replace CPR/First Aid certification and official Active Shooter training and is not a comprehensive report on active shooter situations; it merely seeks to point readers in the direction of deeper resources and develop a general awareness of best practices for approaching an active shooter situation. The guide does not provide legal, medical, or any other advice. .*

SECTION 1:

# PREVENTION

**SECTION 1:**

# **PREVENTION**

While there is no guarantee that someone can prevent an act of senseless violence, there are time-tested practices that can be put into action in your sport program to limit the opportunity and activities that must occur for an active shooter situation to happen.

## **THE PROACTIVE ACTIONS WE WILL EXPLORE IN THIS GUIDEBOOK ARE:**

- **Set the Tone with Culture: Zero Tolerance for Violent Behavior**
- **Situational Observation and Vigilance**
- **At-Risk Individuals**
- **Engage Community Law Enforcement**
- **Emergency Preparedness**
- **Education and Training**



## SET THE TONE WITH CULTURE:

# ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE

For the health and safety of all participants, violent actions, verbal or physical, should never be considered OK or “normal.” While it can be included in your program’s Athlete Safety Policy, accountability for and protection of a positive team and program culture should always be a priority.

## EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR THAT SHOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED:

- Coaches yelling at players, other coaches, officials, parents/guardians or spectators.
- Any physical aggression including invading personal space in an intimidating manner.
- Spectators yelling at coaches, players, other spectators, or officials.
- Verbal abuse of any kind.
- Negative social media posts or digital communications meant to demean or degrade anyone involved in your program-coaches, athletes, volunteers, or parents/guardians.

## SUGGESTED ACTIONS TO PROTECT YOUR SPORT PROGRAM AND TEAM CULTURE

- Have posted and written code of conduct, ask all involved to sign them, and have defined consequences for violations that you are prepared and willing to enforce.
- Dismiss individuals who demonstrate violent conduct.
  - An example of diplomatic phrasing is: “Thank you for your service, but we will not be asking you to participate in our program in the future.”
- Provide positive coaching training for your program.

## VERBAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse is a type of emotional abuse. It is when someone uses their words to assault, dominate, ridicule, manipulate, and/or degrade another person and negatively impact that person’s psychological health.

Verbal abuse is a means of controlling and maintaining power over another person.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-recognize-verbal-abuse-bullying-4154087>

## SET THE TONE WITH CULTURE:

# ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE

- Be intentionally inclusive of everyone in your program to create an environment where all feel welcome.
  - This can prevent members of your sport community from feeling excluded or ostracized, which can be a precursor to negative actions, or lead to violence.
- Invest in relationships with families, and get to know them personally. This will allow you to recognize those that may need additional support.

## THINKING AHEAD

Competition is where tempers can flare, and confrontations can happen in the heat of the moment. Thinking ahead to identify potentially volatile matchups on your schedule can help prevent conflicts from arising.

### Questions to think about:

- Is there a history of heated rivalry between teams or programs?
- Are there racial tensions in the community or prior history of sport confrontation?
- Have there been social media posts that are aggressive or threatening in nature?

If any of these are a “yes” consider deploying some of the strategies presented later in this guidebook, including engaging community law enforcement presence.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Positive Coaching Alliance

[positivecoach.org](http://positivecoach.org)

### TrueSport

[truesport.org](http://truesport.org)

### Players Health Athlete Safety Policy

[playershealth.com](http://playershealth.com)

[playershealth.ca](http://playershealth.ca)





# SITUATIONAL OBSERVATION AND VIGILANCE

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (cisa.gov), vigilance is a powerful way to prevent hostile situations. Alert and watchful parents, administrators, coaches, and volunteers can spot suspicious activity and report it. Anyone can be empowered to observe and report.

## THE OHNO APPROACH

Cisa.gov has developed a simple acronym for how to observe and evaluate suspicious behaviors. OHNO stands for **Observe, Initiate a Hello, Navigate the Risk, and Obtain Help**<sup>3</sup> The OHNO approach can help coaches and parents observe and evaluate suspicious behaviors, and empower them to mitigate potential risks, and obtain help when necessary. Used effectively, the right words can be a powerful tool. Simply saying “Hello” can prompt a casual conversation with unknown individuals and help you determine why they are there.

## VIGILANCE

The action or state of keeping careful watch for possible danger or difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://languages.oup.com>

## O-Observe

Stay vigilant of your surroundings. Alert coaches and parents can identify suspicious behavior, such as:

- Putting down a bag or item and walking away from it.
- A prolonged interest in or taking pictures/videos of facilities, and game fields, in an unusual manner.
- Unauthorized people trying to enter a restricted area.
- Loitering at a location without reasonable explanation for being there.
- Suspicious Activity Indicators:
  - Expressed or implied threats to commit acts of violence
  - Using abusive language that a reasonable person might find threatening
  - Statements or behaviors indicative of suicidal/homicidal ideations
  - Contextually inappropriate statements about harming others Exaggerated or violent gestures like clenching fists or jaws could be interpreted as threatening or intimidating.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cisa.gov/power-hello>

# SITUATIONAL OBSERVATION AND VIGILANCE

## H-Initiate a Hello

Acknowledging a risk can significantly deter a threat. Use the power of 'hello' to engage with individuals you observe in your space. The following are some greetings that can be used to engage with individuals you may not know or appear suspicious:

Smile, make eye contact, and introduce yourself.

- “Hello, how are you?”
- “How can I assist you?”
- “Which team are you supporting today?”
- “Can I help you find the team you’re looking for?”

## N-Navigate the Risk

Navigate the risk by asking yourself if the observed behavior is suspicious. Consider the following in reference to the person that is exhibiting suspicious or threatening behavior:

- Do they appear to be legitimately attending the event?
- Are they wearing clothing consistent with the weather of the day?
- Acting in a way that suggests or would arouse suspicion of criminality in a reasonable person?
- Are they taking pictures inconsistent with the activity, i.e., taking pictures of the surrounding area or if indoors of security cameras and exit areas?
- Are they showing irritated or detached behavior.
- Are they causing you to feel threatened? (if you feel threatened, do not engage, calmly walk away and call 9-1-1)

# OHNO APPROACH

## O - Observe

Stay vigilant of your surroundings. Alert coaches and parents can identify suspicious behavior.

## H - Initiate a Hello

Use the power of 'hello' to engage with individuals you observe in your space.

## N - Navigate the Risk

Navigate the risk by asking yourself if the observed behavior is suspicious.

## O - Obtain Help

After navigating the risk, obtain help from management or authorities.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cisa.gov/power-hello>

# SITUATIONAL OBSERVATION AND VIGILANCE

## O-Obtain Help

After navigating the risk, obtain help from management or authorities.

- Call 911 for emergencies or if you feel in danger.
- Remember the 5W's when contacting management or law enforcement:
  - What is happening?
  - Who is doing it?
  - Where is it taking place?
  - When did you observe it?
  - Why are they here?
- You can submit suspicious activity reports to your local law enforcement or call the non-emergency number.
- Work to develop a relationship with local police/fire authorities.
- Have law enforcement and fire department phone numbers listed for all coaches and staff to see.

*The OHNO information provided has been adapted for sport from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency-Hometown Security Division-Employee Vigilance-Power of Hello.*

## SITE PATROL

Consider establishing a site patrol position where your sport program is operating.

Equip this person or persons to use OHNO to keep your site safe. These individuals are responsible for monitoring the grounds or facility.

While coaches and administrators can be distracted by all the things required of their job during practice or games, the site patrol volunteers have the advantage of only having one duty—observe and take action if necessary.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### OHNO Framework Explained

<https://www.cisa.gov/power-hello>

### OHNO Information Sheet

[https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA\\_Power\\_of\\_%20Hello\\_SlickSheet.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA_Power_of_%20Hello_SlickSheet.pdf)

### See Something, Say Something

<https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cisa.gov/power-hello>

## AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS:

# WARNING SIGNS

Sport communities can be tight-knit. Those involved often spend many hours together and close relationships can form. Likewise for coaches and their athletes. You may be best positioned to notice changes in behavior that may be signs of trouble ahead.

## FACTS ABOUT ACTIVE SHOOTERS <sup>4</sup>

- On average, each active shooter displayed 4 to 5 concerning behaviors over time that were observable to others around the shooter. The most concerning behaviors were related to the active shooter's mental health, problematic interpersonal interactions, and threats of violent intent.
- For active shooters under age 18, peers and other close adults, such as teachers and coaches, were more likely to first observe concerning behaviors than family members.
- In the majority of cases (64%) at least one of the victims was specifically targeted by the active shooter.
- Active shooters were typically experiencing multiple stressors in the year before they attacked.

## WARNING SIGNS

It is important to know that warning signs alone do not mean that someone is planning a violent act. Understanding the triggers that can drive someone to harm others can help you identify if there is a potential danger.

Recognizing the following warning signs and reaching out for help could bring an at-risk individual to the attention of law enforcement sooner and prevent a future attack.

- Increasingly erratic, unsafe, or aggressive behaviors
- Hostile behavior based on claims of injustice or perceived wrongdoing
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Claims of marginalization or distancing from friends and colleagues
- Changes in performance at work or school
- Sudden and dramatic changes in home or life or personality
- Financial difficulties
- Pending civil or criminal litigations
- Observable grievances and making statements of retribution

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/vie>

## AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS:

# WARNING SIGNS

### Signs you might see in students or athletes (but not limited to)<sup>5</sup>

- An obsession with guns and mass shootings
- Being a target of long-term bullying
- Extreme isolation or social withdrawal from real or perceived actions of others
- Excessively aggressive response to seemingly minor issues — a sign of a lack of self-regulation
- Easy access to firearms or bragging about access to firearms
- Overt threats of violence (spoken, written, pictures, videos, gestures)

## HELP ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THOSE AROUND YOU BY:

- Being aware of drastic changes in attitudes towards others
- Taking note of escalations in behavior and reporting appropriately
- Providing information that may help facilitate intervention and mitigate potential risk
- Being aware of social media interactions that could indicate stressors

### RELATED RESOURCES

#### Active Shooter Fact Sheet

[https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/sash/Publications/Active\\_Shooter\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/sash/Publications/Active_Shooter_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

#### Sandy Hook Promise Say Something Tips

<https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/say-something-tips/>

#### Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters

<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/sash/Publications/Active\\_Shooter\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/sash/Publications/Active_Shooter_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

# ENGAGE LAW ENFORCEMENT

It is a common misconception that law enforcement can only be engaged when there an incident occurs. Your local police force can be a tremendous ally for your sport program in incident prevention and deterrence.

Things to know about your local law enforcement and how you can make them a part of your program's activities:

- Most law enforcement departments have a designated community policing representative. This is your best primary contact. Contact them to provide schedules of events that may have an increased risk of an incident. Connect with them for assistance in emergency preparedness planning.
- Foster a relationship with your assigned "zone" officer. This is an individual who assigned to a patrol area of responsibility. They can be a valuable presence, even if it means just being seen near your practice location during their patrol.
- Inquire about providing training for those in your program.



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Being prepared for a crisis can be the difference between loss and survival. The following information is meant to provide best practices regarding general emergency preparedness to prevent and mitigate emergencies, including an active shooter situation.



## SITE PREPAREDNESS

Scope out the surroundings. Observe, ask yourself, and know the following:

### Outdoors

- Where are the open spaces?
- Where would intruders have access to attendees?
- Where are there closed spaces with limited exits, such as dugouts?
- Where would you direct children to run or hide?
- Know the difference and effectiveness of cover (an impenetrable object like a brick wall) and concealment (which will hide but can be penetrated by a weapon such as a bush).

### Indoors

- What is the quickest route to emergency exits?
- Landlines? Useful if cellphones are not within reach.
- Where are the nearest rooms with doors and locks in which to hide?
- First aid kits?
- Where are the fire alarms? These should be quickly deployed in an incident.
- Where are the fire extinguishers? These are useful in distracting or diverting a shooter.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

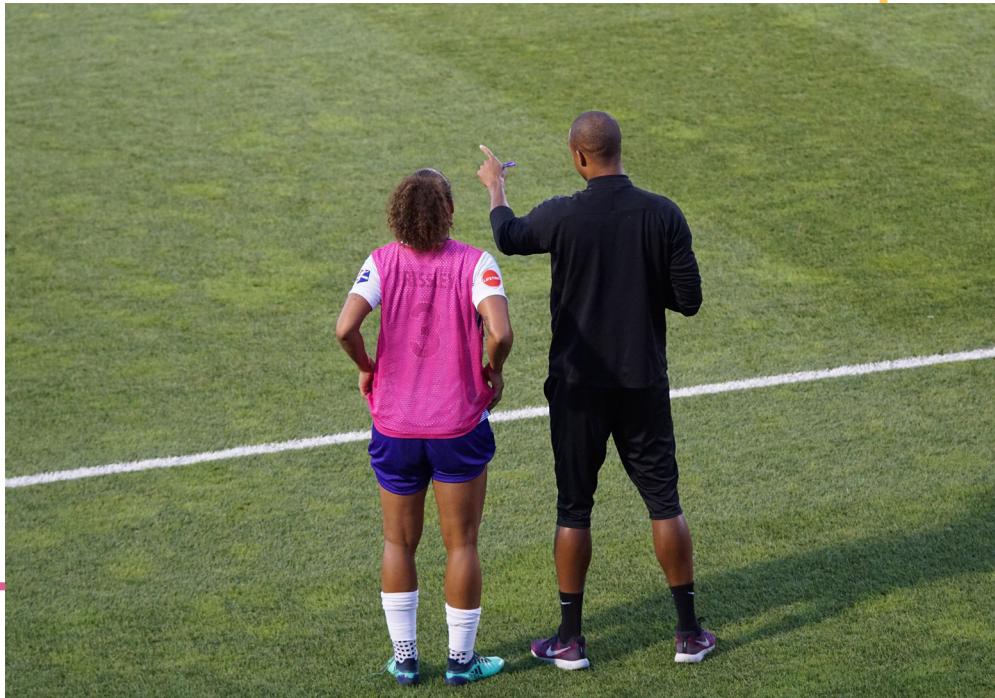
## COACH AND TEAM PREPAREDNESS

- Review program emergency plan regularly.
- Rosters and attendance lists should always be on hand to account for all participants.
- Parent/guardian contact information for all participants should be carried with coach at all times.
- Have a plan to track where injured individuals were taken for treatment.

### >>> TIP

Enlist the help of those already serving in your program who are current law enforcement officers and/or medical personnel to assist in your emergency planning efforts.

They can be valuable resources who are already familiar with your program and are usually very willing to contribute their knowledge and expertise.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Emergency Action Plan (for all emergencies, not just Active Shooter)**

<https://www.ready.gov/>



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The following best practices can assist your organization in building a plan to educate and train its members in the prevention of and preparing for an active shooter incident.

- Reach out to local law enforcement to inquire about training opportunities.
- Budget for 3rd party training courses for members of your organization. Possibly hold an additional fundraiser to support this.
- Provide your program's emergency action plan to all participants.
- Incorporate emergency training into your pre-season coach meeting.
- Provide OHNO information to program members.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### FEMA free online course- Active Shooter: What You Can Do

<https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-907&lang=en>

### ALICE Training

<https://www.alicetraining.com/>

### HSI Active Shooter Training

<https://hsi.com/solutions/active-shooter-training/training>



*Note: The additional resources listed above and throughout this guide are cited for ease of reference. Players Health does not endorse or have any existing relationships with the above-listed entities or training providers. This information is provided to direct the reader to available options on the topics discussed in this guide. A sport program is solely responsible for selecting an official safety and training provider.*

SECTION 2:

# RESPONSE

## SECTION 2:

# HOW TO RESPOND

## IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

Active shooter situations are unpredictable. It is nearly impossible to prescribe “on paper” what exactly to do because no situation is ever the same. However, there are a few guiding principles every adult in your sport program should know:

### THE PLAYERS COME FIRST

Most active shooter training focuses on how you personally can survive an active shooter situation. If you are an adult responsible for minors at a sporting event, your survival comes second to the athletes you oversee.

## RUN, HIDE, FIGHT

There are a variety of methods taught for surviving an active shooter situation. Ultimately, there are three fundamental choices people have: **run, hide, or fight**.

**This is highly situational, which is why knowing your environment, making the right choice for the children in your care, and having thought through escape routes ahead of time are all important.**

### Run

- >>> Identify the location(s) of the threat
- >>> Quickly escape from the threat (via windows, stairs, doors, etc.)
- >>> Leave belongings behind except cell phone

### Hide

- >>> Block entry to hiding place and lock doors
- >>> Hide in area out of the shooter’s view
- >>> Silence mobile communication devices

### Fight

- >>> Commit to decisive and aggressive action
- >>> Your goal is to incapacitate the shooter
- >>> Fight until the threat is neutralized

SECTION 2:

# HOW TO RESPOND

## IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

### YOU ARE 911

911 should be alerted immediately, but the reality is that 911 will only arrive after the incident has already commenced. Be prepared that you will have to provide whatever is needed in the moment until help arrives. Having this mindset can mean the difference between life and death. All coaches should be CPR and First Aid certified at a minimum. If it is not a part of your program's policy that volunteers be CPR and First Aid certified, it should be a consideration for regular or repeat volunteers.

**Keep in mind that emergency medical personnel will stage in the area and will not immediately respond to the scene of an active shooter until law enforcement has declared the area safe to enter. Therefore, those already there must rely on each other to survive.**

### Stop Bleeding

Unfortunately, victims in an active shooter situation often need immediate medical attention, particularly for bleeding wounds. An arm or leg wound that will not stop bleeding can put the victim at significant risk. Quick actions to stop bleeding and potentially apply an improvised tourniquet can save a life. Improvised tourniquets can be a belt, a ripped shirt, a sock, a flag football belt, or other items that can be tied or tightened. **Please review this visual at:** [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB\\_Applying\\_Tourniquet\\_08-06-2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB_Applying_Tourniquet_08-06-2018_0.pdf)

## ABC'S OF CPR

Remember that if someone is found unconscious, the ABC's of CPR are:

- **Airway:** Open the victim's airway using a head-tilt chin-lift or jaw thrust maneuver
- **Breathing:** Assess breathing
- **Circulation:** Perform chest compression to restore the blood circulation

**For more information or to find a class visit**  
<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/performing-cpr/cpr-steps>



*The above points are a review of basic principles and do not replace the training and certification provided by attending and completing a formal First Aid program.*

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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## VIDEOS

### **Avoid Deny Defend - Surviving an Active Shooter Event**

<https://www.cisa.gov/active-shooter-workshop-participant>

### **Run, Hide, Fight Options for Consideration**

<https://www.cisa.gov/options-consideration-active-shooter-preparedness-video>

## DOWNLOADS

### **Pocket Card**

<https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA-Active-Shooter-Pocket-Card-052022-508.pdf>

### **Active Shooter Pamphlet**

<https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/active-shooter-pamphlet-2017-508.pdf>

### **How to Apply a Tourniquet**

[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB\\_Applying\\_Tourniquet\\_08-06-2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/STB_Applying_Tourniquet_08-06-2018_0.pdf)

### **Active Shooter Action Planning Checklist for Sport Programs**

(Can be found on page 23 of this guidebook)

## OTHER INFORMATION

### **CISA Active Shooter Workshop Resources**

<https://www.cisa.gov/active-shooter-workshop-participant>

*Want to learn more about Players Health? Visit us at*

**PLAYERSHEALTH.COM**

**PLAYERSHEALTH.CA**



## CONCLUSION

We sincerely hope your sport program never encounters an active shooter situation. We also hope that this guidebook will catalyze you and your organization to continue your research and exploration into preparing for such an event. We have only scratched the surface of the information available to you. We desire that this guidebook encourages further action on your part to be prepared.

On the next page, we have included an action planning checklist to help you assess your program in taking the next best steps to prepare for an active shooter situation.

## ACTIVE SHOOTER

# ACTION PLANNING CHECKLIST

## FOR SPORT PROGRAMS

### CULTURE

- Code of Conduct
- Zero Tolerance Policy for Violent Behavior
- Identify ways to be inclusive of all families.
- Evaluation of potentially volatile games or opponents

### SITUATIONAL OBSERVATION AND DILIGENCE

- Establish a Site Patrol role for games and practices.
- Educate coaches and program volunteers on OHNO.
- Share OHNO resources with parents, coaches and others in your program.

### AT RISK INDIVIDUALS

- Share with coaches at-risk signs for athletes/students.
- Build relationships with members of your program.
- Be observant of changes in those you do have relationships with.

### ENGAGE LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Connect and introduce your program to your local law enforcement community policing representative.
- Contact about training and patrol schedules.
- If applicable, secure presence at competitions and games.

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Ensure all adults in your program know the exits and escape routes for your program facility or space.
- Complete your program's general emergency action plan.
- Provide coaches with resources and paperwork they should have at all times.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- If possible, secure training for your program on active shooter situations.
- Post active shooter education and resources on your program's website.
- Include active shooter information in coaches' packets and pre-season meeting topics.

### RESPONDING IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION

- Communicate and regularly reinforce the value that the players come first.
- Keep First Aid and CPR certifications up to date for staff and coaches.
- Include a tourniquet in team First Aid kits, know other items can be used.
- Regularly review your emergency preparedness plans and make available to your program.



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