



PROTEct ACTIVE THREAT RESPONSE

Prepare | Restrict Access | Observe & Report | Take Action | Escape

WHEN THE SITUATION CHANGES, YOUR RESPONSE MAY NEED TO CHANGE.

A difficult, disruptive, or emotionally charged situation is not automatically an active threat.

Respond to observable behavior and circumstances—not appearance, emotion, or assumptions about intent.

RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCE

CONFLICT

Manage the interaction.

Raised voices, disagreement, emotional behavior, refusal to cooperate, verbal hostility, or disruption may require engagement, boundaries, assistance, L.O.V.E. De-Escalation, or another organizational response.

Intensity alone does not make a conflict an active threat.

CONCERNING BEHAVIOR

Increase awareness and readiness.

Escalating threats, attempts to defeat security measures, repeated efforts to enter restricted areas, fixation on a person or location, increasingly aggressive movement, or statements suggesting possible violence may require greater attention, distance, notification, restricted access, or other protective preparation.

Concerning behavior should increase awareness—not automatically trigger confrontation.

IMMEDIATE ACTIVE THREAT

Protect life.

An immediate active threat exists when observable circumstances reasonably indicate that violence presenting an imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm is occurring or about to occur. When circumstances indicate an immediate threat to life or serious bodily harm, ordinary engagement or prolonged attempts at de-escalation may no longer be appropriate.

Protecting life becomes the priority.

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PROTEct is not a sequence to complete. It is a set of preparedness principles and response options for changing conditions.

The circumstances determine which options are available and appropriate.

THE PRIORITY

Choose the available response that best protects life under the circumstances.

Your location, available exits, barriers, people around you, responsibilities, capabilities, and what the threat is doing may all affect the appropriate response.

REMEMBER

Don't mistake conflict for a threat. Don't mistake a threat for ordinary conflict.





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The circumstances determine which PROTECT options are available and appropriate. You may use more than one as conditions change.

PREPARE

Preparation creates options before you need them.

Know the environment, exits, alternate routes, restricted areas, communication methods, emergency procedures, and responsibilities associated with your role.

DO NOT: Depend on one memorized response or assume an emergency will unfold the way you expect.

RESTRICT ACCESS

Use distance and barriers to separate people from danger when circumstances allow.

Use available doors, barriers, controlled-access practices, or secured spaces to limit a threat's access to people or protected areas when feasible.

DO NOT: Move toward danger simply to secure another location or physically block a dangerous person when a safer option exists.

OBSERVE & REPORT

Report what you know—but don't remain in danger just to gather information.

When safe and feasible, communicate useful information such as the nature and location of the threat, relevant description, direction of movement, known injuries or hazards, and meaningful changes.

DO NOT: Follow, investigate, remain exposed, or delay protective action simply to obtain additional information.

TAKE ACTION

Take the action the circumstances require—not the action you expected to take.

Take decisive protective action appropriate to the immediate circumstances. This may include warning or directing others, helping someone reach relative safety when feasible, securing an available space, communicating urgent information, or responding to an unavoidable immediate threat within your capabilities.

DO NOT: Assume Take Action means automatically confronting, pursuing, or attempting to apprehend the threat.

ESCAPE

If a safer path away from the threat is available, use it.

Move away from immediate danger when a reasonably safe path is available. Use available exits or alternate routes, encourage others to move when feasible, and continue toward relative safety.

DO NOT: Follow a predetermined route into known danger, delay for belongings, or assume remaining where you are is safer simply because it was the original plan.

FIELD PRINCIPLE

There is no single PROTECT response for every person in every location. Conditions determine the decision.





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Conditions can change quickly during an active threat. Do not remain committed to a decision simply because it was appropriate moments earlier.

THE PROTECT CRITICAL THINKING CYCLE

OBSERVE → DISCERN → ACT → REASSESS

OBSERVE **What is happening now?**

Identify relevant behavior, hazards, locations, available exits, barriers, people at risk, and meaningful changes.

DISCERN **What does this situation require?**

Consider the immediacy of the threat, your location, available options, responsibilities, capabilities, and the likely consequences of acting—or not acting.

ACT **What available action best protects life right now?**

Choose and carry out an appropriate response based on the circumstances.

REASSESS **What changed?**

Determine whether your action is still appropriate. A safer route may open. A threat may move. A secured location may become unsafe. Responders may arrive. New information may change what you need to do.

REASSESS

A good decision can become the wrong decision when conditions change.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

SITUATION You hear what appears to be gunfire from another area of the building. You are with several people near an available exterior exit.

OBSERVE The apparent threat is not visible from your location. The exterior route appears clear.

DISCERN Moving away from the reported threat through the available exit may provide greater safety than remaining inside.

ACT You direct those with you toward the available exit and move away from the building.

REASSESS Once at a safer location, you remain alert to changing conditions and provide useful information to emergency responders when safe and appropriate.

WHEN EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ARRIVE

Follow their instructions. Keep your hands visible when appropriate, avoid sudden actions that could create confusion, and provide useful information when requested and circumstances permit.

Do not interfere with their response or assume they immediately know who everyone is or what has occurred.

BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO A RESPONSE

THREAT — What is the immediate danger?

OPTIONS — What safer options are available to me right now?

PEOPLE — Who may be affected by what I do?

CHANGE — What would cause me to change my response?

FINAL PRINCIPLE

Recognize the change. Choose the response that best protects life. Act. Reassess.

