



The Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) recognizes that fire safety is only one element to consider when creating safe schools in Tennessee and that local education officials and agencies must comprehensively address all risks to ensure the safety of students, teachers and administrators. In an effort to assist local educators the SFMO is offering the following guidance.

The SFMO inspectors will enforce the provisions of the adopted codes based on their observations during an inspection. If a classroom door or means of egress is obstructed at the time of inspection, the inspector will require the obstruction to be removed immediately. Any alterations to classroom doors must comply with adopted codes. Inspectors will not issue citations for barricade devices that are not attached to the door or not deployed at the time of inspection. If there is evidence that a barricade device is used for purposes other than security drills or lockdowns, the inspector will note this as a deficiency.

The SFMO encourages local education officials to consult with their local first responders, including fire officials and law enforcement officials, to review the emergency action plans for all educational facilities.

*Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-120-101 gives the State Fire Marshal the authority to establish building standards for state buildings, educational occupancies and occupancies requiring an inspection by the State Fire Marshal for initial licensure. The Department of Education requires that each school have an annual fire safety inspection based on the fire safety inspection checklist developed by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0520-01-04-.01(2)(a).

*Local building and fire code officials having jurisdiction to conduct school inspections may follow the same guidance; however, adopted codes and rules allow local officials having jurisdiction to enforce more stringent requirements.

*The decision on whether to use a barricade device to address school security concerns, if at all, will be a local determination. As such, the State Fire Marshal's Office does not approve or endorse any particular barricade device.

*The SFMO asks that school officials be mindful of the fire and life safety code and accessibility requirements including, but not limited to, the following:

- Self-closing doors shall swing easily and freely and be equipped with a closing device to cause the door to close and latch each time it is opened. *2010 NFPA 80 6.1.4.2.1*
- The unlocking and unlatching from the classroom side of the door can be accomplished without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (2)*
- The releasing mechanism for unlocking and unlatching shall be located at a height not less than 34 in. (865 mm) and not exceeding 48 in. (1220 mm) above the finished floor. Alternative designs, products or technologies may be used, provided they result in substantially equivalent or greater accessibility and usability. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (3)*
- Locks, if remotely engaged, shall be unlockable from the classroom side of the door without the use of a key, tool, or special knowledge or effort. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (4)*
- The door shall be capable of being unlocked and opened from outside the room with the necessary key or other credential. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (5)*
- The locking means shall not modify the door closer, panic hardware, or fire exit hardware. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (6)*
- Modifications to a fire door and fire door assemblies, including door hardware, shall be in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 80: Standard for Fire Doors and Other Opening Protectives (2010). *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (7)*
- The emergency action plan shall address the use of the locking and unlocking means from within and outside the room. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (8)*
- Staff shall be drilled in the engagement and release of the locking means, from within and outside the room, as part of the emergency egress drills. *2018 NFPA 101 15.2.2.2.4 (9)*

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the SFMO's Codes Enforcement Section at (615) 741-7190.



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Active Shooter Answer Key

1. U.S. government agencies—including the White House, U.S. Department of Justice/Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency—define an active shooter as “an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.” In an active shooter situation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommends the following:
 - Be aware of your surroundings and any possible dangers.
 - Take note of the two nearest exits in any facility you visit.
 - If you are in an office, stay there and secure the door.
 - If you are in a hallway, get into a room and secure the door.
 - As a last resort, attempt to take the active shooter down. When the shooter is at close range and you cannot flee, your chance of survival is much greater if you try to incapacitate him/her.
 - Call 911 when it is safe to do so.
2. “Run,” “Hide,” and “Fight” are the actions that both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommend in an active shooter situation. Each action is explained in further detail below:

Run

If possible, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep your hands visible when engaging with law enforcement.
- Follow the instructions of any police officers.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 911 when you are safe.

Hide

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of view.
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door).
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement.
- Can prevent an active shooter from entering. (i.e. you should be able to lock the door).
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door.
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager.
- Turn off any source of noise (radios, televisions).
- Hide behind large items (cabinets, desks).
- Remain quiet.
- If evacuation and hiding are not possible, remain calm.
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter’s location.
 - If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.



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Active Shooter Answer Key

Fight

As a last resort, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her.
- Throwing items and improvising weapons.
- Yelling.
- Committing to your actions.

If there is more than one Active Shooter and/or if the Active Shooter has other weapons in addition to a gun, the Run, Hide, and Fight method still applies. Apply the most appropriate method for the situation. More information about Active Shooter Preparedness may be found at: <https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>

3. Remaining silent in an active shooter situation is of critical importance. One way to accomplish this is to shut off your cell phone or put it on mute. As turning off or muting your cell phone varies slightly by manufacturer, you should take a moment to familiarize yourself with this process and then practice so that it can be done quickly.
4. Try to memorize at least one or two phone numbers of family members or loved ones in case your cell phone is lost or damaged. In addition, establish a family communications plan.
5. The phrase, "If you see something, say something," is used throughout the nation. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security defines suspicious behavior as any observed behavior that could indicate terrorism or terrorism-related crime. This includes, but is not limited to:

Unusual items or situations: A vehicle is parked in an odd location, luggage or a package is left unattended, a window/door that is usually closed is open, or some other out-of-the-ordinary situation occurs.

Eliciting Information: A person questions individuals at a level beyond idle curiosity about a building's purpose, operations, security procedures and/or personnel, shift changes, etc.

Observation/Surveillance: Someone pays unusual attention to facilities or buildings, beyond a casual or professional interest. This includes extended loitering without explanation (particularly in concealed locations); unusual, repeated, and/or prolonged observation of a building (e.g., with binoculars or video camera); taking notes or measurements; counting paces; sketching floor plans, etc.

6. When visiting a new place, make sure to take note of at least **two** emergency exits nearby in case of an Active Shooter. It is extremely important to try and *run* from the shooter if possible, before hiding or fighting. If you are forced to hide, make sure you draw all the blinds, turn off the lights, and remain extremely quiet.
7. After an Active Shooter incident, it is important to interact appropriately with law enforcement. A few recommendations include:
 - Keep your hands visible and empty as you interact with them.
 - Allow law enforcement to end the incident, which might entail their walking past wounded people along the way.



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Active Shooter Answer Key

- Follow law enforcement instructions and evacuate in the direction they come from, unless otherwise instructed.
- Take care of yourself before helping any wounded individuals.
- While waiting for Emergency Medical Services, provide first aid – apply direct pressure to bleeding areas and use tourniquets if you have been trained to do so.
- Turn wounded people onto their sides if they are unconscious and make sure they are warm.
- Consider seeking a mental health provider to help yourself and your loved ones process the trauma of this event.

To learn more about suspicious behavior, please visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something/what-suspicious-activity>.