an armed person who has used deadly physical force on other persons and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.” The definition includes so-called “snipers”, but not usually suicide bombers.

Another more common definition is, “a person or persons who appear to be actively killing or attempting to kill people using a firearm(s) in a single populated location.” There is usually no pattern or method to the selection of victims and no advanced warning. An active shooter is typically very unstable and has planned this event including his or her own death. The intended victims of an active shooter can be random or targeted or both. Active shooting situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, many times, even before law enforcement officers can arrive on the scene.

Unfortunately, in today’s society and since the Columbine shootings in Colorado in 1999, the term “active shooter” is not just known to law enforcement. Now, middle school students are familiar with the term and it has become an issue of growing concern. And as we have just witnessed in Norway, the active shooter phenomenon is not just an event that Americans have experienced. Since 1966 through 2010, there have been 281 active shooting incidents.

Recently due to the tragedy in Norway nearly 90 innocent teens and young adults were unmercifully executed by a crazed gunman.
Considerations when an active shooter is in your vicinity

- Call 911 and building security if you can do so safely.
- Evacuate the area if there is an accessible escape path; leave your belongings, laptop, etc. behind; keep hands visible and follow the directives of law enforcement.
- Once outside, get away from the building and out of the line of fire of the shooter and responding police.
- As difficult as it is to say, DO NOT stop to help injured persons as you are escaping; this puts you in danger and many times a shooter will return to the people he just shot; but of course that is YOUR decision to make.

If you can’t evacuate, hide out; find a safe place to hide where the shooter is less likely to find you

When Hiding

- Be out of the shooter’s view
- Lock /barricade door
- Hide under or behind a large item – stay low
- Shut off lights
- Shut off computers, radios
- Silence cell phones, watch alarms, anything that can beep or cause a noise
- Unplug any room phone so it won’t ring
- Close blinds or other window treatments
- Be silent
- Stay away from door and windows
  Never respond to unfamiliar voices/knocks; Never open door even if person claims to be the police
- If sounds indicating shooter is approaching, call 911 (leave line open if you can’t talk); hide in office space
Here are the sobering statistics on active shooting incidents recently reported in a January 2011 New York City Police Department research study:

- 96% of active shooters are male;
- 98% of active shooter incidents are carried out by a single attacker;
- The median number of deaths associated with active shooter attacks is two, as is the median number of wounded;
- 36% of active shooter attacks involve more than one weapon;
- 46% of active shooter attacks end with force applied by police, private security, or other bystanders, and 40% of active shooter attacks end with attacker suicide or attempted suicide; and

Relationships to victim:
- 41% professional relationship (supervisor, co-worker, customer, etc.)
- 23% academic (Columbine, Virginia Tech, etc.)
- 22% no relationship (random or caught in the shooting)

Location of Active Shootings
- Less than 1/3 in schools
- 50% in office buildings, commercial, factories and open commercial areas (malls, food courts)

Typical Scenarios
- Shooter in the immediate area
- Shooter in the building (lobby or in a tenant space)

Prevention/Readiness Considerations
To help prepare you for a potential active shooter situation, here are some things you can do:

- Know the location of the nearest emergency exits to you.
- Actively participate in your building’s annual fire drill to make you aware of exits, escape routes and assembly areas.
- If you hear what sounds like gunshots – don’t assume they are “fireworks”; call security and 911 immediately.
- Report any strange behavior or threats from co-workers – many persons who commit workplace violence do give signs of their distress.
- Report suspicious persons or behavior to building security, management or the police.
- Follow your building’s security procedures TO THE LETTER – never hold open a secured door for strangers.
- Scope out in advance a safe area to hide in an emergency.
Considerations for Management and Emergency Planning

*There is no 100% method to completely prevent an active shooter situation, but management should be prepared.* Considerations include:

- Regular evacuation and shelter-in-place training exercises
- Creation of an emergency action plan that includes methods for reporting emergencies, an evacuation plan and an emergency notification system to alert employees and occupants of an emergency situation
- Establish a pre-determined location for a primary and alternate incident command center
- Providing building and floor drawings to your local public safety agencies to use in deploying personnel
- Conducting training exercises for management staff on recognizing the sound of gunshots, how to react to an active shooter, how to communicate with law enforcement and building occupants, how to interface with authorities
- Training for management on workplace violence recognition, prevention and mitigation (see the August 2010 issue of *SecurAlert* or go to our re-designed website at www.securamericallc.com)
- Working with your local police department in vetting any plan and providing training to building occupants on how to react to a active shooter situation
If Confronted by an Active Shooter

- Try to remain calm and quiet.
- Make eye contact.
- Call 911; leave line open (if you can safely do this).
- Follow shooter’s instructions unless it endangers you or others.
- Attempt to flee to safe location (doors, windows, etc.) – use zig-zag motion so it is more difficult for the shooter to aim at you.
- Attempt to talk with shooter, if possible (“What can I do to help you?”).
- Never argue or provoke shooter.

If YOU make the decision to physically confront the shooter:
  - Act immediately and as aggressively as possible
  - Do so when the shooter is distracted (such as re-loading his weapon)
  - Be totally committed to your actions
  - If you do incapacitate the shooter, try getting his firearm away from him

For more Information on Active Shooter readiness go to:

www.dhs.gov