

# COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION SAFETY

## PRACTICAL ADVICE AND BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING CONFLICT AND CREATING A SAFETY PLAN

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGERS, board members, and business partners are rethinking the unthinkable and asking questions about their safety with mounting gun violence impacting their homes, workplaces, and clients.

CAI, its leaders, and members are grappling with whether they need to tighten safety precautions and reassess how they interact with residents, potentially even by shutting the door on a longstanding open-door policy. Managers and board members often face verbal threats, and some say today's growing lack of civility—both in person and electronically—is only making encounters potentially more volatile.

Many experts agree that active shooter training for community association residents, board members, managers, and business partners is important.

According to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, it is highly unlikely law enforcement officers will be present when a shooting begins; therefore, those present must decide what to do.

No single response fits all active shooter situations; however, making sure each individual knows his or her options for response and can react decisively can save valuable time and lives. There are three basic response options: Run. Hide. Fight. Individuals can run away from the shooter, seek a secure place where they can hide or deny the shooter access, or incapacitate the shooter to survive and protect others from harm. Contact your local law enforcement agency for training in response to violence.

**The FBI offers a brief summary of RUN. HIDE. FIGHT. »»**



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CAI has additional conflict management resources available, including on-demand webinars, books, and past articles in CAI periodicals.

### ON-DEMAND WEBINARS

- *From Conflict to Community: Resolution Strategies for Board Members and Managers*
- *Love Thy Neighbor and Your HOA: Reducing Conflict in Community Associations*
- *Resolving Conflict in Divided Communities*
- *The Community Association Civility Pledge*
- *Approaching Divisiveness in Our Current Climate*
- *How to Deal with Difficult People: Effective Strategies for Communicating*

»» Access these webinars and other learning opportunities at [www.caionline.org/learningcenter](http://www.caionline.org/learningcenter).

### BOOKS

- *Conflict Resolution: How Alternative Dispute Resolution Helps Community Associations*
- *Perfect Phrases for Dealing with Difficult People*

»» Access these books and others at [www.caionline.org/shop](http://www.caionline.org/shop).

### ARTICLES

- On Edge, *Common Ground* November/December 2022
- Armed and Dangerous, *Common Ground* May/June 2019
- Who's Packing?, *Common Ground* January/February 2015

»» Access these free articles at [www.caionline.org/cgsneakpeek](http://www.caionline.org/cgsneakpeek).

**RUN. HIDE. FIGHT. TACTICS THAT MAY BE EMPLOYED TO PREPARE AND EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS TO RESPOND TO VIOLENCE. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FOR TRAINING.**

**RUN**



If safe to do so, run out of a building or away from the shooting until in a safe location.

- Leave personal belongings behind.
- Visualize possible escape routes, including physically accessible routes for individuals with disabilities.
- Avoid escalators and elevators.
- Take others with you but do not stay behind if they will not go.
- Call 911 when safe to do so.
- Let someone know you are safe.

**When training to run, consider whether:**

- Escape routes have been identified.
- You've rehearsed the use of escape routes.
- Escape routes provide enough distance, cover, and concealment to provide safety.
- A system has been developed to account for all personnel or residents when it is safe to do so.

**HIDE**



If running is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible. Residents and employees should be trained to:

- Hide in a location where the walls might be thicker and have fewer windows.
- Lock the door.
- Barricade the doors with heavy furniture.
- Close and lock windows and close blinds or cover windows.
- Turn off lights.
- Silence all electronic devices.
- Remain silent.
- Use strategies, if possible, to silently communicate with first responders (for example, in rooms with exterior windows, make signs to silently signal law enforcement and emergency responders to indicate the status of the room's occupants).
- Hide along the wall closest to a building exit but out of the view from the hallway (allowing for an ambush of the shooter and for possible escape if the shooter enters the room).
- Remain in place until given an all clear by identifiable law enforcement.

**When training to hide, consider whether:**

- Shelter-in-place locations have been identified and properly marked.
- There is a method to secure the access to these locations.
- Employees and residents rehearsed moving to and positioning within these locations.
- Communication methods have been established within these locations.

**FIGHT**



If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, as a last resort, when confronted by a shooter, individuals in immediate danger may consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate a shooter by using aggressive force. Items in the environment, such as fire extinguishers and chairs, can aid these actions.

Talking about confronting a shooter may be daunting and upsetting for some. They should know that they might be able to successfully take action to save lives, but this should be tempered with a clear explanation that no corporate policy requires such action. How each individual chooses to respond if directly confronted by an active shooter is up to him or her.

Portions of this download were adapted from CAI's Common Ground™ magazine. The Run. Hide. Fight. chart was adapted from the FBI's comprehensive guide, [Developing Emergency Operations Plans: A Guide for Businesses](#), which offers additional practical advice and best practices on preparing for and responding to active shooter incidents.