Active shootings can result in a number of casualties in a short period of time, generally before tactical officers or other emergency responders can even be summoned. However, swift, but calculated action by even one or two armed officers can alter the outcome of these situations.

• **An active shooting** is defined as an incident in which one or more armed persons have used, or are reasonably likely to use, deadly force in an ongoing manner, and where persons have been injured, killed, or are under imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm by such persons. Additional terms that may be used to describe these incidents include active killing, active threat, and mass casualty attack.

• Law enforcement agencies should adopt policies that allow for **immediate action** by officers at the scene of an active shooting where ongoing deadly force is reasonably likely to be employed by a suspect and a delay in taking law enforcement action could result in further injury or death.

• Even if unarmed, officers can still play a role in an active shooter response. In these situations, officers should facilitate **evacuation**, where safe to do so. If evacuation is not possible, officers should shift their focus to directing individuals to safer locations and having them silence any electronic devices.

• A **contact officer or team** is comprised of the first officer(s) at the scene of an active shooting and is tasked with locating the suspect(s) and stopping the threat.

• Once sufficient resources are available, **rescue task forces** (RTFs) should be formed. These teams consist of fire/EMS personnel, paired with law enforcement officers. The goal of RTFs is to provide initial treatment and triage of victims and to assist with evacuation.

• **Unified incident command** should be established as soon as possible and should include representatives from all involved agencies.

• Separate **staging areas** should be designated in the cold zone for responding emergency personnel, treatment of victims and evacuation by EMS or medevac, identification and debriefing of individuals without injuries, arriving family members, and media.

• Law enforcement agencies should conduct **joint training** with local fire/EMS providers to ensure that all involved personnel understand their roles and responsibilities and those of other involved emergency responders when responding to active shooter situations.

• Law enforcement agencies can better **prepare their communities** for active shooter events by explaining what is known about these situations, providing information on how law enforcement will respond and react, and providing information on what potential victims need to know to protect themselves and others prior to law enforcement’s arrival and intervention.