



Position Statement on Preparing for, responding to, Recovering From & Preventing Active Shooter Incidents

The IAFC Board takes a position recommending that fire chiefs take proactive actions to educate, prevent, prepare, and respond to the threat of active shooter incidents in their communities. The IAFC joins the [International Association of Chiefs of Police](#), the [American Medical Association](#), and other organizations whose members are also directly affected by active shooter incidents in crafting a position statement for active shooter incidents.

The nation is facing an onslaught of active shooter and mass casualty incidents that are resulting in loss of life. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, there were 61 active shooter incidents in the United States in 2021, a 52.5% increase from 2020. These incidents resulted in 103 dead and 140 wounded.¹

These events are exemplified by the May 24 active shooter incident at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and the May 14 active shooter incident at the Tops Friendly Markets grocery store in Buffalo, New York. However, it is important to recognize that jurisdictions face multi-casualty incidents every day as the nation's crime rate escalates.

Fire and EMS personnel are on-scene at these incidents and must provide emergency medical services to patients suffering from multiple gunshot wounds and help comfort community members who suddenly lose their friends, family, and loved ones. The rash of active shooter incidents create mental and physical tolls on the fire and EMS personnel, and the need for specialized equipment, training, and exercises increase operational costs for the fire department budgets.

Fire chiefs can take measures to prepare for active shooter incidents. They can purchase ballistic protection PPE for their personnel and make sure that their apparatus is stocked with the appropriate trauma response supplies. They can plan with their communities, including law enforcement, public health, hospitals, and other stakeholders for responding to an active shooter incident. They can exercise and train for response to an active shooter incident, including ensuring that the principles of the National Incident Management System are followed to ensure coordination between law enforcement, fire, EMS, and others. They can exercise operations in the "warm zone" using force protection strategies, like the Rescue Task

¹ "Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2021," Federal Bureau of Investigation, May 2022, <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-in-the-us-2021-052422.pdf/view>

Force concept², to stop the bleeding in casualties. Fire chiefs also can promote public education around “Stop the Bleed” and “Run, Hide, Fight” campaigns to save lives. Fire chiefs also can support efforts in their communities to prevent weapons from being available for use by criminals and individuals suffering from mental health issues with the intent to engage in active shooter activity. Fire chiefs also can develop mental wellness programs to help fire and EMS personnel recover from the trauma of responding to an active shooter incident.

The IAFC has produced several documents to help fire chiefs prepare for active shooter incidents:

- [The IAFC Active Shooter Toolkit](#)
- [IAFC Position Statement on Active Violence and Mass Casualty Terrorist Attacks](#)
- [IAFC Position Statement on Coordination of Responses to Acts of Terrorism](#)
- [IAFC Position Statement on Maintaining Building and Fire Safety During Active Assailant Events and Other Terrorist Events](#)
- [IAFC Position Statement on Active Shooter and Mass Casualty Terrorist Events](#)
- [IAFC Checklist for Active Shooter Incidents](#)

The IAFC is committed to helping fire and EMS departments prepare for, respond to, and recover from, active shooter incidents. We will continue to develop resources to help our members deal with this growing threat. We urge our members to take action to prepare for active shooter incidents in their communities.

Submitted by the IAFC Terrorism and Homeland Security Committee

Approved by the IAFC Board of Directors: 11 JAN 2023

² <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Resources/External-links/First-responders/Urban-Fire-Forum/UFF-Rescue-task-force-operations-2013.ashx>