FREE PREVIEW

PATROL REFERENCE PRESS

Patrol Essentials: Active Shooter Response for Patrol Officers

A Pocket-Reference Guide for Patrol Officers

SOLO & MULTI-OFFICER TACTICS · MEDICAL RESPONSE · LEGAL FRAMEWORK

First Edition — 2026

patrolreferencepress.com

Free sample — not for resale

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

About This Free Preview

This preview gives you the complete opening of Patrol Essentials: Active Shooter Response for Patrol Officers — the Foreword and How to Use this Manual, plus the full first chapter, *The Threat and the Response Doctrine*. You'll see the manual's real format: the quick-reference that opens each chapter, the case-law and red-line callouts, and the decision frameworks that make the full manual a fast, on-scene reference. If this preview helps, the full 87-page manual continues with the chapters listed on the closing page.

Foreword

Every active shooter event is the same story until the first officer arrives: an unthinkable crime unfolding in minutes, ordinary people dying while help is still minutes away. And every event has the same turning point — the moment the first uniformed officer steps through the door, alone, with the sound of gunfire still fresh and no one to wait for.

That officer is you.

The research and the after-action reports agree on a hard reality: **many active-shooter incidents end within minutes, often before specialized tactical teams can deploy.** Victims are wounded in the first minutes. The shooter stops when they are stopped — by themselves, by suicide, or by a citizen or officer who ends the threat. When law-enforcement intervention is required during the active phase, first-arriving patrol officers may be the only officers positioned to interrupt the killing in time. They are often the first officer on scene, and they are frequently alone for the critical minutes.

This manual is built around that reality. It is not a SWAT manual and it is not a replacement for your agency's hands-on active shooter training. It is a field reference for the officer on patrol when the call comes in — the officer who has to decide, in seconds, whether to go in now or wait for backup, what to broadcast, which rooms to bypass, whether to stop for the wounded, and what to say in the report a year from now when the lawyers ask why.

It covers the doctrine in plain terms — **stop the killing, stop the dying, prevent further harm** — and then gets specific: the solo entry decision framework, contact team roles, the four decisions you will make under fire, immediate bleeding control, communications, and the legal landscape that follows. Every chapter ends with a Quick-Reference card you can scan in thirty seconds.

Patrol Reference Press — Free Sample 2

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

This manual is a reference companion to ALERRT-style doctrine and your agency's hands-on active shooter training. **It does not replace that training, your agency's policy, or your firearms and medical certifications** — no book can substitute for scenario-based practice under live-fire conditions. Where the doctrine in this manual and your agency's training or policy conflict, your agency's training and policy govern.

Read it now, while the shift is quiet. Rehearse it at roll call. As a training principle: the officer who has already rehearsed these decisions — on paper, in training, in the dark of a quiet shift — is better prepared to make them well in the worst minute of their career.

— Patrol Reference Press
First Edition, 2026

How to Use This Manual

This manual is designed for the working patrol officer — organized so you can find what you need in seconds, whether you are running a mental rehearsal before going in service, reviewing the solo-entry framework on the way to a shots-fired call, or preparing the narrative of an officer-involved shooting report.

Each chapter ends with a Quick-Reference card — a compact, scannable summary you can read in thirty seconds. If you only have time for the card, you still walk away with the core of the chapter.

Icons and callouts used throughout:

- ⚖️ **CASE LAW** — A decision that shapes the law of force, search, or questioning in the active shooter context. These are the cases courts cite and the holdings you should know by name.
- 🛑 **RED LINE** — A bright-line prohibition. Cross this and you risk death, serious injury, civil liability, or a compromised prosecution.
- 💡 **OFFICER NOTE** — Practical field guidance, common-sense reminders, and lessons from real-world events and after-action reports.
- ⚠️ **PITFALL** — A common mistake that costs officers their safety, their cases, or their careers.

What this manual is — and is not. This manual is a reference companion to ALERRT-style active shooter doctrine and your agency's hands-on active shooter training. It does not replace that training, your agency's policy, or your firearms and medical certifications — no book can substitute for scenario-based practice under live-fire conditions. The tactical chapters (Chapters 2–4) are written as a *reference companion*: they remind you of what you learned in scenario training and on the range, and they help you pre-decide the hard calls. They do not teach tactics from scratch. **Where doctrine in this manual and your agency's training or policy conflict, your agency's training and policy govern.**

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

How the chapters fit together: Chapters 1–2 give you the doctrine and the solo response. Chapter 3 covers the multi-officer contact team. Chapter 4 is the decision framework — the four hard decisions, pre-decided. Chapter 5 is immediate bleeding control. Chapter 6 is communications and the expanding response. Chapter 7 is the legal and personal aftermath. Appendices A–F are the reference tools: the case table, the flowcharts (text-described for the designer), the radio templates, the rehearsal checklist, the tear-out bleeding control card, and the expanding-response exercise checklists.

Disclaimer: This manual is a training and reference aid. It does not constitute legal advice, nor does it replace department policy, POST-mandated training, or guidance from your agency's legal advisor. Active shooter doctrine, use-of-force law, and medical guidance vary by jurisdiction and change over time. When in doubt, consult a supervisor, your training unit, or your department's legal office.

Chapter 1: The Threat and the Response Doctrine

1.1 What an Active Shooter Event Is

The standard working definition: an **active shooter** is one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. The term is operational rather than architectural — an active shooter event may occur indoors or outdoors. Three ideas do the work, and they are why the entire response model is built the way it is.

"Actively engaged." The killing is happening *now*. The shooter is moving through the environment looking for targets — firing, reloading, advancing. Classify the incident by current behavior and continuing threat, not presumed motive. A subject who has stopped shooting and is holding a position is a barricade; a subject who has ceased attacking and is contained may be transitioning toward barricade/hostage protocols. A subject who resumes attacking makes the event active again. The active shooter presents an ongoing lethal threat requiring intervention.

"In a populated area." Active-shooter events are not confined to buildings — they can occur outdoors and in open spaces. The shooter typically chooses a target-rich, populated environment — schools, workplaces, malls, houses of worship, theaters, government buildings, or outdoor spaces. Population density makes the event catastrophic, and it is what makes the response urgent: every minute of continued shooting produces new casualties.

"Killing or attempting to kill." The threat is lethal by definition. That single fact drives everything else in this manual — the entry decision, the force decision, the medical priorities, and the legal analysis.

What an active shooter event is *not*:

- **Not a barricade.** A subject who has stopped shooting, holed up, and is not engaging new victims is a barricade — a different problem with a different response: containment, negotiation, tactical team. The moment the subject resumes shooting, the event is active again.

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

- **Not automatically a hostage situation.** Classify by current behavior and continuing threat, not presumed motive. People can move between active attack, barricade, hostage-taking, and suicidal behavior within a single event. An offender who is actively attacking victims requires immediate threat-intervention tactics; an offender who has ceased attacking and is contained may transition toward barricade/hostage protocols, subject to continuous reassessment.
- **Not a spontaneous "shots fired" call.** Shots at a distant location with no victims and no ongoing fire may be a shooting *incident* — a separate crime scene. The active shooter event is defined by ongoing, targeted killing.

> ⚠️ **PITFALL**
>
> Mislabeling the event changes the response: The officer who arrives at what is actually an active shooter event but files it mentally as "a barricade" or "shots fired, unknown" will wait — and waiting kills people. The sound of gunfire *with victims* or *with an ongoing shooting* is the active shooter signature. When facts reasonably indicate an ongoing attack, transition immediately to active-attack response. When facts remain uncertain, maintain a high-threat posture, gather information rapidly, and continuously reassess without unnecessary delay. Do not let uncertainty become an excuse for inaction when credible evidence shows ongoing killing.

1.2 The Shift to Immediate Entry

The current doctrine was written in blood. For most of modern policing, the standing model for an armed subject inside a building was **contain and wait**: surround the location, secure the perimeter, call the tactical team, negotiate. The model assumed the subject would stay put and time favored the responders.

April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School broke that assumption permanently. Two shooters moved through the school killing students while responding officers established a perimeter and waited for the tactical team before entering. Thirteen people died and more than twenty were wounded. Columbine became a major catalyst for changing police active-shooter doctrine away from perimeter-and-wait responses toward rapid intervention by first-arriving officers, and subsequent attacks reinforced the need for immediate action when killing remains ongoing. Time favored the shooter, not the responders, and the armed, trained officers on scene had been ordered to wait.

The lesson was reinforced by Virginia Tech (2007) from another direction. At Norris Hall, the principal mass shooting unfolded within minutes; the attacker had chained entrances, forcing responding officers to breach their way inside. Officers moved to locate and clear the threat once entry was gained. The federal government's formal shift to immediate-entry doctrine followed, and every major event since has reinforced it. The modern doctrine is **immediate entry by the first officers on scene**: the officers who can stop the killing are the ones already there, and they move toward the shooter without waiting for specialized teams.

The doctrine rests on well-documented arithmetic:

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

- **Active shooter events are short.** In the FBI's 2000–2013 study of 160 incidents, among incidents where duration could be determined, nearly 70% ended within five minutes and 23 ended within two minutes or less — over before tactical teams can assemble and deploy. Event durations vary, and this is not a current-year statistic.
- **The shooter is stopped by someone on scene.** Events end several ways — by suicide, by the shooter leaving, by unarmed citizens intervening, or by law enforcement — and when law enforcement is the one stopping the attacker during the active phase, it is most often *patrol officers*, not tactical teams, who do it.
- **Casualties accrue early.** The first minutes produce the heaviest concentration of victims.

> 🛑 **RED LINE**
>
> Never default to contain-and-wait at an active shooter event: Contain-and-wait is for barricades and hostage situations — subjects who have stopped shooting. An active shooter is still killing. Modern active-attack doctrine and many agency policies require immediate action to locate and stop an ongoing attacker; the precise legal and employment duty is jurisdiction- and policy-specific. Waiting for the tactical team while an active shooter continues killing is not "safety"; it is the doctrine of 1999, and it failed.

1.3 Stop the Killing, Stop the Dying

The entire doctrine reduces to three objectives, in a strict priority order:

Objective 1 — Stop the killing. The shooter must be stopped. Everything else is secondary, because the shooter is the only thing producing new victims. The first officers move toward the shooter and engage. This objective belongs to law enforcement alone and takes priority over every other task on the scene — including helping the wounded.

Objective 2 — Stop the dying. The moment the immediate threat is stopped — no longer capable of firing, neutralized, or contained, with the area reasonably assessed for additional attackers, devices, and hazards — the mission shifts to saving the wounded: immediate bleeding control, casualty collection, evacuation. This is where patrol officers with tourniquets provide a critical, time-sensitive intervention no ambulance can match in the first minutes — and it is why Chapter 5 exists.

Objective 3 — Prevent further harm. ALERRT's operational goals are Stop the Killing → Stop the Dying; this manual adds a continuing incident-management consideration — prevent further harm. With the immediate threat stopped and the wounded being treated, the response prevents the next disaster: secondary devices, the second shooter, fires, structural hazards, panicked crowds, and perimeter failures. Evacuation, containment, and scene security protect everyone.

The three objectives overlap in time: the contact team stopping the shooter simultaneously creates the conditions for rescue, and arriving units establish the perimeter — Objective 3 — while the contact team is still on Objective 1. The order is a priority, not a sequence of shifts. **Nobody's job is more important than**

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

stopping the killer, and the moment the killer is stopped, stopping the dying begins.

> 💡 **OFFICER NOTE**
>
> The three objectives are your mission statement: When the chaos is at its worst — shots, screams, smoke, contradictory radio traffic — run the three objectives. *Am I stopping the killing? Stopping the dying? Preventing further harm?* If your current action answers none of the three, change what you are doing. The objectives cut through the noise and tell you what to do next when everything else is uncertain.

1.4 Why This Manual Is a Companion, Not a Replacement

This is the most important page in the manual, repeated on the Quick-Reference cards of the tactical chapters because it must never be forgotten.

This manual is a reference companion to ALERRT-style doctrine and your agency's hands-on active shooter training. It does not replace that training, your agency's policy, or your firearms and medical certifications — no book can substitute for scenario-based practice under live-fire conditions. Where doctrine in this manual and your agency's training or policy conflict, your agency's training and policy govern.

Every active shooter training program teaches the same hard lesson: **skills do not transfer from reading to gunfire.** The officer who has done scenario-based training — moving through a mock building against simulated gunfire, applying a tourniquet under stress, running the radio drill while rounding a corner — performs under fire. The officer who has only read about it does not. This manual will not make you trained; only your agency's training can do that.

What this manual *can* do:

- **Pre-decide the decisions.** The hardest moments are decisions, not movements: enter or wait, bypass or aid, engage or continue, secure or continue. This manual walks through each before the call, so you are not inventing answers under fire.
- **Reinforce what training taught you.** The contact team chapter is a reminder of your training — it does not replace it. If you have not had the training, this manual tells you to get it before you need it.
- **Give you the words.** The radio templates, the commands, and the articulation language in Chapters 6–7 give you the words to start the response and write the report afterward.
- **Anchor the law.** Chapter 7 explains the legal framework in plain language, so the decisions you make on scene are the decisions you can defend on paper.

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

> ⚠️ **PITFALL**
>
> Reading this manual and calling yourself trained: The officer who has studied the manuals but skipped the scenarios is a danger to themselves and the people they are sworn to protect. The room-entry mechanics, movement techniques, and medical skills in this manual all require hands-on, certified training to perform under stress. If your agency offers active shooter or medical training — take it. If you carry a tourniquet and have never practiced applying it one-handed, practice. This manual is the reference; your training is the skill.

1.5 How to Use This Manual

This manual is written to be used in three modes:

Before the call — the rehearsal. Appendix D is a pre-shift mental rehearsal checklist: walk through the solo entry, recite the broadcast script, practice the tourniquet drill in your head, review the contact team roles. Run it at roll call. Mental rehearsal can improve preparedness and reinforce trained decision frameworks.

On the way to the call — the framework. The cards and chapters are structured to be read in seconds: the Quick-Reference cards, the decision framework in Chapter 4, the broadcast template in Chapter 6. If you are responding to a shots-fired call, the framework you need is: solo entry decision (Chapters 2 and 4), the broadcast (Chapter 6), the medical priorities (Chapter 5) — in that order.

After the call — the documentation. Chapter 7 walks through the review process: statements, BWC, evidence, the report. The articulation templates give you the language. Follow agency protocols on statements and report timing, and let the facts carry the justification.

A note on terminology. This manual uses "shooter," "contact team," and the three objectives — the terminology used in ALERRT-style doctrine and most departmental training. "Active attack" is the broader contemporary training term (used by ALERRT and others) and may encompass attacks involving firearms, edged weapons, vehicles, fire, or other methods; this manual focuses specifically on active-shooter events. Your agency may use different terms. The words matter less than the concepts; translate this manual into your agency's vocabulary.

Quick-Reference: The Three Objectives and the First-Officer Reality

PATROL ESSENTIALS: ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: FREE PREVIEW

PRIORITY	OBJECTIVE	WHO DOES IT	WHEN
1	**Stop the killing** — locate and stop the shooter	First arriving officers (contact teams)	Immediately — moving toward the gunfire
2	**Stop the dying** — immediate bleeding control, casualty collection	Officers after the immediate threat is stopped; medical responders	Once the immediate threat is stopped
3	**Prevent further harm** — secondary devices, second shooter, fires, evacuation, perimeter	Arriving units, dispatch, unified command	Continuously, from the start of the response

The first-officer reality:

- The first officer on scene is **often alone** for the critical first minutes.
- Many active-shooter incidents **end before specialized tactical teams can deploy**. When law enforcement intervention is required during the active phase, first-arriving patrol officers may be the only officers positioned to interrupt the killing in time.
- **Credible evidence of ongoing killing = move to interrupt the threat, consistent with training and policy.** Waiting is for barricades, not active shooters.
- The three objectives answer every question: *Am I stopping the killing? Stopping the dying? Preventing further harm?*

This manual is a reference companion to ALERRT-style doctrine and your agency's hands-on active shooter training. It does not replace that training, your agency's policy, or your firearms and medical certifications. Where doctrine in this manual and your agency's training or policy conflict, your agency's training and policy govern.

Get the Full 87-Page Manual

Chapter 1 set the doctrine. The full manual walks you through the response minute by minute, from the solo entry to the aftermath.

- **Chapter 2: The Solo Officer Response** — the immediate solo entry and the decisions that follow.
- **Chapter 3: The Multi-Officer Contact Team** — formations, movement, and the coordinated response.
- **Chapter 4: Decision-Making Under Fire** — the split-second decision frameworks, run against real scenarios.
- **Chapter 5: Stop the Dying** — immediate medical response and bleeding control.
- **Chapter 6: Communications & the Expanding Response** — radio, command, and the larger operation, including the first-officer-to-command handoff.
- **Chapter 7: Legal, Liability & the Aftermath** — the legal framework and what comes after the call.
- **Appendices A–F:** verified case table, decision flowcharts, radio templates, pre-shift rehearsal, the tear-out bleeding-control card, and the expanding-response exercise checklists.

$19.99

Instant digital download — carry it on your phone, tablet, or print for your duty bag

GET THE FULL MANUAL

https://buy.stripe.com/cNi3cw5t11Ml0w53S0grS09

Patrol Reference Press — First Edition, 2026
This manual is a training and reference aid for law enforcement professionals. Consult your agency's policies and legal advisor for jurisdiction-specific guidance.