



# Practical Arms Training Academy

## What to do if you are involved in a self-defense altercation:



Ensure that the assailant is no longer a threat and the situation is maintained.

Secure any firearm upon the arrival of the police. Police have shot innocent people because they were holding firearms when the officers arrived.

Check yourself for injuries.

Do not talk to the assailant or use abusive language. Do not touch the assailant even if they appear dead.

Call the police (911) as soon as possible. The first words out of the caller's mouth should be the **location** of the incident. If the battery then dies, or the minutes run out, or some other technological catastrophe occurs the authorities will know that something of interest is at that location, and the caller's cell phone records can prove that he or she made the call. The next statement is the **caller's name**. The core of the 911 call consists of the following sentences:

1. Give them your **location** and **name**
2. Inform them what happened: **"He tried to kill me"**
3. Inform them that **"you are in fear of your life" "I was never so scared in my life"**
4. Ask them to **"Send an ambulance"**
5. **THEN KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT - SILENCE IS A MUST!** Remember the call will be recorded and if the call sounds bad for the defendant, it will be played over and over again at the trial.

The first sentence serves to introduce the roles of the parties; the caller is the victim, the other person the attacker. Being in reasonable fear of life or limb is a prerequisite to acting in self-defense. The phrase "I was never so scared..." is to preclude the prosecutor from claiming that the citizen never said he was scared "until he talked to a lawyer" The phrase "send an ambulance" says that the caller doesn't not want anyone to die. Make a complete check of the scene but do not tamper with any evidence. Do not let anyone else handle any evidence. Identify witnesses, if applicable.

When police arrive, try to spot them first and attract them in a non-threatening manner. At first, the police may treat you like a suspect, especially if you have a firearm. Do as you are told. Do not question or argue.



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The police will want a more elaborate statement; this should consist of only the following:

- 1. He attacked me**
- 2. I will sign a complaint**
- 3. There is the evidence**
- 4. I WANT A LAWYER**

If you are with family have them call your lawyer for you. Make no statement to the police or anyone else until your attorney is present. If possible, try to have your lawyer meet you at the scene. Tell your attorney exactly what has happened and let them do the talking for you. If you must meet the police by yourself, do not make any statements. Explain to the police politely, but firmly that you will not talk until your attorney arrives. You can advise that you are in fear of being sued and demand a lawyer to protect against frivolous litigation. Remember, you have the right to remain silent and anything you do or say can be used against you in a court of law. Police officers know the key to survival is to stay silent and wait for your lawyer. The police may try to make you feel guilty for not talking to them. No police officer would make a statement about a police shooting without a police union lawyer or a Fraternal Order of Police attorney present. The police will be on your side when all the facts are in, so be polite and do not be overly concerned about their initial impression or your silence.

When the medical assistance arrives, get medical treatment for shock for yourself and any other person involved whether physically injured or not.

Stay away from the news media. Never talk or make any sort of statement to them. Let your attorney make any statements for you.

Comments to friends and family may be confused and mistaken and used against you. Both family and friend can be subpoenaed and forced to testify against you.

**Legal Actions:** You are justified in using lethal force only if you **“feared for your life”** or that of another person. Do not apologize for defending yourself. Avoid statements such as “I am sorry I had to hurt them” or “I regret the incident happened”. Such statements are equated with feelings of guilt. Since you are showing remorse, it is assumed your actions were inappropriate. Such statements may be used against you in a court of law. The most important element to include is **fear**.



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**Stress:** Persons involved in a self-defense incident may face a great amount of stress. Psychological or physiological problems may appear. These problems are common and affect even trained soldiers and law enforcement officers. If you encounter any problems, seek professional help.

*This information is for legal information purposes and does not constitute legal advice. For specific questions you should consult a qualified attorney.*