

“Emergency –

Code Red, Code Red, Code Red –

Initiate Lockdown” !!!!!!!

Violent Incident Emergency Response

OSBIE Seminar – Nov 02, 2006

Joint Safe Schools Task Force

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Quick Review/History

- Bill 81 – Safe Schools Act, 2000 received Royal Assent June 23, 2000
- Covered a number of areas including the establishment of a Provincial Code of Conduct.
 - Enhanced fines for Trespassing on School property (\$5,000)
 - Dress Codes
 - Establishing a Police/School Protocol

Police/School Protocol

- 23 Elements to the protocol
- Some flexibility in terms of content, but much of it mandated by the joint ministries of Education, and at that time, Solicitor General
- Requirement to establish an “Emergency Plan” – very non specific
- Emergency plans already existed for fires, weather, bomb threats etc.
- Decisions made to develop a plan to deal with a major incident of school violence – I.e a School Shooting

Local Partnerships

- “Writing Team” includes input from local police agencies
- School Board personnel
- Plans can be gathered from across Canada and U.S. (limited number available)

Immediate Rapid Deployment "IRD"

- Columbine – 3 hours to enter school
- Officers did what they were trained to do – contain and wait for tactical
- Significant criticism of police in the aftermath regarding non-entry into the school
- It became clear we needed to do things differently
- IRD was explored and recognized as the most effective method to stop the threat

The Plan

- Effective plans must be simple, concise and user friendly
- No surprise exercises, due to possibility of panic
- Plans must be exercised regularly, or they are of no use
- Two exercises per school year – one without fire alarm pulled, one with fire alarm pull (advise Fire Dept and Alarm Co. in advance)
- Everyone must be aware of the plan, their roles/responsibilities – no secret codes

The Plan

- The Plans belong to the schools – Police are there to assist with implementation. If called upon to initiate the plan, highly probable police will not be in the school, and the school must be prepared to implement quickly and effectively
- ***Minutes Count/Seconds Count even more !!!!***

Violent Incident

- Armed Individual posing immediate threat to life
- (i.e. has a gun, knife, explosives, etc)
- " active shooter"
- May or may not be barricaded - hostages
- School Staff directed "Not to Confront"
- However – many of these situations have been resolved by school staff stepping in
- During staff training – talk about this
- We advise not to confront, however we know some will
- Quickly assess the chances of success in defusing or overpowering

Announcing Code Red

- Absolutely critical that the announcement be made via the P.A. ASAP !!
- **“Emergency – Code Red, Code Red, Code Red – Initiate Lockdown”**
- During staff training, stress that it will likely be the secretary who gets the call from somewhere in the school.
- They are to call the Code Red immediately, and not hesitate, or wait to consult with administration.
- Remember – These things are over in a matter of minutes.

9-1-1

- Immediately after announcing Code Red, call 911
- Maintain open line – do not let that line go for any reason
- Feed information to responding officers
- Safe approach route to school vital for officer safety
- Advise which door to enter
- Someone to meet officers with floor plan and identify where in the school the suspect is, if known

S.P.E.A.R.

- Each Patrol Sgt has data base of all schools in Peel on cruiser laptop
- Immediate access to school blueprints,
- Aerial photos, hydro and gas shut offs etc...
- Pre-established Inner and outer perimeters
- Media site, parent gathering point

Fire Alarms

- If Code Red has been called and school is locked down, disregard fire alarm if pulled
- Protocol in effect with Fire Depts.
- We now respond to all Fire Alarms during the day at schools, in the event a violent incident is commenced with the pull of a fire alarm
- Worst case scenario is an intruder who starts the incident with a fire alarm pull.

Lockdown Procedures in Classroom

- Away from doors and windows
- Lights out, blinds pulled
- Beware of sight lines
- Take cover if available
- **QUIET** !!! (most common problem during drills)
- Make classroom look empty
- No contact with office unless information about suspect/incident

Lockdown Procedures in Classroom

- No cell phone usage within the classroom – **ringers must be off**
- Remain in secure location until the “all clear” is received via the PA
- Be aware of wall construction in portables
- Portables - Desks on their side in a circle on the floor with desk tops facing out, students on inside of circle
- Washrooms – Elementary – must be checked – incorporate into plan

Open Areas (Libraries, Cafeterias etc)

- Local plans must be customized for each school
- Consider controlled evacuation if doors leading directly to exterior
- Significant attention required when customizing local plan for each school
- Most vulnerable area
- Highest probability of incident occurring in an open area

Outside School Building(s)

- If outside, do not re-enter if Code Red called
- Move quickly away from building to identified off-site evacuation location
- Some will scatter
- Stress the importance of the PA system working outside the school

Command Post Locations

- Establish three locations for each school
- 1) main office in every school
- 2) other location within the school, in the event the office is unavailable
- 3) off site in the event the school is not accessible
- Only an issue if the situation goes from an active shooter, to a barricaded or hostage situation

Individual School Plans

- Necessary for each school
- Principal/Vice Principal must be involved
- Work closely with the development/annual review of the plans
- Modifications to school buildings, require update to local plan

Individual School Plans (Cont)

- Spend the time to do it right. Have someone else review it for input (teachers, other members of detachment/service)
- Involve the caretaker – one of your best resources
- Staff training/buy in – a must!
- Ensure everyone including visitors to schools understand what to do if a Code Red is called

Police Response

- Principal is primarily responsible for the safety of students and staff
- Police are ultimately responsible for command and control of the incident
- If the situation turns from an active shooter to a hostage/barricaded situation, principal becomes part of the command team (Level 2 call)
- Police deal with media in terms of the incident and police response
- School Board deal with the media in terms of board/school related issues

Medway High School

- Thames Valley District School Board
- Middlesex County OPP – London, Lucan, Strathroy and Glencoe Detachments
- Friday afternoon – Soccer tournament
- Report of a male on roof of school with a high powered rifle

Medway High School

- Responding officers met by student body in various states of awareness of incident
- Some panicked, some lighthearted
- Four officers arrived in a matter of minutes
- Initiated IRD
- Every Student was possible suspect

Medway High School

- School and roof were eventually cleared by Tactics and Rescue team
- First time IRD was used by the OPP
- Youth with emotional issues later charged with Public Mischief endangering life
- Debriefed entire student body – following week in an assembly

School Training & Drills

- Principals to review twice each school year with staff – Police present to assist
- Police to ensure all officers who may respond to schools are trained in Code Red
- Drills – Two each year under the direction of the principal, including scheduling
- Police attend to assist, support and make recommendations, not to direct the drills
- Drills should include a debriefing
- Schools to record the dates of their drills

Prevention

- If the school and the police are doing things right, there is a high probability these types of incidents can be avoided
- The “Code of Silence” must be dealt with
- In Staff & Student training, talk about the fact that in most school shootings in the U.S., someone knew it was going to happen, but adhered to the Code of Silence and failed to tell anyone. Those people must live with this fact for the rest of their lives.

Prevention

- Teachers must identify at risk students, and action must be taken
- Police can assist – i.e. threat assessments (Behavioral Sciences)
- Be open and confront individuals exhibiting behavior which causes concern

90/10 Rule

- We should be spending 90 per cent of our time on prevention and 10 per cent of our time on reaction (i.e. Code Red planning/practicing)
- If we (police/schools in partnership) do this, we greatly reduce the chances of an incident occurring.
- However we must always be prepared for the fact that despite our best efforts, it could happen anywhere, any time.



***“Prevention Reduces
Risk,***

***Preparation Reduces
Impact”***



■ Questions???

■ Your Experiences???

