

Rapid Response Training

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WHEN: 12-29-08 from 0800 hours to 1600 hours (8AM until 4PM)

WHERE: Lakes Community High School
1600 Eagle Way
Lake Villa, IL 60046

WHO: This rapid response class will be made up primarily of police officers from the Lake Villa, Lindenhurst and Antioch Police Departments. Other departments such as the Lake County Sheriff's Office have been invited as well as other law enforcement departments in the area. The Lake Villa Fire Department and Lake Villa Rescue are aware of the program and may be taking part in their own training to supplement that of law enforcement.

WHY: Unfortunately in the current times, threats against schools have become more prevalent. Everyone remembers the Columbine High School incident, but there are dozens more stories just like that one that remind us on a daily basis that we need to prepare and practice tactics so that our officers are confident that they can handle almost every situation that may arise in the community.

WHAT: The goal of this training is multifaceted. We intend to achieve the training goals through a combination of classroom and simulated scenario training.

First of all, most of the officers in Lake Villa are familiar with the basic layout of LCHS, but other first responders in the area have likely never been inside. The hope is that officers from every surrounding department will have practiced for emergencies inside of LCHS and therefore will be better acquainted with where the different areas of the school are.

Secondly, it is important that officers are able to deal with their emotions and instincts that they would face in the event of an active shooter. In order to simulate the level of stress that is involved, the officers will face distractions in the form of flashing lights, smoke, loud noises and even the sound of gun fire. Portions of the training will also include the use of simulated weapons. The weapons used actually shoot a non-staining paint pellet. The pellet will not cause damage to the school, yet is capable of giving an immediate stimulus to offenders or officers.

One of the final points that we are trying to stress to our officers is that they are to act immediately. This sounds like common sense, but is not always a practice that

is followed. Dealing with active shooters is a patrol function, yet in a case like Columbine, the officers had been trained to set up a perimeter and wait for a SWAT team to arrive to deal with the matter. This training is to give patrol officers the tools that they will need to take on the threat immediately, without wasting valuable time waiting for someone else to deal with it. Most other training in law enforcement is all about how to avoid danger. This is one instance where we are teaching them that it is their responsibility to face the danger head on, in order to protect our children.

HOW: The purpose of this training exercise is to be as realistic as possible. In order to achieve this, actors will be brought in to portray staff and students, as well as the offenders. Scenarios will be set up in which the officers will engage the offenders or a threat of some kind. They will be faced with split second decision making opportunities and learn to act as a team to solve the problems that they face.

SAFETY CONCERNS:

Weapons: NO ACTUAL WEAPONS WILL BE ALLOWED INTO THE SCHOOL WITHOUT MULTIPLE INSPECTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE EMPTY. Although the officers may train using handguns and rifles, they will be checked a minimum of three separate times to ensure safety. NO AMMUNITION, PEPPER SPRAY, TASERS, OR KNIVES WILL BE ALLOWED INSIDE OF THE SCHOOL. Each officer and person permitted to enter this portion of the school will be subject to search, in order to confirm that they are not in possession of these items.

Public Concern: Inevitably people throughout the community will notice a strong police presence at the high school on the day of the training. The police dispatchers that would field calls about LCHS, will be informed of the event and will have a press release on hand to explain the circumstances to concerned persons.

In order to address the possibility of anyone uninvited persons entering the area of the school being used we will take several steps. The doors that separate the North end of LCHS, South of the main GYM and the locker rooms, will be secured at all times. The windows will be covered so as not to alarm or attract curious on lookers from the general public. These doors will also have signs posted on them that read "POLICE TRAINING IN PROGRESS. DO NOT ENTER". The exterior doors will also have these signs posted on them. All officers will remain inside of LCHS throughout the training with a few exceptions; training with a marked squad car in the front parking lot, training on a Jones Bus Company bus which will be parked out front of the school, or to go to lunch.

Medical Emergencies: Both the Lake Villa Fire and Rescue Departments are aware of the training and will be on hand in the event of an actual medical emergency. The closest hospitals are Condell and Vista East, while a helicopter landing area is available to the East of the LCHS football field, in order to transport patients to a more specialized hospital.