

LESSONS LEARNED: SPEED MATTERS

A 60 SECOND SCHOOL SAFETY PRIMER

School Hardening & School Attacks. Too many communities around the United States have experienced the horrors of school mass shootings and the phenomenon continues to accelerate rather than abate. Significant investments in school hardening have been made over the last decade to stop these threats, but hardening alone is not sufficient.

What Investigators Found. Post-incident mass school shooting investigations reveal that hardening measures didn't stop these attacks and chaotic and delayed emergency response contributed to heavy death tolls. These response delays resulted from communications problems, lack of visibility into the school and lack of real time information and coordination. This was the case in Sandy Hook, CT, Parkland, FL, Santa Fe, TX and, most recently, Uvalde, TX, among others.

Awareness is Next. Implementing an effective school security system requires a layered approach addressing all phases of security from detection, denial, notification to response. Among these elements, fast, coordinated emergency response is the least considered, but most significant factor in saving lives when an incident occurs.

Speed is Key. This serious security problem is known as a lack of "situational awareness", which is not having accurate and relevant information at the right time to make good decisions and act. For public safety personnel responding to an active lethal threat, knowing the "what, where, how, who and when" up to the moment means less uncertainty and the ability to act swiftly with a tactical advantage.

Automated Emergency Response. Implementing an instant automated emergency response system that directly connects your school communications to police and automatically shares the school radio and live video from a floor plan enables instant awareness of the unfolding situation so public safety can quickly assess and respond. This capability is an essential part of your school security plan.

Please review the following critical considerations when thinking about enhancing your school security.



Detection

- Social Media Monitoring
- Bullying and Tip Reporting
- Staff Evaluation



Denial

- School Radio
- Cameras
- Access Control
- Bollards
- Hardened Doors
- Bullet Proof Glass



Notification

- 9-1-1
- Panic Buttons
- Mass Notification



Response

- Police
- Fire
- EMS

Quick Facts

MYTHS THAT COST LIVES & TRUTHS THAT SAVE LIVES

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Panic Buttons

Uvalde Had Panic Buttons

A panic button system alerts police there is an emergency at your school. It saves 5-10 seconds over a 9-1-1 call. Though helpful, school emergency failures occur in the chaotic response that follows. It's not about not knowing something is happening. It's about knowing what is happening.



Video Systems with Police Login

Access vs. Instant Context Viewing

In an emergency if police have access, they must log into the school video system. Assuming credentials are on-hand (which often isn't the case), this takes time. Second, police are viewing a block of cameras without location context. They don't know where to look or where the cameras are located when they do see something. This limits their usability. By contrast, being able to immediately see the right camera views and know their location on a floor plan provides situational context and tactical utility.



Loaned Police Radios

Using Unfamiliar Systems in an Emergency

Equipping the principal's office with a police radio for direct communications is simple, but an ineffective solution. First, the radio must be accessible and always carried to be readily useful. Second, it must be maintained and charged. More than 50% of the time an unused radio will require charging when tested. Third, asking civilians to use an unfamiliar device in an emergency violates basic emergency tenets of using what you know when under stress.



Locks and Access Control

Inside and Outside Threats

Building access control systems are useful in stopping intruders. However, as shown in many cases, these systems are defeated through social engineering, and by mistakes and lapses in judgment. Students are fully aware of all security procedures and holes in the school system. Outsiders likewise can use pretext (such as delivery of uniforms, visiting teachers, etc.) to gain access.



Other Partners

Coordination with Other Responders

In any major incident, the clock doesn't stop when police arrive at the school. Providing rapid, safe access to emergency medical services personnel to help injured persons saves lives. Stabilizing and transporting gravely injured patients to trauma centers within the golden hour is a priority. The sooner police, having full situational awareness, can clear areas inside the school, the faster EMS can coordinate and enter the scene, and the quicker transport can be arranged.