

Running head: PFR'S ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE

Leading Community Risk Reduction

Puyallup Fire & Rescue's Response to Active School Shooting Incidents

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

Schools need to be a safe haven for learning. When that comfort zone is damaged by violence, the entire community is affected. Local fire/EMS, law enforcement, and school administrations need to work together and create an action plan should a school shooting occur. The problem was that Puyallup Fire & Rescue (PFR) had no plan in place to effectively work with law enforcement and school administrators during an active shooter incident. The purpose of this applied research project was to identify elements necessary to effectively respond to and manage school shooting emergencies.

The research questions asked are how does PFR and cooperating agencies (law enforcement, school district) prepare for school shooting situations, what specialized resources and training are necessary to safely operate at school shootings, what items are needed for PFR to effectively operate with other local agencies and the Puyallup School District, what do other emergency services and school districts do to deal with school shootings, and what national standards are available to use to handle school shootings?

The research method used was descriptive using literature review, unstructured interviews, and a survey sent to Puyallup Fire, Puyallup Police and local principals.

Results showed that there are planning templates available for use to prepare for shooting events in schools. Washington state law requires school districts meet with emergency responders to create emergency plans. Emergency responders are willing to experiment with new procedures and joint training to quickly remove injured patients from school shootings.

Recommendations will include more interaction between Puyallup Fire and Puyallup Police for emergency extraction of injured patients using an armed police escort, interaction between local stakeholders for emergency school preparedness, and become involved in the

Pierce County Department of Emergency Management schools coalition to assist with county wide training for schools and emergency responders.

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Introduction

Although statistically infrequent (less than one percent of homicides and suicides among children ages 5-18 (Center for Disease Control, 2006)), the impact to any community from a shooting at a school is tremendous. The psychological, emotional, and physical impacts to assaults on children create a great toll to all those involved – the students, parents, educational staff, the community, and emergency responders. As items are practiced and discussed prior to an actual event, the event and its stressors are reduced and outcomes are more successful. Adding to this is the randomness and suddenness of many of these school shooting situations.

Puyallup Fire & Rescue has multiple public and private schools within its response area. Currently, Puyallup Fire & Rescue (PFR) has no system in place to effectively respond to and manage school shooting situations. The purpose of this research is to identify elements necessary to effectively respond to and manage school shooting situations.

Research questions used are; how does PFR and cooperating agencies (law enforcement, school district) prepare for school shooting situations, what specialized resources and training are necessary to safely operate at school shootings, what items are needed for PFR to effectively operate with other local agencies and the Puyallup School District, what do other emergency services and school districts do to deal with school shootings, and what national standards are available to use to handle school shootings?

This research project will use the descriptive research model. The research approach will use a literature review, unstructured interviews, and a survey of PFR response personnel, Puyallup Police response personnel, and Principals in the Puyallup School District.

Background and Significance

The school shooting massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999 (Bergquist, 2001) was the watershed event that changed the way fire/EMS and law enforcement began thinking about school shootings. Prior to this event, the SOP was for initial police patrol officers would establish a perimeter and await the local SWAT element to enter the building and confront the shooter(s). The new methodologies for police response involves the initial police officers forming in groups of up to four person teams and immediately move toward the sound of gunfire. Terms to describe this action include Initial Action Rapid Deployment (IARD), (Wikipedia, 2008), Quick Action Deployment (QUAD) (Prendergast, 2000), or more commonly, active shooter. In spite of the rapid response from police units, research shows that most of the shootings ended prior to police arrival and by means other than police interdiction (Fein et al., 2002, p. 25)

Fire/EMS would stage safely away from the incident and only be allowed to enter the scene after the entire school campus was deemed safe and secure. Often, this would take hours to occur. Because of this, wounded students, teachers, and other school personnel stood a greater chance of dying from their wounds and not have access to trauma care.

The Puyallup School District (PSD) is the ninth largest district in Washington state, with over 21,000 students. The district has 22 elementary schools, six junior high schools, three high schools, one alternative school, and multiple support buildings. The district employs close to 2,500 staff (Puyallup School District, 2008). The school district encompasses the cities of Puyallup, Edgewood, Fife, as well as part of unincorporated Pierce County. Fire/EMS services provided to the many school district buildings are from Puyallup Fire & Rescue, Central Pierce

Fire & Rescue, Graham Fire District, Edgewood Fire District, and the Riverside Fire District.

Law enforcement is provided from Puyallup Police, Edgewood Police, and Pierce County Sheriff departments.

The Puyallup Police Department (PPD) has nearly 100 uniformed and civilian staff, and operates a full-service police department. Their divisions include investigations and patrol work, as well as a Problem Oriented Policing unit, and a Power squad to assist during heavy call-times. The Puyallup Police Department also has a School Resource Officer (SRO), who has interaction with junior and senior high schools in the city limits. This position was funded through a cooperative effort with the Puyallup School District (Abe, 2007). The Puyallup Police Department actively participates with Metro SWAT, a joint SWAT team utilizing personnel from various nearby law enforcement agencies. (James, 2008).

Puyallup Fire & Rescue (PFR) currently has 55 uniformed response personnel trained to various levels of medical, hazardous materials, and special operations requirements. PFR has over 20 paramedics, with the remainder being EMT's. PFR transports primarily ALS patients from their one 24/7 staffed medic unit. The 12 personnel minimum per shift respond from three stations in the city. Two of the stations use a pumper, and the other station responds on an aerial apparatus. One Battalion Chief is on duty for 24 hours and is responsible for the operational needs of the city on their shift. PFR's training is primarily conducted by Central Pierce Fire & Rescue (CPF&R) under an operating agreement.

The City of Puyallup is a city of approximately 12 square miles with a population of 36,790 (City of Puyallup, 2008). The city contains residential, light industry, and commercial occupancies. Of special note for this research paper are the South Hill Mall, which is a large, regional shopping mall, and Good Samaritan Hospital, a 250 patient bed Level 3 Trauma Center.

All Pierce County fire departments, law enforcement agencies and school districts use Pierce Responder, an emergency mapping system that shows exterior and interior views of all public schools within the county. When the system became operational, various administrators from fire, law enforcement and school districts discussed evacuation routes and staging areas for different emergencies. Those locations were then denoted in Pierce Responder. Most emergency service and school administrators are able to access this information through a secure portal website.

This research project is important to PFR in that there is currently no active shooter policy or Operating Guideline in effect. PFR in the past has also not coordinated this type of emergency with PPD or the Puyallup School District in either a tabletop or live exercise. Due to the randomness at when this type of scenario could occur, discussions need to occur to plan for this type of event. Also, several shootings in the nearby area in the past year have heightened the awareness of this type of situation. In January 2007, a Foss High School student was shot and killed on campus (News Tribune Staff, 2007). On November 20, 2005 a lone gunman entered the Tacoma Mall and began shooting, wounding six and taking hostages before eventually surrendering (Heffter, Sommerfeld & Carter, 2005). The South Hill Mall, located in Puyallup, is similar to the Tacoma Mall.

This research paper ties in with two of the United States Fire Administration operational objectives (United States Fire Administration, 2007). The first objective that meets the criteria is to “appropriately respond in a timely manner to emergent issues”. Although school violence has been around for a long time, the violence of shootings since Columbine High School has highlighted the need to appropriately respond to save innocent victims. With the inception of

NIMS and Presidential Directive 5, (FEMA, 2004), emergency responders must coordinate responses for the safety and effectiveness of responders and the public.

By working with other emergency response agencies and the local school district on an active shooter response plan, the beginnings of a multihazard risk-reduction plan can occur. These discussions, subsequent planning, and formation of plans will meet the operational objective of a comprehensive multi hazard risk-reduction plan in the community (United States Fire Administration, 2007).

By being a leader in preparedness planning with other emergency response agencies, the school district, and other community stakeholders (Good Samaritan Hospital), this ties in with information learned in Leading Community Risk Reduction (LCRR). Community vitality is addressed in the introduction to the course (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp. SM0-16). By having a plan involving city resources and other stakeholders, this response plan will be the impetus to a multihazard response plan. Should emergencies occur at school sites, this plan can be enacted, helping ensure community vitality. As stated in the course, some of the benefits of risk reduction are quality of life issues, PFR leaders will become leaders in the community, and PFR can become a change agent for other risk reduction initiatives (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp. SM0-18). Working with community groups and PPD will show that PFR cares about and wants to be involved with community issues (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp. SM3-60) and will build community equity (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp. SM3-70) and credibility (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp. SM3-61).

Risk as defined in LCRR is Community Hazard multiplied by Vulnerability ($CH \times V =$ Risk) (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp. SM1-77). “Low Frequency/High Risk events have the greatest potential for major disaster”, as stated in LCRR (National Fire Academy, 2007, pp.

SM1-78). The learning manual recognizes that community impacts can be disastrous, but by having a plan in place to deal with a low frequency/high risk event such as a school shooting, the community impacts can be lessened.

Literature Review

To prepare for school shootings, looking to past events and their after-action reports is a beginning step. In *EMS Response to Columbine: Lessons Learned*, Mell and Sztajnkrzyer (Mell & Sztajnkrzyer, 2005) give an overview of the Columbine incident, as well as recommendations for changes or improvement. In an unstructured interview with EMS Chief Wayne Zygowicz (personal communication, June 10, 2008), Zygowicz shares many of the same recommendations as does Mell and Sztajnkrzyer. Zygowicz was involved at Columbine and stills works for Littleton, CO. Fire & Rescue and has lectured around the country on lessons learned there. The National School Safety Center (National school safety center, 2004) report on schools and terrorism contains a checklist on preparing schools, law enforcement and other stakeholders on preparation and action plans during an incident. Baldanza (2005) discusses forming partnerships and sharing information in addressing school emergency response plans.

Sinkgraven (Sinkgraven, 2007) in her presentation lists 10 elements needed in a sound school emergency plan. The elements that include all stakeholders are: developed collaboratively with community partners, practiced on a regular basis, include Incident Command structure that aligns with NIMS, and be continually reviewed and updated.

Washington State Substitution Senate Bill 5097 (Washington State Senate, 2007) passed into law sets forth a safe school plan that include the following items: requires the building principal to be certified on the incident command system, set guidelines for requesting city and county law enforcement, fire departments, emergency service providers, and county emergency

management agencies to meet with school districts and participate in safety-related drills annually. School districts shall also annually review and update safe school plans and mapping information, identify staff trained in the incident command system, and provide one safety-related drill each month schools are in session – one drill for lock downs, one for shelter in place, and six for fire drills. Schools are encouraged to work with local emergency providers to conduct one table top exercise, one functional exercise, and two full-scale exercises within a four year period.

All of these citations refer to working collaboratively with involved stakeholders to create a working plan that can be used during a time of emergency. The documents further stress the revisiting of the documents for review and update, and continual practice of the plan.

Weimerskirch (2006) highlights effective ways to conduct drills, tabletop, functional, and full scale exercises and the steps needed to conduct and evaluate these various drills. By working collaboratively on this plan, similar plans can be created for other sites within the city, ie. South Hill Mall and Good Samaritan hospital.

Specialized resources and training are available based upon the type of system PFR wants to build for its initial entry with Puyallup Police units. These are SWAT medic, tactical medic, and entry medics using armed law enforcement officers as escorts. SWAT and Tactical Medic training exists in various levels and locations. Another option available is a newer training system called TEMS, or Tactical Emergency Medical Support. The medical component of this training concentrates on trauma injuries that would typically be seen with gunshot wounds or bomb blast injuries (Insights Training Center, 2008). The other component of this training deals with the interaction with law enforcement – how to move with the armed escort, cover and concealment, and extraction of those injured.

The other training necessary is between PFR, Puyallup Police, and Puyallup School District. Using SSB 5097 (Washington State Senate, 2007) as a template will incorporate many of the necessary items: school mapping (Pierce Responder), NIMS, and multi faceted drills and exercises. Pierce County Department of Emergency Management (PCDEM) has a coalition of school districts and emergency services providers that are in the final stages of preparing the training aspects necessary to comply with SSB 5097. Articles like NIMS explained by the US Department of Education in their ERCM Express article are concise yet complete enough for busy school administrators to understand NIMS and its importance to school emergencies. Information from the Dept. of Education will also help give it implied expertise (Department of Education, 2006).

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (Kramen, Massey & Timm) have a comprehensive guide for school administrators and emergency services personnel to work from that begins with prevention and includes threat assessment, planning, and pre and post incident actions. The United States Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education issued a report in 2002 (Fein et al., 2002) that cover in depth threat assessment that focuses on finding those at risk students that have the capacity to cause harm or death on school grounds.

Although begun prior to Columbine, The Denver Public School system was working on their emergency response plan with both Denver Fire and Police, but their resolve heightened and became a top priority after Columbine (Mayo, 2005, p. 8). Positive outcomes from these discussions were understanding from emergency responders how the school system worked, working together gave the schools insight on how emergency responders needed various information, and from all school levels acceptance on the importance of emergency planning and preparedness.

Neighboring Aurora School District in Aurora, Colorado, met regularly with emergency services personnel and did table top drills and discussions with various school administrators, according to retired principal Mark Donovan in a general interview with the author (personal communication, April 5, 2008).

In another general interview with Pegi McEvoy (personal communication, June 18, 2008), Director of Safety for the Seattle School District, McEvoy stated they are using best practices from the Department of Education, and including ESF #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services and ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security Annex ((Department of Homeland Security, 2008)). During planning stages for the district and school specific plans, McEvoy and her staff will call upon outside stakeholders like fire/EMS and police for their input and drill preparation. These plans will comply with SSB 5097 as required by Washington state law.

Orange County Fire Rescue (OCFR) in Orange County Florida, has an in-station drill called “Responding to Schools for Large Scale Incidents”. This drill covers the multi-color cards that the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) use to indicate relative safety in each room. A green card at the door or window indicates everything is ok, red signifies help is needed, and yellow signals extra or missing students. This drill also discusses the OCPS’ Emergency Code System of : Code Red, Code Red Lock Down/Lay Down, Code Yellow, Code Blue, and Code Green. In addition, OCFR trains with both the OC Sheriffs Office and the OCPS on incident command to include role playing exercises (Orange County Fire Rescue, 2007)

Camden County NJ has a school lockdown guideline that was prepared in cooperation with the Camden County Police Chiefs Association, Camden County Fire Chiefs Association,

and Camden County Fire Marshal's. The guideline has three tiers of lockdowns and discusses lockdown vs. evacuation (Camden County Chiefs of Police, 2007).

By using state mandated laws and planning guides as shown above, schools and emergency responders have shown that all stakeholder groups can work together to achieve a common goal. Not only does this help for these incidents, but these relationships lay the groundwork for other planning processes and collaborative work in the future. Plans work better and people have more confidence in them when all interested parties have been involved in their creation.

Several national standards or recommendations for active school shooter responses were found. NFPA 1500 states written guidelines are necessary to establish a standardized approach to incidents involving violence (National Fire Protection Agency, 2007). In addition, NFPA 1500 also recommends developing interagency agreements with law enforcement, communicate and coordinate rescue actions with law enforcement, develop SOP's, and special training for these type of high risk events (National Fire Protection Agency, 2007). NIOSH made several recommendations regarding violent incidents after a Kentucky Fire Lieutenant was killed by gunfire on an EMS incident. Their recommendations were: develop SOP's for responding to potentially violent incidents, develop integrated emergency communication systems that can talk real time to all responding personnel and dispatch, provide body armor or bullet resistant personal protective equipment, and train on and enforce its use when necessary, integrated hands free communication equipment, archive historical data relative to incident locations or addresses, and develop coordinated response guidelines for violent situations and hold joint training sessions with law enforcement and mutual aid response agencies (NIOSH, 2005). Obviously, emergency responder is of the utmost priority. There is implied risk when working at these high

risk/low frequency events. Without written guidelines for the safe operation at them, emergency responders lives will also be put at an unnecessarily higher risk than the one implied.

Procedures

Literature review was accomplished through various means. The first method was by using the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the National Fire Academy in Emmittsburg, Md. The online version of the LRC card catalog was used as well. On line searches used Google Scholar and the main Google.com website. Other online sources were accomplished by directly typing URL's.

An email was sent through the EFO coordinator, asking current EFO students for information regarding this research. Many helpful replies were received. Unstructured interviews were also used. Interviewees were obtained through earlier research mentioned or the authors past experiences.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the level of awareness of active school shooter planning, training, and the likelihood of it happening in our community. Surveys were sent to three groups of personnel. The first survey group was PFR operations personnel. This group included firefighters, firemedics, Captains, and Battalion Chiefs. The rationale for this group was because these personnel will be the first responders at these emergency incidents. Because any type of rescue training (entry to an area escorted by armed law enforcement personnel) would be new, questions about appropriateness and proper safety levels were also questioned. Questions about incident command and assistance levels and support functions were also asked. Finally, length of service in the fire service and at PFR was asked. Surveys to all groups were confidential, and it was directed that no names be placed on the survey. Surveys were distributed to all three Operations Battalion Chiefs for dissemination. Completion of

surveys was requested prior to joint PFR and PPD training which occurred in early April. Because there had been no formal joint school shooter training before, it was important to have the surveys completed prior to that date. All the surveys were checked by several of the author's peers for wording and grammatical issues so confusion or misinterpretation was reduced. Check boxes were used and there was only one fill-in response used. Additional wording and write-in questions were not used to assist in ease of use and interpretation later by the author. All surveys have the same amount of questions, and survey response was gauged at less than ten minutes. A cover letter explaining the survey and the author's introduction was included, as well as a phone number for follow up questions later. A total of 51 PFR surveys were distributed, and 40 were returned.

The survey for law enforcement was similar to PFR's. The author, in the three different survey groups, wanted to see if there was a difference in the attitude or likelihood of a shooter event occurring in Puyallup's schools. Because there had been no prior active shooter training with PFR, it would be interesting to see the readiness and acceptance of this new idea on the police side as well. The police survey was emailed to the Operations Lieutenant, who emailed them to their personnel. Those included in the survey were patrol officers, detectives, Sergeants, and anyone on the Metro SWAT squad. Command staff was not included, as they typically would fill incident command positions and would not be escorting PFR personnel on the entry-rescue team. Similar to PFR's, the return date was to be prior to the early April joint training drill. The PPD survey was emailed to 58 officers and 25 were returned. For ease of determining which survey was which, PFR's was watermarked with "Fire/EMS", PD's was watermarked "Law Enforcement", and PSD's was watermarked "Principals".

The principal's survey was pre read by two local principals, Mrs. Lisa Berry from Brouillet Elementary School, and Mrs. Melanie Helle from Stahl Jr. High. Both principals are in the PSD, and it was pre read for clarity. Again, the principal survey had the same number of questions, was anonymous, and would take less than ten minutes to complete. The survey was sent through two different channels to the supervisory level, one being the Executive Director of Elementary School Leadership, and one to the Executive Director of Secondary School Leadership. Once approved at that level, the survey was then sent to the Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability for approval. Once final approval was obtained, both lead principals emailed the survey to the respective peers – primary and secondary principals and assistant principals. Surveys were either returned electronically or hard copy to the two lead principals, with the final due date of June 13, the last day of school in PSD. There are 60 principals and assistant principals, and 13 surveys were returned. The decision to survey only principals and assistant principals was based on the premise that they are in the schools daily, have a feel for the school and surrounding community, and would be directly involved in the coordination of efforts at a school emergency. It will be these leaders that PFR and PPD will work most closely with during the planning of and application of emergency procedures, when they occur.

Once all surveys were returned, the surveys were separated into the three individual groups – Fire/EMS, Law Enforcement, and Principals and responses were tabulated.

The author was encouraged by both the PFR and PPD return results. Because the first ever rescue/entry team drill with both PFR and PPD was being held the first week of April due to PSD's Spring Break, the timing of the survey was short. The author wanted to deal with preconceived ideas prior to the training, and did not want to taint the survey results. By doing the

survey prior to the initial training, there was a benchmark and the survey would be consistent through both agencies – no pre/post information would be used in the same survey.

The author relied on the Patrol Lieutenant to send out the survey via email to the police department officers. To do it again, the author would have asked to attend the different squads patrol briefings and hand the surveys out there, and wait for them to be completed during the briefing. The only difficulty with that is to try to find those not in attendance at the initial squad briefing. With anonymity wanting to be protected, the author did not use a roster of personnel who completed the survey for either agency.

The school district situation proved to be more problematic. The author is fairly aware of the district operations, but was completely unaware of how to move the survey through the proper channels. It was very important to find champions within the district that knew how and where to move the survey. Timing will always be an issue – during Winter and Spring semesters, all schools are involved in some type of assessment testing. This has a big impact on the principal's time. The final authority for the survey is in charge of the assessments for the district, so the timing for them to approve the survey is even more critical.

To have a larger response from the principals, the author would ask to attend a meeting of the principal group and hand the survey out in person. Due to time constraints and conflicts, not all principals are able to attend those meetings, so the email process worked. Two items worked well for this group: the cover letter and the email sent from their peers, both principals within their group. This gave the survey importance and credibility.

For all three groups, a limited amount of time to complete the survey was given. By leaving a short window of opportunity, this created an urgency to complete it as soon as possible. A reminder by all three group senders (Battalion Chiefs, Patrol Lieutenant, and Principals) was

also appreciated. These were limited, but were helpful to get some late returns. The principal's cut off was the end of the school year (given in early June), so it was anticipated to be a "cleaning off of the desk" item for some before summer break.

Results

The first research question how do PFR and other agencies prepare for shooter situations is through planning and recognizing that this situation can exist. See Appendix B for full results of the survey. Respondents from all three agencies were asked if there was a policy in place that deals specifically with active school shootings. The law enforcement response is much higher in the affirmative that a policy exists, although unsure responses were high for both PFR and PPD groups. This is suggestive that operational guidelines are not clear or need to be reinforced. The PSD principals responded that they were quite sure that their policy was an all hazards emergency policy and not a specific shooter policy.

PSD principals were asked who they had assist them prepare their emergency plan (not specific shooter plan). Of the school respondents that have an active shooter portion in their emergency plan, slightly more than half worked with local law enforcement, while slightly less than half worked with the district administration on their plan. For fire/EMS, the three that were consulted were outside of the city (surrounding county fire districts). Other schools were listed probably due to evacuation sites, as some elementary and junior high schools are near each other. Two schools contacted the Pierce County Emergency Management Office, possibly for training or assistance with Pierce Responder mapping system.

The PSD principals were also asked who they shared their plan with. Communication regarding the emergency plan is vital for its success. Of the responders, only the communication of the plan with its staff was above 50%. Law enforcement communication with active school

shooter situations is also crucial. The more these groups can share information, and all groups know what the plan is, the plan has a higher chance of success.

Pierce Responder will be a critical tool used for tactical planning at school incidents. PSD respondents look at Pierce Responder yearly to see that their plan is updated. Over half of the PPD officers have never looked at Pierce Responder, while over seventy five percent of PFR personnel have never looked at the mapping system. PFR rarely uses Pierce Responder other than to look at previous operations or for training purposes. PPD will use it during many of their combined training and SWAT operations, so their use is higher. PSD principals or their staff will verify information is correct, normally at the beginning of the school year.

Situational awareness regarding school safety and the preparedness of schools and responders is important in the planning process. PFR personnel responded with a 37 percent each probability that the schools are likely vulnerable and somewhat vulnerable to a school shooting situation. The highest percentage of PPD respondents felt that there was a likely chance of an event. The highest percentage of PSD respondents felt that there was a somewhat chance of a shooting event. With more training and knowledge regarding violence and WMD, both PPD and PFR felt the likelihood of a shooting incident happening was the highest response in their categories. The PSD respondents by a large majority felt there was somewhat of a chance of this occurring.

Regarding individuals departments preparation for an event like this, a full quarter of PFR respondents felt that there has been no preparation to effectively deal with an active shooter incident. This shows that continual reinforcement of MCI, trauma patient care principles, and involvement with both PSD and PPD is necessary. With the high numbers in the 'Somewhat' range further reinforces added continual work and training as a group in preparation for these

events.

The second research question concerned specialized resources and training needed to handle school shooting incidents. Ninety percent of PFR personnel have never received training on active shooter emergencies, with 88 percent of PPD officers receiving this training within the past year. Principal respondents were high in both the never category and over one year ago.

Interagency training was also questioned between PFR and PPD regarding active shooter drills. It is not surprising that law enforcement does far more training in active shooter scenarios due to the change in philosophy and that some of the respondents are on the Metro SWAT team. PFR's lone respondent to shooter training does some instructing in this area, hence the affirmative notation. Regarding the principals training with emergency responders, only two of the responding principals stated they train yearly with emergency service personnel on the emergency plan. The largest majority have never trained with either law enforcement or fire/EMS on their emergency plan.

Another question on both PFR and PPD's survey dealt asked that, with appropriate training and personal protective equipment, should PFR enter schools to rescue, treat immediate life threatening injuries, and extract shooting victims with a law enforcement team. Half of the PFR personnel felt this was an appropriate action, while 92% of PPD respondents felt this was appropriate. There were 30% of the PFR personnel who were unsure if this was an appropriate action. As training continues between both emergency responder groups, the unsure category group will change.

The third research question was what items are needed to effectively operate with other local agencies and the PSD. A survey question asked all three groups what NIMS stood for. Without a strong incident command system, these high risk/low frequency events become

extremely unsafe and the chances of a successful outcome decline. All of the PFR and three quarters of the PPD respondents answered the question correctly. Ninety two percent of the PSD respondents answered the question incorrectly. Through NIMS training, the principals and their staff will become more accustomed to using the incident command system and become comfortable working within the system. Working with and understanding the nomenclature will also be a benefit.

Another survey question asked what role PFR should take during an active school shooting incident. All of the functions asked had at or over 50% from PFR respondents. Only wound treatment in the treatment collection area and extraction with armed escort were answered above 50% from the PPD officers. Further questioning would be helpful to see if they are unaware of those functions, or truly do not think they are important PFR functions. The functions asked about were: incident command, wound treatment in treatment area, extraction with armed escort, MCI set up, communications, fire suppression, alarm control, and rehab.

The fourth question regarded how other departments and school districts operated, which was covered in the literature review, and was not covered in the survey.

National standards was the fifth question. NFPA and NIOSH have recommendations as stated in the literature review. The other standards applicable would be SSB 5097 that requires certain actions and procedures to be done by PSD, again as stated in the literature review. Wound care and medical will be covered under Pierce County and Washington state Medical Protocols for EMT's and Paramedics.

Discussion

Mell and Sztajnkrycer (2005), in their lessons learned from Columbine, had several recommendations. One was to use and have a better understanding of the incident command

system, and that its use is a prerequisite to a successful operation. PFR and PPD command staff are working through the NIMS series, and both departments have had joint command level training in the past several years. A vast majority of the PPD officers and all of the PFR respondents were able to correctly name what NIMS stands for. On the other end, only one PSD principal responding to the survey was aware of what NIMS stands for.

Another recommendation from Mell & Sztajnkrzyer was for EMS integration into law enforcement activity at violent situations such as active shooter scenes. Specialized training such as TEMS would improve the officers entry in to the building with TEMS trained paramedics, with adequate protective gear. Zygowicz (Donovan, 2008) concurs, and Littleton Fire & Rescue has an operational TEMS team. The survey of PFR and PPD suggest the same, with half of the PFR personnel affirming this, and 90+ percent of PPD concur with additional training and entry support from PFR. Another question affirming this relates to roles PFR should perform at active shooter incidents. Both emergency responder groups agree that PFR should be involved inside the building treating wounded victims (or law enforcement officers) with an armed law enforcement escort.

Both Zygowicz and Mell & Sztajnkrzyer agree that communications is very important to a successful operation. PFR personnel recognize this by their response about roles PFR should take on during active shooter responses in schools. Over 92% of PFR respondents felt that was an important role. Another communications question relates to Pierce Responder and its use. All respondents were aware of Pierce Responder, but not all had used it or can access it readily. With principals knowing their operational plan and maps of the layout of their building, this will go a long way to ensure a successful operation. Most command staff from PFR, PPD and school staff can access Pierce Responder.

Operational scene control was the last recommendation Mell & Sztajnkrycer discuss. Having a strong command presence and operational control for an incident like this is a necessity for the safety of operating personnel, victims, and the public. By complying with SSB 5097 (Washington State Senate, 2007) many of these items can be satisfied. SSB 5097 requires the principal to be certified in incident command and all staff members who have taken NIMS training.

SSB 5097 and Sinkgraven (2007) encourage all interested parties to include PFR, PPD, PSD and all other law enforcement and fire departments inside PSD boundaries to cooperate and collaborate on school all-hazard plans and policies. Principal respondents had just shy of 50% having the central administration assist in their school plan. Just over 50% included the appropriate law enforcement, while only three respondents used the fire department for planning purposes. The local hospital, Good Samaritan, was not consulted at all. Based on this the author will assume that regional Level 2 trauma hospitals were also not consulted. These hospitals are more distant than Good Samaritan, a Level 3 trauma hospital. The author is not aware of PFR being contacted to consult on any school emergency plans, although the author is aware of neighboring Central Pierce F&R being contacted.

SSB 5097 also encourages school districts to work with local emergency management agencies and emergency responders to conduct relevant training and exercises. PFR as a department has not participated in active shooter emergency training prior to April 2008, as indicated by the survey. PPD does train with other responders on school shooting situations, but those have been other Metro SWAT participants, not PFR personnel. The vast majority of principal respondents had only trained over one year ago or never on school shootings. PFR has not participated in any school shooting exercises with PSD, and the author is only aware of one

shooter exercise in the Puyallup School District, in which the Pierce County Sheriffs Office and Central Pierce FR participated.

The author was pleased to see that school safety was high on the principals list of job responsibilities. Because of this high a value, the author feels that principals and staff will be receptive to training regarding school shooter and all-hazards incidents.

The author asked about length of service for all three groups. Because this training and response mode is fairly new to both emergency responder groups, the author was curious to see how receptive personnel would be to this idea, and if length of service would be a factor. Both PFR and PPD will have to train together for these situations – something that does not happen frequently. With the affirmative responses from both groups, the author was pleased to see that both groups are willing to work together for the greater good. Service time does not appear to be a factor; 50% of PFR personnel thought EMS personnel should enter with an armed escort after training and proper protective equipment was provided, with another 30% unsure. Again, the survey was done prior to training with PPD on this role. The average length of service of PFR and PPD respondents was nearly 15 years, well in to many responder's careers. It was enlightening to see the willingness to work together and try innovative steps to improve service to the public.

The respondent principal's average career as a school administrator was over 10 years, and in the district over 7 years, but the item that was interesting was the average age in their current school was 2 years. Due to the relative newness in their current school, spending time working with Pierce Responder and nearby emergency responders would be a good idea.

Recommendations

To successfully manage a critical incident like a school shooting, pre-incident preparation, planning, and table top drills are necessary. These elements help all participants gain an understanding and appreciation for other participant's perspective and experience. During the emergency, it is relieving to see school administrators and police commanders at the scene that you have prior relationships with – relationships that were born through pre-incident planning and training. Based on the survey of the three component groups, PF&R, PPD, and PSD, these items need to happen. Relationships between the three groups need to begin to prepare not only school shootings, but for all emergency hazards. The first step in the process is to believe that this positive relationship is necessary. Once buy-in is achieved, not only at the school level, but at administrative levels across all three jurisdictions, further training and relationship building can successfully continue. This training will include but not be limited to incident command, NIMS training, and Pierce Responder applications.

The author recommends further training for PF&R relative to trauma care. Classes such as TEMS should be investigated to assist in training as well as finding appropriate equipment that will work for a successful outcome. PFR should use PPD as a reference and resource to provide information regarding personal protective equipment for PFR personnel working in the hot zone. Continued training on MCI elements should be continued, as well as in-service training on school emergency procedures.

Joint training between PFR and PPD should continue on several fronts. Hands-on training between first responders (police and fire) should continue on escorting PFR personnel to injured patients by armed PPD personnel. This will help build teamwork and confidence between the crews that will have to work and communicate together at a moments notice. Training at the

incident command level should continue for Battalion Chiefs from PFR and Sergeants and Commanders from PPD, especially regarding MCI and joint incident activities.

PFR should create an operating guideline regarding active shooter incidents. Based on the survey, over half of the PFR respondents did not know if PFR had an active shooter policy. This guideline should be created with assistance from PPD and PSD. This guideline should be consistent with Pierce County medical protocols.

Even with all of the internal city collaboration recommended, the author further recommends becoming an active participant in the Pierce County schools/emergency responder coalition. Because PSD incorporates an area larger than just the city boundaries, it is important to provide consistent information school-district wide. As all the emergency responders work with multiple school districts, it would only make sense to be involved with a county-wide plan. With county-wide training and information being disseminated, response plans should be similar and consistent enough for all agencies to use them and quickly grasp the necessary information.

Discussion, collaboration, planning, and training for school shooting emergencies benefits everyone. Emergency responders will become more proficient in their tactical operations, and commanders will be able to better apply strategic plans. School district personnel will be more aware of emergency operational plans, and this collaborative work will satisfy state legal requirements for the school district. By concentrating on a high risk/low frequency emergency such as an active shooter in a school, this collaboration will benefit everyone involved, now and for the future. Working together for a common goal will be a springboard for safer schools and emergency responders in the future.

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Appendix A

Fire/EMS, Law Enforcement, and Principal Surveys

PFR Survey

Does your department have a specific active shooting policy for schools?

Yes No Don't know

When was the last time you received training on active shooter emergencies?

Within the last month?

Within the last six months?

Within the last year?

Over one year ago?

Never

How often do you train with other first responders on active shooter scenarios (Law Enforcement, Fire/EMS...)?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

In your opinion, how vulnerable are the local schools to an active shooter incident?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

In your opinion, how prepared is your department/school to effectively deal with an active school shooter scenario?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

In the Emergency Management realm, what does NIMS stands for?

How often do you access Pierce Responder (emergency school mapping system)?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

In your opinion, what role(s) should Fire/EMS be involved with during active shooter situations in schools? (Check all that apply)

Incident Command

Wound treatment in Treatment Area

Extraction of injured patients with Law Enforcement security team

MCI set up

Communications

Fire Suppression

Fire Alarm Control

Rehab for All

In your opinion, should Fire/EMS enter schools to rescue, treat immediate life threatening injuries, and extract shooting victims with a Law Enforcement security team?

No, not until entire building is secured

Yes, with proper training and life protecting equipment (ballistic vest ...)

Unsure at this point

How many years have you been in the Fire Service? _____

How many years have you been with Puyallup Fire & Rescue? _____

Thank you for your assistance!

Law Enforcement Survey

Does your department have a specific active shooting policy for the schools?

Yes No Don't know

When was the last time you received training on active shooter emergencies?

Within the last month?

Within the last six months?

Within the last year?

Over one year ago?

Never

How often do you train with other first responders on active shooter scenarios (SWAT, Fire/EMS...)?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

In your opinion, how vulnerable are the local schools to an active shooter incident?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

In your opinion, how prepared is your department to effectively deal with an active shooter school scenario?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

In the Emergency Management realm, what does NIMS stands for?

How often do you access Pierce Responder (emergency school mapping system)?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

In your opinion, what role(s) should Fire/EMS be involved with during active shooter situations in schools? (Check all that apply)

- Incident Command
- Wound treatment in Treatment Area
- Extraction of injured patients with Law Enforcement security team
- MCI set up Communications
- Rehab

In your opinion, should Fire/EMS enter schools to rescue, treat immediate life threatening injuries, and extract shooting victims with a Law Enforcement security team?

- No, not until entire building is secured
- Yes, with proper training and life protecting equipment (ballistic vest)
- Unsure at this point

How many years have you been in Law Enforcement? _____

How many years have you been with Puyallup PD? _____

Thank you for your assistance!

Principal Survey

Does your school have a specific active shooter policy or an all hazards emergency policy?

Specific Policy All Hazards Policy I don't know

When was the last time you received training on active shooter emergencies?

Within the last month?

Within the last six months?

Within the last year?

Over one year ago?

Never

Do your emergency plans cover an active shooter situation? Yes No

If Yes:

What other agencies did you work with to prepare your plan? (Check all that apply)

School District Administration

City Police or County Sheriff

City Fire Department or County Fire Department

Local Hospital

Other Local School(s)

City or County Emergency Management Office

Other: _____

How often do you train with first responders regarding your emergency plan (Law Enforcement, Fire/EMS...)?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

Who have you communicated your emergency plan involving active school shooters plan to?

(Check all that apply)

Staff

District Administration

City or County Law Enforcement

City or County Fire Department

Parents

School Stakeholders

Local Hospital

City or County Emergency Management

In your opinion, how vulnerable are the local schools to an active shooter incident?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

In your opinion, how prepared is your school to effectively deal with an active school shooter scenario?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

In the Emergency Management realm, what does NIMS stands for?

How often do you or your staff access Pierce Responder (emergency school mapping system)?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

How often is your school updated in Pierce Responder?

Yearly

Never

I don't know

Where do you place school safety in the order of importance with your other job responsibilities?

Lowest Importance 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 Highest Importance

How many years have you been a Principal or Assistant Principal? _____

How many years have you been at your current school? _____

How many years have you been a Principal or Assistant Principal in the Puyallup School District? _____

Thank you for your assistance!

Appendix B – Survey Results

Does your department have an active shooter policy for the schools?

Yes No Don't Know

	Yes	No	Don't Know
PFR (40)	Yes 3 7.5%	No 16 40%	Unsure 21 52.5%
PPD (25)	Yes 11 40%	No 6 22%	Unsure 27 37%

Does your school have a specific active shooter policy or an all hazards emergency policy?

Specific Policy All-Hazards Policy I don't know

PSD (13)	Spec Policy 3 23%	All Hazard 10 77%	Unsure 2 15%
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When was the last time you received training on active shooter emergencies?

Within the last month?

Within the last six months?

Within the last year?

Over one year ago?

Never

	< month	< 6 months	< 1 year	Year +	Never
PFR (40)	1 2.5%	0 0%	0 0%	3 7.5%	36 90%

PPD (25)	2 8%	9 36%	13 52%	1 4%	0 0%
PSD (13)	0 0%	0 0%	2 15%	5 38%	6 46%

Do your emergency plans cover an active shooter situation? Yes No

(Principals only)

	Yes	No
Principals (13)	7 54%	6 46%

If Yes:

What other agencies did you work with to prepare your plan? (Check all that apply)

- School District Administration
- City Police or County Sheriff
- City Fire Department or County Fire Department
- Local Hospital
- Other Local School(s)
- City or County Emergency Management Office

School District Administration	6 46%
Police or Sheriff	7 54%
Fire/EMS	3 23%
Local Hospital	0 0%
Other Local School(s)	2 15%
Emergency Mgmt. Office	2 15%

How often do you train with first responders on active shooter scenarios?

Monthly

Yearly

Within the last five years

Never

	Monthly	Yearly	W/in 5 years	Never
PFR (40)	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.5%	39 97.5%
PPD (25)	1 4%	14 56%	3 12%	7 28%

How often do you train with first responders regarding your emergency plan (Law enforcement, Fire/EMS...)? Principals only

	Monthly	Yearly	W/in 5 years	Never
Principals (13)	0 0%	2 15%	3 23%	8 62%

In your opinion, how vulnerable are the local schools to an active shooter incident?

None

Somewhat

Likely

Very Likely

	None	Somewhat	Likely	Very Likely
PFR (40)	0 0%	15 37.5%	15 37.5%	9 22.5%
PPD (25)	0 0%	8 32%	11 44%	6 24%
PSD (13)	0 0%	8 62%	3 23%	2 15%

In your opinion, how prepared is your department or school to effectively deal with an active shooter incident?

None Somewhat Likely Very Likely

	None	Somewhat	Likely	Very Likely
PFR (40)	10 25%	26 65%	4 10%	0 0%
PPD (25)	0 0%	11 44%	13 52%	1 4%
PSD (13)	0 0%	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%

In the emergency management realm, what does NIMS stand for? (fill in the blank)

	Correct	Incorrect
PFR (40)	39 100%	0 0%
PPD (25)	19 76%	6 24%
PSD (13)	1 8%	12 92%

How often do you access Pierce Responder (emergency school mapping system)?

Monthly Yearly W/in the last 5 years Never

	Monthly	Yearly	<5 years	Never
PFR (40)	1 2.5%	1 2.5%	7 17.5%	31 77.5%
PPD (25)	1 4%	6 24%	5 20%	13 52%
PSD (13)	0 0%	11 84%	1 8%	1 8%

How often is your school updated in Pierce Responder? (Principals only)

Yearly Never I don't know

	Yearly	Never	I don't know
PSD (13)	13 100%	0 0%	0 0%

Where do you place school safety in the order of importance with your other job responsibilities?

(Principals only) 1-10 scale with 10 as highest importance

	7	8	9	10
PSD (13)	1 8%	1 8%	3 23%	8 61%

Who have you communicated your emergency plan involving active school shooters plan to?

Check all that apply (Principals only)

Staff District Administration Law Enforcement Fire/EMS
 Parents School Stakeholders Local Hospital
 Emergency Management

	Staff	Admin	Law	Fire/EMS	Parents	Stakes	Hosp.	Emer. Mgt
PSD	10 77%	6 46%	6 46%	2 15%	4 31%	1 7%	0 0%	2 15%

In your opinion, what role should Fire/EMS be involved with during active shooter situations in schools? (Check all that apply)

- Incident Command Wound Treatment in Treatment Area
 Extraction of injured patients with law enforcement security team
 MCI set up Communications Fire Suppression
 Fire Alarm Control Rehab for all

	PFR (40)	PPD (25)
Incident Command	35 87.5%	12 48%
Wound Tx. In Treatment	38 95%	22 88%
Extraction w/ escort	20 50%	23 92%
MCI set up	35 87.5%	5 20%
Communications	29 72.5%	7 28%
Fire Suppression	37 92.5%	Not asked
Alarm Control	29 72.5%	Not asked
Rehab	30 75%	6 24%

In your opinion, should Fire/EMS enter schools to rescue, treat immediate life threatening injuries, and extract shooting victims with a Law Enforcement Team?

No, not until entire building is secured

Yes, with proper training and life protecting equipment (ballistic vest)

Unsure at this point

	Secured Building	Extraction Team	Unsure
PFR (40)	8 20%	20 50%	11 30%
PPD (25)	1 4%	23 92%	1 4%

How many years have you been in fire service or law enforcement? Fill in blank

Average: Fire Service 15.4 years Law Enforcement: 14.5 years

How many years have you worked in Puyallup? Fill in blank

Average: Fire Service 12 years Law Enforcement: 10.8 years

How many years have you been a Principal or Assistant Principal? Fill in blank

Average: 14.7 years

How many years have you been at your current school? Fill in blank

Average: 2 years

How many years have you been a Principal or Assistant Principal in the Puyallup School

District? Fill in blank

Average: 7.4 years