

Proactive School Safety Measures

On December 14, 2012 an armed gunman shot his way into the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and killed twenty school children and six staff and faculty members. This tragic event focused a nation's attention on the state of school security. Police, Fire, and School officials responded immediately to this heart wrenching incident with reviews and enhancements to safety measures that have been in place since the senseless murders of students at Columbine High School in 1999.

To all those concerned about the safety of children who go off to school you should know that first and foremost all school, fire, and police personnel are fully committed to the idea that no child should be put at risk while pursuing their education. The administrators, faculty, and staff of the Holliston School system, the Fire Department, and all Holliston Police Officers are in public service to nurture and protect the youth of the community. They are fathers and mothers just like you, and their dedication to all children is their top priority.

School/Fire Initiatives:

- Youth and Family Services collaboration
- Community Based Justice Initiative (Middlesex District Attorney)
- Student Teacher Assistance Team (STAT)
- Crisis Response Team
- Campus Supervisor
- Staff Safety Training
- Incident Command for Schools (Fire Chief Cassidy)
- Emergency Response Plan (SRO and Chief Cassidy)
- Lockdown Drills (SRO and Chief Cassidy)
- Safe Schools Initiative (December 2012)
- Buzzer Entry Systems with Personnel (December 2012)
- 911 System upgrades (March 2013)
- Emergency Response Taskforce (March 2013)

Police/Fire Initiatives:

- School Resource Officers (February 2013 – 3rd SRO Trained)
- Active Shooter Training (since 1999)
- Incident Command Training (since 2001 9/11)(Fire Chief Cassidy)
- Physical Structure Security Assessment (reviewed December 2012)
- Internal / External Threat Assessment (December 2012)
- Threat Response Operational Plan (updated December 2012)
- K9 Tactical Operational Training
- Policy Reviews (ICS, Use of Force, School Security, Etc.)(December 2012)

It is the absolute goal of the Schools, the Fire Department, and the Police to ensure the safety of all children in this Town. There is an unquestionable commitment to this objective and all these departments will not rest in our continuous pursuit of the same.

Gun Licensing, Safe Storage, and Past Gun Incidents

Gun Licensing:

Firearms licensing is a closely monitored administrative system of statutory laws and promulgated regulations at the local, state, and federal levels. It is a strict process with little to no deviation from standard and best practices in this field. The overriding goal of proper gun licensing and registration is to keep firearms out of the hands of irresponsible parties, and this is truly supported by Massachusetts having some of the strictest gun control laws in the country.

Gun Licenses “by the Numbers” in Holliston:

753 Licenses to Carry Firearms (LTC) (unrestricted)

147 Firearms Identification Cards (FID) (note: 49 are for pepper spray only)

4 Machine Gun Licenses (bona fide collectors)

2 Dealer/Ammunition/Gunsmithing Licenses

Note: under the Public Records Law the names and addresses of license holders will not be disclosed.

License Procedure

- **Completed application**
 - **Statutory disqualifiers (under 21 on LTC, under 18 on FID, convicted of a felony, convicted of a narcotics offense, convicted of a violent crime that could carry a sentence of more than one year, convicted of a violent crime from another state, confined to a hospital or institution for mental illness, under treatment or confinement for drug addiction or habitual drunkenness, subject to a restraining order, presently facing criminal charges)**
- **\$100.00 filing fee**
- **Firearms Safety Course (State Police approved)**
- **Background Check (MIRCS – Massachusetts Instant Record Checks System – warrants, criminal record (state and other states), driving record, suicide statements)**
- **Fingerprints (AFIS System – Automated Fingerprint Identification System)**

- **Approval or Denial within 40 days**
- **LTC – “Suitability” Factor (“may” issue state – 8 strictest in country)**
- **FID – “shall” issue with no statutory disqualifiers**
- **Appeal of denials, suspensions, and revocations (District Court or the Firearms Licensing Review Board)**
 - **Approximately 10 denials/suspensions/revocations per year. Most common reasons are domestic violence, drug offenses, and operating under the influence of alcohol.**
- **Firearms Records Bureau (tracking of licenses and firearms)**
- **Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office (Consumer Protection Handgun Regulations)**
- **Massachusetts State Police (AFIS – Automated Fingerprint Identification System, regulations on approved firearms safety course, certification of firearms instructors, ballistics personnel, approval of trigger lock manufactures)**
- **Massachusetts Gun Control Advisory Board (advise Executive Office of Public Safety and Security all matters relating to firearms)**

Safe Storage and Transport of Firearms:

- **Approved trigger locks and dealer responsibility to provide.**
- **Carrying of Firearms – under “direct control”**
- **Transport of Firearms – under “direct control” or unloaded and secured**
- **Storage of Firearms – under “direct control” or unloaded and secure**
- **Firearms Safety Course**
- **Gun Safes**

Gun Violence in Holliston:

- **1981 – Tragic killing of Officer John Johnson**
- **1985 – Intoxicated shooter and victim acquaintances (.22 cal rifle)(minor injuries)**

Violence Prevention – School Emergency Management *

In today's society the most prudent measure to prevent violence is to identify the threat early enough so as to proactively address it through mitigation and, if necessary, outright prevention. Many times threats can be neutralized through assignment of proper social services, but if this proves unsuccessful then other plans must be in place to counter that element. Prior to any threat of violence surfacing, those charged with the responsibility of protecting any segments of the public must prepare in the event that it does materialize. This preparation phase includes reality based training that will thoroughly cover as many variations of possible violence that can be professionally estimated. With this commitment to continuous training in violence prevention the public will be better protected when an act of violence is carried out.

Prevention/Mitigation

- Safety and integrity of the facilities and security situation.
- Culture and climate at the school.
- Vulnerability and risk assessments (early identification of possible individual threats to put those individuals on the radar of both social services and law enforcement in order to proactively manage their potential for violence).
- Building access control measures.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPEd).

Preparedness

- Rapid coordinated response system in place.
- Implementation of Incident Command System (ICS).
- Development and perfection of communication systems.
- Development and accountability of reunification procedures.
- Practice through tabletop exercise (reality based scenarios)

Response

- Emergency plans are activated effectively to contain and resolve the emergency.
- Activate the Incident Command System.
- Working with first responders, mutual aid, and community partners.
- Assessing the problem and determining the appropriate response.
- Deploying resources and making informed decisions.
- Accounting for all students, faculty, and staff.

- Reuniting families with students.
- Initiating the transition to the Recovery Stage
- Conducting the after-action assessment.

Recovery

- Assist students, staff, and their families in the healing process.
- Restore educational operations.
- Physical and structural recovery.

*** - Can also apply to the workplace, government buildings, community centers, or anywhere the public will gather.**