

Q&A Community Safety dialogue

**Why are children instructed to go to a designated place in a classroom during a drill? Are there trainings available for teachers to respond to a gunman? Are the drills timed?**

Safety drills take place in every school on a monthly basis. Some of the drills practice the instructions published in the Vermont School Crisis Guide, a publication available at the Vermont Emergency Management website. (<http://vem.vermont.gov/>) Teachers lead children to the safest location within a classroom which is away from doors and windows. Drills are typically timed, however, emphasis is placed on following procedure throughout a drill which could be several minutes in duration. To date, instructions for teachers and staff have focused on making students inconspicuous and placing barriers between children and the threat. Remaining in a concealed, quiet and barrier location may be required for a considerable period of time. As other response options (“best practices”) are deemed viable for our schools they will be evaluated for possible implementation.

**Is there preparedness training for emergency situations in venues other than schools ?**

On occasion, emergency responders, service providers and businesses have discussed and practiced emergency response procedures. Tabletop exercises are the most common form of preparedness evaluation. Additionally, each emergency response agency trains independently on a regular basis. Training sessions cover a wide range of scenarios that could take place anywhere in our community.

**How do citizens obtain information about how to respond to an emergency situation (at home or in a public place)?**

There is an abundance of information regarding emergency notification response and preparedness for citizens available at the Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) website. VEM services are available to all communities.

**How can our violence prevention plan go regional?**

In the mid 1990 officials from our community join with representatives from a multitude of agencies to form the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team (VSCPT). The efforts of this group created the Vermont School Crisis Guide, a document that has served as a reference manual for many school districts and school safety committees in Vermont.

Additional information about the VSCPT and the Vermont School Crisis Guide is located at the Vermont Emergency Management website. (<http://vem.vermont.gov/>)

**Are there bicycle safety classes available to teach how to ride bikes safely on city streets? What can we do to promote pedestrian safety? (pedestrian crosswalks, etc.)**

The community Recreational Departments do not offer any classes in bicycle safety. Students are exposed to some bicycle safety in physical education classes. Cpl. Rob Hall, the traffic safety officer for

the Essex Police Department has been working with Local Motion. Local Motion is a non-profit organization that promotes bicycle, pedestrian and motor vehicle safety in the community.

Local Motion has assisted Cpl. Hall in evaluating problem areas. Cpl. Hall has also been in contact with Essex Junction Public Works Director Rick Jones to address some areas of concern. For example, during the warmer months traffic barrels are placed on Maple Street at the intersection of Railroad Street to reduce the risk of bicycle/pedestrian – vehicle collisions.

### **What is being done at higher risk times of the day to ensure safety of youth?**

Essex Police has an officer posted at the five corners during the morning and afternoon school commuting hours. This officer's responsibilities include monitoring bicyclists/pedestrians movement to ensure safe and efficient crossing of the intersection. There are crossing guards located throughout Essex Junction at high volume bicycle and pedestrian crossings. Cpl. Hall monitors these locations to help ensure that the laws of the roadways and to promote safety.

### **What ways can law enforcement and safety personnel share information with the public? Are there statistical patterns that reflect an increase in crime in Essex in the past 5-7 years? What drives crime rates in Essex? Can EPD communicate in some way with citizens about specific incidents or concerns?**

The police department shares information in the Crime Beat section of the Essex Reporter and in the town report, you can refer to these publications to determine the rate and types of crime. The police department does not currently have staff dedicated to perform statistical analysis, but we know that crime has increased somewhat due to an increase in population and the illegal drug network. Crime spikes at different times of the year. Increases in the summer months and winter holiday season are most notable. If a specific community-wide concern becomes evident the Essex PD has sent out press releases notifying the community of specific incidents or concerns. We are currently looking at a new system that will allow us to provide statistics much more efficiently than with the current system, however there is no specific date set for implementation.

### **How should one behave if not feeling safe in the community, other than calling 911?**

Anyone is welcome to call the Essex Police Department and speak with an officer about any safety concerns. We have a number available for non-emergency calls which is 878-8331. You can use this number to provide information or relay your concerns to us.