



The Utah Sheriff

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Working Together To Keep Our Children Safe

By Sheriff Terry Thompson

In light of recent events around the country and in our own community, we are all reminded of the potential dangers we face when it comes to protecting our school children. Fortunately, we have not had to deal with an actual shooter in any of our schools, but that threat is real and we are constantly preparing for it.

Over the past week, school resource officers and deputies from the Sheriff's Office have dealt with an increase in potential threats at a number of our schools within Weber County. None of these threats posed an immediate danger to any students, and in fact, some of them turned out to be hoaxes. Each was handled on a case-by-case basis as we worked closely with officials from the Weber School District.

One particular case involved a prank about a possible bomb threat. The student responsible for the hoax was arrested and booked into a juvenile detention center on the felony charge of making a terroristic threat. The Sheriff's Office and the Weber School District take a hard-line approach when dealing with these kinds of situations, and there will be zero tolerance for these types of antics.

Other situations turned out to just be based on rumors that started circulating among students, but regardless, each situation was thoroughly investigated to make sure there was no credible threat.

Over the past couple of years, the Weber County Sheriff's Office has been implementing innovative procedures to help prepare for these types of situations, as well as putting in place many preventative measures. The Sheriff's Office has forged a strong relationship with the Weber School District and our charter schools while



developing safety plans and training for each individual school. Working in conjunction with administrators, teachers, and faculty, safety drills continue to be practiced at schools throughout Weber County. These drills emphasize proper planning and procedures, as well as familiarizing deputies with the layout of each school. After each exercise, deputies and school officials critique their performance and offer ideas for improvement. This working relationship between law enforcement and educators in developing a Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is essential in making sure we are at the highest level of readiness in the event of an emergency.

In addition to conducting lockdown and lockout drills, the Sheriff's Office has also implemented an advanced training course called ALERRT (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training). This nationally-sponsored, two day course is designed to prepare first responders to isolate, distract, and neutralize an active shooter. Officers receive practical, hands-on training while engaged in dynamic "force on force" scenarios.

We have also been instrumental in developing a student safety training program for educators who wish to carry a concealed weapon while at work. This 28-hour course instructs teachers and administrators how to prepare for an active shooter situation, and what defensive measures they can take to help ensure the safety of their

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“Executive Actions” on Firearms Raise Questions

The recent January announcement by the Obama Administration to restrict gun sales and distribution is still being weighed by analysts, politicians, and legal scholars; however, key provisions include:

- Requiring certain individuals to register as Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers with the stated goal of increasing the number of background checks and “closing loopholes.”
- Requiring/Allowing healthcare providers to report certain individuals with a “mental health prohibitor” to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) with the stated goal of keeping guns from people who are mentally “unhealthy” or “incompetent.”
- Increasing funding for 200 more Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) agents and investigators to enforce gun laws.
- Investing in incentives to develop “smart gun technology.”

As lawmakers and the courts weigh in on the proposed regulations, orders, and rule clarifications, it will take months, or perhaps years, to see the end results of this administration’s efforts to restrict gun rights.



Working Together to Keep Our Children Safe

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students. Officials take part in hands-on, live action scenarios, study the history of active shooters and law enforcement response, learn traumatic injury life saving measures, obtaining necessary medical supplies, cover critical statutory elements of the use of force, and demonstrate firearms proficiency training on the range.

In 2014, the Weber School District in conjunction with the Ogden City Police Department’s Real Time Crime Center, introduced the “Friend’s Hotline” in Weber County. This hotline is set-up so that students can text anonymously about possible safety threats or problems occurring in their school. By entering the word “Friends” followed by a space and the school’s name, a student can enter a message and send the text to 274637 (CRIMES), which routes the text to the Crime Center where it is received and evaluated. This allows students who may be uncomfortable in coming forward in person with information, to anonymously report tips to law enforcement.

The Sheriff’s Office has full-time deputies assigned to each of our high schools and junior high schools within Weber School District.



These deputies along with a NOVA deputy also service our elementary schools. Our deputies work hand-in-hand with students and school officials to promote a safe learning environment for everyone. Deputies not only enforce the law, but they act as mentors, counselors, and role models. Their presence is a key deterrent for criminal behavior while providing a vital contact person for students to immediately go to if there is a problem in the school. We also want to encourage parents and students to continue to be vigilant in reporting suspicious behavior or possible threats.

The Sheriff’s Office wants to ensure the public that the safety of our children is one of our top priorities here in Weber County, and that we are doing everything we can to prevent and prepare to respond to any threat that we may face in our school system.

Americans’ Trust in Law Enforcement Rebounding: Gallup

2015 ended with a positive shift in the public’s attitude toward law enforcement, ranking police officers in the top five professions for integrity.

After a bruising year of negative reporting, social media attacks, and criticism from public figures, attitudes toward police officers approached a 20-year low. In December 2014, only 48% of poll respondents considered the “honesty and ethics” of police to be “very high” or “high.”

The rebounded rate of 56% in the very high/high category is more than double that of journalists (only 27%). Similarly, the “low” or “very low” rate for police at 14% is less than half the “distrust rate” of journalists (30%). Only 8% of Americans consider members of congress to have a very high/high trust

rate, and 64% consider them to have low/very low honesty and ethics.

We still have a way to go in regaining the public’s trust, and we cannot let our guard down from those who would tear us down for political purposes. The stakes are too high.

Truth is a stubborn thing, and we appreciate your proud support as a USA Member during a turbulent time in the national debate. Thank you for standing shoulder-to-shoulder with us as we make our communities safer! If you haven’t had a chance to renew your Membership for 2016 yet, or know someone who would like to become a member, please use the enclosed reply card and envelope.

Partnership + Preparation = Protection

Here's a deeper look into the kinds of advancements adopted by the Weber County Sheriff's Office that protect our students and communities:

The Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center was created "to address the need for active shooter response training for first responders."

- Established in 2002, in the wake of the 1999 Columbine High School shootings in Colorado.
- Shortly after the Sandy Hook Elementary School attack in Connecticut at the end of 2012, the FBI entered into a formal partnership to support the ALERRT curriculum nationwide.
- Helps first responders prepare physically, technically, and mentally to deal with active threats and help keep our communities safer.
- Core methods include isolating, distracting, and neutralizing the shooter.
- Training focuses on shooting and moving, individually and as a team, as well as rescue team tactics, knowledge of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and situation evaluation.

Tactical Training for Teachers: Teachers are typically the first professionals on the scene when an active threat manifests in a school – and potentially the best hope in protecting our children – if they are appropriately trained.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a tactic as "an action or method that is planned and used to achieve a particular goal." Several critical areas of tactical training include:



- **Mindset:** interactive "force on force" exercises and in-depth study of active shooter situations help teachers understand how to be more alert, cool-headed, decisive, and bold.

- **Resourcefulness:** help them most effectively use the resources around them, including firearms if the teachers are armed, as well as cover, movement options, communication with team members, and the element of surprise.
- **Skills:** range instruction using firearms in ways that are most applicable to an active shooter situation, as well as practicing defensive methods and first aid that maximize the health and safety of students.

Law Enforcement-Education Partnership: Law enforcement professionals have the experience, knowledge, and skills needed to respond or even prevent active threats. We have the opportunity and ability to help train and support teachers, administrators, and students through active partnerships.

- **NOVA Principles Program:** "Nurturing youth to seek out positive Opportunities, internalize good Values, and to accept Accountability for their choices in life." Taught by uniformed law enforcement officers in elementary and secondary schools to help protect youth from drugs, violence, and negative media exposure.
- **School Resource Deputies** help provide:
 - a safer learning environment
 - an understanding of the impact of drugs and alcohol
 - decision-making skills
- **On-Site Safety Drills:**
 - strengthen communication and familiarity with individuals and facilities
 - help refine Standard Response Protocols (SRPs)
 - build skills, awareness, and confidence for all involved

Thank you for your important role in making these strategic relationships possible. By creating partnerships with our educators – strengthened through training and active engagement – our children and communities become safer.

Win-Win: Davis County Saving \$400,000 and Restoring Inmate Dignity

The Davis County Jail recently saved \$400,000 in labor costs by employing 40 of its inmates for much-needed maintenance. Bracken Ricketts, the project foreman, oversaw the four-year project. In addition to the labor savings, the jail gains by standardizing the paint (from several colors and sheens to a simpler one-color scheme) and tearing up the old vinyl floors (that require regular waxing).

In addition to the cost savings, the inmates have expressed real joy in doing honest work, restoring a bit of dignity as

they serve their time and give back a little. As Sheriff Danny Perkins of Garfield County wrote in last summer's special newsletter, "idle hands are the Devil's workshop." Hopefully, these men's hearts will continue to change for the better.



Grieving and Grateful: 2015 Law Enforcement Losses



In 2015, Utah did not lose one law enforcement officer in the line of duty – a rarity shared by only 16 other states and Washington DC. For this, we are grateful – especially given the four percent nationwide increase in officer fatalities (119 in 2014). We appreciate, honor, and grieve the 124 officers – representing federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement – who made the ultimate sacrifice in 2015.

Sadly, one of our veteran officers suffered the first fatality of the new year. On January 17, Sgt. Doug Barney, of the Unified Police Department of Greater Salt Lake, responded to an accident in

Holladay. Shortly after 10:00 a.m., Sgt. Barney – an 18-year career officer, cancer survivor, and married father of three – was shot and killed by a male subject walking away from the crash. The gunman had an extensive criminal history and active state and federal arrest warrants. Minutes later, the man was killed in an intense shootout with officers responding on the scene.

Please join us in remembering Sgt. Barney, his family, and the other officers serving in Utah and around the nation this year.

2015 Enforcement Fatalities in the Line of Duty

Traffic-related incidents: 52
(35 killed in automobile accidents, 11 struck on foot, 6 on motorcycles).

Firearms-related incidents: 42
(14 percent fewer than the 49 officers killed in 2014).

Other Causes: 30
(24 job-related illnesses, 2 falls, 1 drowning, 1 electrocution, 1 beating, 1 aircraft accident)

Average age and duty: 41 years old and served 12 years

Female Officers: 9 (more than double 2014)

Felonious deaths:

- Traffic stops: 7
- Ambushes: 6
- Investigating suspicious persons or activities: 5
- Disturbance calls: 5
- Attempting arrests: 4
- Inadvertent shootings: 3
- Robbery: 3
- Unknown: 3
- Transporting suspects: 2
- Burglary: 2
- Investigative activity: 1
- Tactical: 1

Attention Scholarship Candidates: Deadline Soon!

Thanks to the generosity of Honorary Members like you, the Utah Sheriffs' Association awards scholarships to future law enforcement professionals. Individuals committed

to pursuing an education and career in a law enforcement field should **apply by March 31**. For applications to

be considered, candidates must fully articulate their career goals and meet the criteria (such as state residency, intention to study at a Utah college or university, and others) outlined on our website at: <http://www.utahsheriffs.org>.

As an Honorary USA Member, please consider supporting these future law enforcement professionals through our scholarship fund.



To support our Sheriffs and the Utah Sheriffs' Association, please send your gift today, along with the enclosed reply slip. Thank you!

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