



## Preparing Citizens for Active Intruder Situations

**2 Greenwood FD Asst. Chief Receives Award**

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Community Hospital's Gary McKay and Franciscan Hospital's Lori Postma conduct an active shooter response training session in District 1 Northwest Indiana.



## Dam Dangerous! Use Caution Around Low Head Dams

There are more than 140 low head dams in Indiana, so it's vital for citizens and rescue personnel to become educated on their dangers. More than 25 percent of low head dam-related deaths are attributed to first responders, family members or friends who drown while attempting to rescue another person from drowning.

Education can help lower the number of low head dam-related deaths, and remembering a few key facts can be helpful when practicing low head dam safety.

First, know how to identify a low head dam: A low head dam is a manmade structure; water flows

The worst thing to do is freeze. The best options: Run, Hide or, as a last resort, Fight.

That's the core advice delivered in active-shooter response training directed at the general public in IDHS District 1 in Northwest Indiana and beyond.

The sessions are delivered by a law enforcement veteran and SWAT nurse – Gary McKay and Lori Postma.

And the public is paying increasing attention to the uncomfortable, yet crucial messages of McKay and Postma. A recent training session drew about 120 residents of northwest Indiana.

McKay and Postma started delivering their active-shooter defense training together early in 2016, before the tragic incident in Orlando. Previously, they had been teaching the subject independently, but decided to

merge the training to make it a more well-rounded presentation.

Their effort is a joining of forces between two hospital systems in northwest Indiana that are working together to prepare local citizens for in case an active shooter situations occurs.

McKay works for Community Hospital in Munster as manager of emergency preparedness, and is a 24-year veteran of the Kokomo Police Department. Postma works for Franciscan Alliance in Munster as a post-anesthesia nursing supervisor and as the hospital's emergency preparedness manager, while also filling roles as a firefighter, tactical emergency medical services nurse and planning section chief for the IDHS District 1 Task Force.

Their training sessions have been delivered in communities throughout District 1, although

## Dam Dangerous! (cont.)

over the dam and forms a keeper hydraulic (circulating water current) at the base of the dam due to the water pressure. This creates a powerful, circulating motion that is difficult to escape. It is possible to be caught in a low head dam's current while moving upstream or downstream.

Second, a low head dam rescue should always be conducted as a shore-assisted rescue. When attempting to rescue someone

from a low head dam, shore-assisted rescue is the best option because it will reduce the amount of risk. If conducting a rescue, in or near a body of water, bring a ring buoy, boat cushion or one-gallon milk jug half full of water tied to 50 feet of rope. Use any of these items to retrieve a person caught in a low head dam. Do not attempt to jump in the water to save the person trapped in the low head dam current. Doing so will make it more difficult to retrieve

the individual and it will also put both people in danger.

Third, understand that the location of a low head dam is not always apparent. Signage is often not mandatory, and low head dams can be difficult to spot from upstream, so remember to be cautious near all moving bodies of water. □

## Active Intruder Situations (cont.)

the presenters are not limited by district borders. McKay recently conducted a training session in Ohio, and the pair will present at August's IERC conference in Indianapolis.

Bookings for the free sessions are handled by Lake County Emergency Management Agency Director Jodi Richmond.

Although the training is geared toward citizens, McKay and Postma encourage first responders to participate and share insights with attendees.

The sessions begin with the five-minute *Run, Hide, Fight* video produced by [readyhouston.tx.gov](http://readyhouston.tx.gov). McKay and Postma then deliver a PowerPoint presentation with advice provided by federal

agencies. Discussion examples are customized based on audience and location; for example, hospitals, schools, offices, factories, community centers.

"Unfortunately, it's a very different world now," Postma said. "We have to be ready." □

## Greenwood FD's Hoggatt Honored for Heroics

Greenwood Assistant Fire Chief Darin Hoggatt was recently honored for saving the life of a man suffering cardiac arrest while driving.

On Jan. 29, ISP Trooper Luis Deffit responded to a single-vehicle accident in Greenwood. A driver was found slumped over the steering wheel at a stoplight. As witnesses tried to check on the unresponsive man, his foot came off the break and his vehicle began rolling, crossed all lanes of traffic and struck a utility pole, knocking out all power to area traffic signals and businesses.

Hoggatt witnessed the crash, along with Dr. Charles Smith, an

anesthesiologist, who stopped to help.

"Dr. Smith and I both witnessed the car hitting a utility pole with a transformer," Hoggatt said. "We were able to pull the man from the vehicle and did see that he was breathing, but unconscious. I called the run in and then we lost the heart rate. He had gone into cardiac arrest. I started CPR and Dr. Smith opened the airway and helped until the ambulance arrived. (Trooper) Deffit and I alternated with the CPR. We were able to apply one shock, which concerted, and the last we saw that day was his eyes flickering a bit."

The man, Zaki Sakha, survived and was able to be present at the ceremony to thank Hoggatt.

"You know, it was just awesome to see our successes, that we do make a difference," Hoggatt said. "So often we work on someone and then never know how things ended unless, unfortunately, we see an obituary in the newspaper. To have Mr. Sakha at the ceremony was amazing!" □

# Nevada Fire Symposium Educates & Instructs

The [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#)' inaugural two-day Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) Symposium in the West drew 128 fire service professionals to Reno, Nevada, to learn from a variety of speakers. Some highlights are below.

**Building Rapport:** Tim Shurr discussed key rapport techniques that can be remembered by “LUV others”: Listen to, Understand and Validate. Shurr said that leaders must use words that create the correct emotional response for a given situation.

**Using Personal Vehicles:** Chief Dan Eggleston discussed the risk of death and injury to firefighters that respond to incidents in their personal vehicles. Leaders must put in place [policies and enforcement procedures](#) to bring this practice under control.

**Attitude:** Chief Eddie Buchanan said a chief's attitude impacts ability to solve personnel problems: "Your attitude impacts your ability to lead yourself long before your ability to lead others."

**Health:** [Firefighter Scott Gieselhart](#) and Fire Chief Steve Heitman spoke about suicides in the fire service, on the rise due to added stress on firefighters in emergency response, the culture of the fire service which pushes firefighters to “be tough and suck it up,” and increases in post-traumatic stress disorder that are often ignored until the situation becomes dangerous. Gieselhart's message was clear: "Stop ignoring the signs within yourself that you need professional help."

**Training:** John M. Buckman III with Indiana Department of Homeland Security presented on the challenges of training, saying that trainers must find ways to

provide education that is pertinent to the functions associated with a firefighter in their specific department. Experience is the hardest part to acquire in a reasonable period of time, said Buckman, yet experience can be enhanced with a realistic, challenging and comprehensive training program.

**Fighting Cancer:** Symposium attendees were asked to contact their Congressional representatives to gain support for the firefighter cancer registry legislation sponsored by Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.). Several large [fire service organizations](#) are in favor of the bill. The proposed registry would establish a nationwide system to monitor the incidence of cancer among firefighters. □

## Stress-Related Issues a Risk for Responders & Staff

For some time now, those in the military have known to look for signs of conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder and seek appropriate help. And there has been much written recently about the similar impact first responders face. Being a first responder is rewarding work, but it can also be stressful and sometimes that stress builds over time, manifesting into recognizable symptoms.

The emphasis has now shifted to also include helping emergency management personnel understand the challenges of their work and how to proactively mitigate the effects of the job. Dispatchers — as well as those who work in an Emergency Operations Center or a Joint Information Center — are now

being identified as also at risk for stress-related issues. It's not just a risk for those considered “in the trenches” anymore.

Sources of stress for first responders may be the witnessing

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**Being a first responder is rewarding work, but it can also be stressful and sometimes that stress builds over time**

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of human suffering, the personal risk of harm, intense workloads and life-and-death decisions. Support staff can encounter some of the same things, even if they are not technically on-site.

Mental health professionals agree

that it's just as critical for responders and others to think about staying well as it is to seek help after a particularly difficult incident. When stress builds up, it can cause burnout, secondary traumatic stress and more.

Recognizing the symptoms, in yourself or in a co-worker, is key. Burnout often shows itself as feelings of extreme exhaustion and being overwhelmed with daily routine. Secondary traumatic stress, sometimes called compassion stress, comes from witnessing other people's traumatic experiences and is the equivalent of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Symptoms include feelings of guilt and/or helplessness, difficulty sleeping, physical pain, anger and irritability.

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## Stress-Related Issues (cont.)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers these important reminders:

- Talk to family, friends, supervisors and teammates about feelings and experiences;
- Practice breathing and relaxation techniques;
- Take breaks;
- Maintain a healthy diet and get adequate sleep and exercise;
- Understand it's not selfish to take breaks; and
- Understand the needs of survivors are not more

important than your own needs and well-being.

As airline passengers are often reminded, "secure your oxygen mask first" and then you are able to better help others. □

## 2016 IDHS Roadshow Seminars Held Statewide

The 2016 Indiana Department of Homeland Security Roadshow Seminars are now complete. The roadshows, which are Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program compliant, ran March 8 through May 26. They took place in all 10 IDHS districts.

The roadshows provided emergency management agencies, police, fire, emergency medical personnel and others information about district initiatives, training and exercises, fire/public safety training academy updates and more. Instructors also provided

legislative, public assistance and grants updates. About 450 local and state government, private sector, and nonprofit personnel attending the seminars, along with representatives from state legislators and the U.S. Congress. □

Newton County EMA Director Ray Chambers and District 1 Coordinator Angie Cloutier discuss some of the latest updates during the first roadshow seminar of 2016, which took place March 8 in Morocco, Ind.



## Mission

*The Indiana Department of Homeland Security will provide statewide leadership, exemplary customer service, and subject matter expertise for the enhancement of public and private partnerships and the assurance of local, state and federal collaboration to continually develop Indiana's public safety capabilities for the wellbeing and protection of our citizens, property and economy.*

## Contact

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