

## The Texas A&M University Police Department (TAMU PD)



### *Developing Officer Safety Programs Within a Campus Law Enforcement Agency*

*Lieutenant Ed Costello*



1

## The Texas A&M University Police Department

NLEOMF Destination Zero  
2018 Award Winner:

---

***General Officer Safety***



2

# Texas A&M University Police Department

## *About our department*

- 165 full-time positions
  - 81 police officers
  - 56 security officers
  - 13 communications officers
  - 13 administrative support personnel

twitter  - @tamupolice



3

# Texas A&M University Police Department

## *What we do:*

- Provide primary police services to:
  - 63,000 students
  - 15,000 additional faculty, staff, and support personnel
- Support law enforcement (LE) response for the surrounding community

twitter  - @tamupolice



4

## Unique Challenges When Developing Officer Safety Programs in an Educational Environment:

- “Ivory Tower” of higher education
- Campus law enforcement viewed as a “necessary evil”
- Budgeting is focused on academic needs:
  - Research
  - Faculty salaries
  - Student services



6

## Unique Challenges When Developing Officer Safety Programs in an Educational Environment:

- How we approached the issue:
  - “Officer Safety = Student Safety”
  - Change in LE mind-set after Columbine in 1999
- Priority of life:
  - Innocent lives (students, victims)
  - Police and other first responders
  - Suspects



7

## Unique Challenges When Developing Officer Safety Programs in an Educational Environment:

- **Three-pronged approach:**

- **Armor the officer** – Department-supplied soft and hard body armor with helmets
- **Train the officer** – Active threat response training for all sworn employees, to include refresher training
- **Equip the officer** – Self-Aid/Buddy-Aid (SABA) training and equipment for all sworn officers to provide enhanced trauma response capabilities



8

## 1. Armor the officer:

- Soft body armor first purchased by the department in 1997
- Currently required to be worn **any time** an officer is in uniform
  - Patrol and administration
  - Includes extra duty
  - No temperature exemptions



9

# 1. Armor the officer:

- Rifle-resistant plates and helmets purchased by the department in 2007 following the Virginia Tech shooting
- Issued to all sworn personnel



10

# 1. Armor the officer:

- Hard armor and helmets must be worn during patrol rifle qualification (daytime and low-light)
- Worn during live-fire and force-on-force in-service training



11

## 2. Train the officer:

- TAMU PD has four certified Advance Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) instructors
- Initial instructors were sent for certification in 2008, following the Virginia Tech shooting



12

## 2. Train the officer:

- All sworn officers have received the basic two-day ALERRT active shooter response training
- Continued training is provided annually:
  - Active threat response
  - Force-on-force scenarios



13

### 3. Equip the officer:

- Self-Aid/Buddy-Aid kits have been issued to every officer to be carried on the hard armor plate carrier
- Additional tourniquets are being purchased and will be required to be carried while in uniform



14

### 3. Equip the officer:

- A full day of basic field trauma training has been provided to all sworn officers
- Annual follow-up training is integrated into active threat response/force-on-force training scenarios



15

## Relevant TAMU PD Policy

- **TAMU PD Policy – Chapter 9, Paragraph 16 – Body Armor:** Mandates the issuance and wear of soft body armor; mandates carrying hard armor plates while on patrol
- **TAMU PD Policy – Chapter 41, Paragraph 7(g):** Outlines when tactical (hard) body armor should be deployed
- **TAMU PD Policy – Chapter 53, Paragraph 4(f):** States that the department shall train designated instructors in rapid response tactics, that they will then be utilized to train department officers in those tactics, and that the department shall periodically conduct scenario-based training in active shooter situations



16

## Future Plans?

- We will continue to evaluate emerging threats, trends, and the operational climate to:
  - Request appropriate resources to purchase mitigating equipment and obtain training
  - Implement policy to support and enhance equipment and training
  - Continue to foster an environment of outstanding service, excellence, professionalism, and integrity



17

# Lieutenant Ed Costello

(979) 458-8552  
ecostello@tamu.edu

<http://upd.tamu.edu>



**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY

