

Campus Safety Initiatives

The shootings at Virginia Tech in April 2007 called attention to the critical importance of safety measures on college campuses. On April 29, 2007, Governor Blagojevich announced three initiatives to enhance safety for students, faculty, staff and visitors at Illinois institutions of higher education. The Governor's initiatives, which build upon his K-12 school security initiatives instituted in 2005, included: 1) the creation of a task force charged with developing training to help colleges prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies; 2) more than \$300,000 in grants to improve interoperable communications capabilities on campuses; and 3) the addition of college officials and campus security representatives to the multi-agency Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF).

1. Campus Security Task Force

As a result of the Governor's initiative, the Illinois Campus Security Task Force (CSTF) was created, with members representing community colleges, public and private colleges and universities, proprietary institutions, the ITTF, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System, and the Illinois Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. The task force determined that the urgent need for training higher education institutions could be addressed by adapting the state's existing K-12 school security training program, "Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Illinois Schools." This training program has been widely acclaimed, with more than 1,000 public and private schools having participated to date. The newly adapted training for higher education institutions is titled, "All-Hazards Emergency Planning for Colleges and Universities."



A two-phase training initiative was launched to include a statewide series of executive briefing seminars followed by train-the-trainer courses. These courses are designed to increase the capacity of higher education institutions to continue on-going review, assessment, training of staff, faculty and students, and testing of campus emergency plans. Phase I was completed in December 2007, with a total of 194 participants representing 96 higher education institutions attending. An assessment will now be completed by a committee of representatives from the ITTF and CSTF. The assessment will

include feedback from participant evaluations and a survey completed by the Community College Board. The information will be used to determine expanded training needs, including subject matter and content for Phase II training.

Phase I consisted of a series of one-day training sessions targeting senior college and university administrators. The training was designed as an executive briefing, providing an introduction and awareness overview for senior campus officials with the following three goals:

- Provide attendees with practical, accurate and timely information regarding emergency management planning.



- Demonstrate the linkage between effective emergency management planning and learning.
- Motivate attendees to review and revise their existing Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to be consistent with “best practices.”

Course objectives included:

- Recognizing that emergency planning for campuses is community-based and continuing;
- Identifying potential members of campus planning team;
- Identifying types of hazards that present the highest risk for campuses and their potential damage (risk assessment);
- Assembling a planning team;
- Developing or revising a campus all-hazard EOP;
- Developing and implementing a strategy for training and testing the plan; and
- Revising the EOP based on lessons learned from exercises and/or actual emergencies.

Course content consisted of:

- Introduction to Campus Emergency Planning Process
- Responding Using the Incident Command System and National Incident Management System (NIMS) Compliance
- Critical Incident Stress Management
- Crisis Communications
- Virginia Tech Tragedy: Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations



Phase I of the “All-Hazard Emergency Planning for Colleges and Universities” training was conducted at the following locations:

- 10/9/07—State Emergency Operations Center, Springfield
- 10/16/07—John A. Logan Community College, Carterville
- 10/29/07—Illinois Math & Science Academy, Aurora
- 11/6/07—Elgin Community College, Elgin
- 11/27/07—Moraine Valley Community College, Palo Hills
- 12/5/07—Columbia College, Chicago

2. Interoperable Communications

The second of Governor Blagojevich’s campus safety initiatives provided \$330,000 from the ITTF to the Illinois Campus Law Enforcement Administrators to purchase 303 Starcom21 radios. The radios, which were distributed to 70 colleges and universities in Illinois, provide campuses with interoperable communications capabilities with other responders during emergencies. The ITTF already has distributed 2,900 Starcom21 radios to public safety agencies throughout the state, including law enforcement, fire, emergency management, hospitals and public health departments. One of the core interoperable communications systems developed to support the Illinois interoperability strategy is STARCOM 21, a statewide 700/800 MHz interoperable trunked radio system linking state government to county and municipal agencies and statewide response teams. This system allows public safety and public service agencies throughout Illinois to effectively and cost-efficiently operate on a common network.



3. Appointment to ITTF

The third campus safety initiative involved the appointment of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Campus Law Enforcement Administrators to the ITTF. The participation of these groups in the ITTF allows other public safety bodies to gain additional insight into the security issues and incidence response requirements unique to college campuses. The ITTF currently has more than 70 member organizations representing state and local agencies, public safety organizations, municipalities with populations over 100,000, and the business community.

The Governor's college security initiatives expand upon his earlier school security initiatives for grades K-12 contained in the School Safety Drill Act. Signed into law in August 2005, the Act includes:

- Creation of a School Security Training Project to enhance school safety and emergency operations planning;
- Creation of an "All-Hazards" school emergency drill statute to replace existing fire, bus and tornado drill statutes with streamlined rules; and,
- Creation of a comprehensive new state model emergency planning guide for schools, which included merging and updating two existing guides.

Since the school security training project was initiated in August 2005, more than 4,300 educators and first responders from public and private schools throughout the state have attended one of the over 100 free training sessions offered. The two courses—a five-hour "Critical Incident Response Teams" seminar and a two-day "Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Illinois Schools" workshop—help schools develop emergency management teams and update their emergency and crisis response plans. The training curriculum underwent a fourth revision during 2007, incorporating lessons learned and best practices from incidents occurring at schools in Illinois and statewide.

