



PREPAREDNESS MATTERS

Be a partner in preparedness...be ready!



Issue 2, Volume 1

May 2007

Contra Costa Community College District • 500 Court Street • Martinez, CA 94553 • (925)229-1000 • <http://www.4cd.net>

We Are a Community

The tragedy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute hit very close to home for those of us working in education. Although this senseless and horrific act achieved dubious distinction as the worst such incident in the United States, we cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that violence has occurred at educational institutions in the past and, quite sadly, they are likely to occur again.

Similar shootings at the University of Texas in 1966, Cleveland Elementary School in 1989, and Columbine High School in 1999 serve as sobering reminders that violence knows no boundaries. While we may have no choice but to acknowledge this tragic reality, we do have a choice as to how we let it affect us--not only as individuals, but as an educational community.

Here in the U.S. our first responders (police, fire, and emergency medical services) are dedicated, well-trained, and well-equipped. While it often seems much longer to those in desperate need, response times are typically measured in mere minutes. On our campuses, too, professional and highly trained assistance is only a telephone call away.

Often the most critical time in violent incidents of this nature are the moments before trained help arrives. Knowing what to do in those fleeting moments can often mean the difference between life and death—and there ARE many things each of us can do to improve the odds of survival.

The primary purpose of this issue is to inform you of these procedures and inform you of the steps our district has been taking to help assure your safety.

Continued on page 5

In This Issue:

- We Are A Community.....Page 1
- Campus Safety: Everyone Can Help.....Page 2
- Preparedness: Are We Really Ready?.....Page 3



Members of the Contra Costa Community College District's first Community Emergency Response Team (CERT 24-1) graduated in October 2006.



"The battle, Sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave."

Thomas Jefferson

Campus Safety: YOU Can Help

As offensive as it may be to a civilized society, we must all face the reality that a shooting situation could occur anywhere and at any time--even at one of our own campuses or facilities.

Community Involvement

Our first line of defense against any form of violence has always been and will continue to be an informed and

District Police Telephones:

Report emergencies immediately to police dispatch via 9-1-1 (or 9-9-1-1 from campus telephones) or use campus blue light telephones.

Non-emergency calls should be directed to the nearest District Police office:

Contra Costa College: (510) 235-7800 x 4207

Diablo Valley College: (925) 685-1230 x 2338

Los Medanos College: (925) 439-2181 x 3228

San Ramon Campus: (925) 685-1230 x 2338

After-hours non-emergency calls should be directed to the appropriate dispatch center:

Contra Costa College: (510) 233-1214

Diablo Valley College: (925) 288-4600

Los Medanos College: (925) 646-2441

San Ramon Campus: (925) 646-2441

Anonymous tips may be left on our **Silent Witness Tip Line:** (925) 685-1230 x 1999.



involved public. A great number of potentially dangerous incidents have been resolved quickly and without violence only because individuals have noticed and quickly reported suspicious behavior to the police.

Examples of suspicious behavior include:

- Persons who are loitering near classrooms, office areas, laboratories, or parking lots without any apparent purpose;
- Persons loitering in unusual places or other areas at unusual times; Persons who avoid contact or quickly try to leave an area when observed or approached;
- Unauthorized persons in offices, laboratories, restrooms or other areas;

Continued on Page 3



Police Aides serve our community in a number of ways. One of their most vital roles is to support patrol operations by observing and reporting potential problems.

Campus Safety (from Page 2)

- Persons carrying property or equipment from classrooms, offices, or storage areas;
- Persons who appear unusually nervous or "out of place";
- Persons displaying unusual or aggressive behavior.

While there may always be reasonable explanations for suspicious behavior, it is always best to trust your instincts. If something does not feel right to you, please report your suspicions to the District Police. It only takes a moment for officers to check on a situation and a brief inquiry will only help to ensure everyone's safety. Our police department welcomes your calls.

Response Actions

If an emergency does occur and you already know what to do or you have a plan in mind, the seconds you save could be your key to survival. If you hear gunfire or

a loud, unexplained report or explosion, assume that a threat exists and take immediate action to protect yourself and those in your immediate area by:

- Closing and locking all doors and windows;
- Pulling down window shades and closing all blinds;
- Seeking shelter behind heavy, solid walls, furnishings, or other dense objects;
- Reporting the incident to police via 9-1-1 (or 9-9-1-1 from campus telephones). When the dispatcher answers, identify yourself and your location, advise the nature of the emergency, and do not hang up until instructed to do so;
- Obtaining information by tuning an AM radio to KCBS 740 or accessing the district Alert Bulletin web page (http://www.4cd.net/police_services/alertbulletins.asp);
- Waiting for an "all clear" notification to be given.

Preparedness: Are We Really Ready?

With every emergency of local, national, or international significance, there comes a renewed sense of concern for our personal safety and the safety of our communities. In the wake of the Virginia Tech incident for example, this seems especially true for those who work upon, attend classes at, or visit any school, college, or university campus.

With the horrors of April 16 still fresh in our minds, many may wonder what is being done to help ensure the safety of *our own* campuses and facilities. Over the past few months, much has been done, much is being done, and much more *will be* accomplished in the near future.

Did you know that the threat of an "active shooter" situation is not new to our district police department? Over the past few years, nearly all of our veteran officers have completed related tactical training. In fact, just two weeks *before* the Virginia



Members of our own District Police Department, as well as those from neighboring agencies, stand ready to assist in times of trouble.

Continued on Page 4

Are We Really Ready? (from Page 3)

Tech shootings occurred, officers at every district station participated in a tabletop training exercise that specifically dealt with that type of incident. As a result of that exercise and regular, ongoing training programs, the department continuously updates and improves its response procedures and capabilities.

Thanks to the recent efforts of many individuals behind the scenes, there is much more that the district has done to help us prepare for an uncertain future. Together, we have:

- Established a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program and trained over 30 district staff members;
- Established a series of emergency preparedness web pages;
- Begun updating district Emergency Operations Plans;
- Developed and published an emergency preparedness newsletter ("Preparedness Matters");
- Begun the purchase of disaster supplies and equipment;
- Received grants to fund preparedness projects;
- Developed a full-time Emergency Services Coordinator position to address preparedness issues district-wide.

While much has been accomplished, there is still much to do. Our district is currently:

- Developing a district-wide emergency preparedness and disaster training program;
- Developing a comprehensive preparedness public education program;

Points to Ponder:

Does everyone in your family (including children) know what to do during a "intruder" emergency? *What things can you do today to prepare them to react to such an incident?*

- Expanding our CERT program to include staff members at all our campuses and facilities;
- Participating in local, regional, and state programs and committees;
- Seeking funding for additional preparedness projects;
- Establishing a district-wide Emergency Preparedness Committee;
- Upgrading response and incident management capabilities.

If we are to continue improving our state of readiness and ability to respond to critical incidents on our campuses we will need *your* support and active participation. We will only succeed if *you* freely contribute your ideas, enthusiasm, and skills. There will be many opportunities to do just that in the coming months and we encourage you to become a part of the team.

You can make a difference!



District CERT members Margaret Hertstein and Lindy Wille tend to a victim during a recent training exercise at Los Medanos College.

Next Month:

Do you know what to do if there is a fire in your home or workplace? Our next issue will be dedicated to fire safety and evacuation procedures.

Other Features:

- **Getting involved in preparedness**
- **How to use a fire extinguisher**
- **Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)**

We Are A Community (from Page 1)

Whatever lessons you may learn from recent tragedies or this publication, we hope you take with you one very important understanding. It is that none of us stands alone, *especially in the Contra Costa Community College District*. As individuals we may be strong, but as a community *we are much, much stronger*.



Acknowledgements:

A special note of thanks to Barbara Allcox for her assistance in the preparation of this issue of "Preparedness Matters"!

Did You Know

Did you know that the Contra Costa College District Police Department is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year?

It has been an honor for us to serve you and we are looking forward to our next quarter-century of service!



Upcoming Preparedness Events:

June 7: *Joblinks (including several emergency-related workshops)*

Comments or Questions? Suggestions for future issues? Please contact the Emergency Services Coordinator:

Officer Teddy M. Terstegge
Los Medanos College Office
2700 East Leland Road
Pittsburg, CA 94565
(925)439-1505 (Telephone)
(925)427-1665 (Fax)
E-Mail: tterstegge@losmedanos.edu