



## Local police review safety policies in wake of Iowa ambush attacks

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**CHEEKWAGA, N.Y. (WIVB)** - The overnight attacks that left two officers dead in the Des Moines area have police across the country on edge, and local law enforcement officials are taking stock of their own departments' policies and procedures to keep their officers safe.

"We are always updating our tactics, updating our training," said Cheektowaga Police Assistant Chief Jim Speyer on Wednesday morning. "We started already months ago now, having our officers draw their weapons from a seated position inside their police car, because a lot of these ambushes happen while they're sitting behind the steering wheel of their police car."

That is apparently what happened to the Des Moines police officer and the Urbandale, Iowa, police officer who were both found shot in their patrol cars early Wednesday morning, just a few miles apart.

The Urbandale shooting, especially, hits close to home for Cheektowaga Police because of the similarities between the two towns. "We're a first ring suburb for the city of Buffalo and we get more calls for service and more arrests than any other suburban police department in this area," Speyer said.

For every call, the officers have to make situational awareness the top priority, thinking carefully about all of the circumstances and whether responding could be a trap.

"We get calls all the time through our anonymous text line, and you have to scrutinize those as you're on your way and be prepared," Speyer said. "Call for back up any time the hair on the back of your neck stands up and you say, 'hey, this doesn't sound right.'"

But even with that in mind, Speyer says there is no way to prevent every incident. "Unfortunately, with an ambush, there's not a whole lot you can do."

More than 50 police officers have been killed this year alone across the country, with the attacks coming at a time when the relationship between police and the community is often tense.

Speyer says constant media coverage of officer-involved incidents – justified or not – is part of the problem. "People who are living on the fringe, who are not mentally stable, see that and I think sometimes they overreact to that," he said.

At this point, there has been no specific local threat. Speyer says Cheektowaga Police are riding in single and paired patrols, and there are no plans to change that. "We can't go and change how we operate on a whim every time an officer is killed," he explained. "We have to look at the circumstances around it and we have to logically think it through."

Des Moines and Urbandale police were all moved to paired patrols following the overnight attacks with the suspect still at large. The suspect, Scott Michael Greene, was captured by police around 9 a.m. Central time.

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