



2017-11-23 / Front Page

OPPD sees increase in requests for active shooter training following Cheektowaga incident

by CHRIS GRAHAM
Editor

In the days following the shooting incident at a Dollar General store in Cheektowaga, the Orchard Park Police Department has been inundated with calls from businesses and other entities looking to undergo active shooter training and have their security protocols checked, according to Police Chief Mark Pacholec.

The department has received six calls since the shooting. Pacholec said the department usually receives eight to 10 calls a year for the department to conduct active shooter training or security assessments.

“The three things that came across last week were active shooter training, security protocols and evacuation planning,” said Pacholec about the nature of the calls.

The chief said no one has come out and said there’s a correlation between the shooting being close to Orchard Park and requests going up, but he added that there could absolutely be a relationship between the two.

Pacholec mentioned during the Nov. 15 Town Board work session that the department has only two active shooter instructors and two individuals in the department certified to do assessments of the training. He added that to comply with the requests would require serious overtime from the department.

Councilman Michael Sherry said that the state, which offers the training for active shooting, should provide some resources to help with the requests. Pacholec didn’t disagree with the idea.

Since the meeting, Pacholec and Lt. Patrick Fitzgerald have reached out to the Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce to see if it wants to be involved in gathering interested businesses for joint training.

From there the department would secure a venue to host the active shooter training for around three representatives of each business that wants to participate. Pacholec added that such training would last a couple of hours.

“What we’re looking at is more of an awareness,” Pacholec said. “We’re not going to get into the nuts and bolts of each business, but we’re going to go over the ‘Run, Hide and Fight’ protocol, security protocols, rules, awareness and assessments.”

While the influx of requests could cause a strain on the department in regard to overtime,

Pacholec is pleased to see so many businesses and entities taking precautions given the increase in events such as the incident that just occurred in the region.

“Any time you have an individual or a business that’s being prudent and proactively planning for security issues, evacuation issues and training that’s going to protect their employees and customer base, that’s a smart business.”

Once the multi-business training takes place, Pacholec feels there will be a demand for more in the future.

Any business that would like to participate in the training should contact the Police Department at 662-6444.

email: cgraham@beenews.com

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