

"Fire Department and Law Enforcement Integration at Hostile Events"

In 2016, FBI Special Agent in Charge Chris Combs stated, "One of the greatest problems facing the United States today is the continued disconnect regarding law enforcement, fire, and EMS response to hostile events." Since April 20, 1999, public safety agencies throughout the United States have realized that hostile events required an integrated response. In the last 20 years, hostile events continue to increase in frequency, ferocity, and lethality.

Regardless of size, every community in the United States is at threat for significant hostile events. Examples of these events include active shooter, large-scale civil unrest, bombings, fire-as-a-weapon, and coordinated terrorist attacks. In the last three years, events in Ferguson, Baltimore, Charlotte, Orlando, and Las Vegas show that significant hostile events can occur with little to no warning. Regardless of the jurisdiction, public safety agencies must plan and prepare to respond with a unified and coordinated effort. To be successful, planning and preparation must occur long before the event occurs.

In this lecture, the presenter will discuss how one metropolitan city began a unified public safety hostile event response plan in 2013. The plan initially focused on active shooter response, but grew to include large-scale civil unrest, fire-as-a-weapon, and complex terrorist attacks. Since 2012, more than 4,000 responders were trained in this city as the threat evolved, both domestically and internationally. Operationally, the plans were tested in 2015 at a reported active shooter event in a crowded mall on Christmas Eve, and then again during a five-day period of major civil unrest in 2016. The taskforce has continued to train responders as significant events occur both locally and throughout the United States.