

**MATTHEW C. KENDALL**  
Sheriff-Coroner



**Undersheriff Darren Brewster**

**Captain Gregory L. Van Patten**  
*Field Services*

**Captain Tim Pearce**  
*Corrections*

## **County of Mendocino Office Of The Sheriff-Coroner**

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July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

To: The Honorable Members of the Mendocino County Grand Jury

From: Mendocino County Sheriff Matt Kendall

Enre: Responses to direction of Grand Jury regarding school safety and emergency responses within Mendocino County.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office has prepared the following responses to Grand Jury School Safety Prioritization dated Jun 3rd 2020. Responding specifically to items (F2, F4-F5) and (R1-R3).

**F2. Standard operating procedures for emergency services personnel is an "All Hands-on Deck" response.**

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office trains frequently on responses to school shootings as well as other active threat scenarios. Sheriff's office personnel train yearly on Active Threat response. Additionally, Sheriff's Office personnel have conducted large scale training exercises at the Mendocino Community College and Howard Memorial Hospital. Sheriff's Office personnel regularly conduct lower level Active Threat trainings with schools, businesses, medical clinics, libraries, and casinos throughout the county. Response tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP's) are also taught during briefing training, field training and smaller break out training groups. These trainings involved Peace Officers from all jurisdictions within the county and the training is standardized throughout the Nation.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office treats any Active Threat as the highest priority call in which every on-duty deputy in the county, regardless of jurisdiction, is expected to respond immediately and with lights and sirens (Code 3). The call will be broadcast county-wide and all law enforcement resources are expected to answer the call.

**F4. Due to the County's geographic challenges, including cities and remote rural areas, there is no optimum incident response time by emergency services personnel. According to a 2013 FBI study, almost 70% of gun related active assailant events, last just five minutes. A third of those last fewer than two minutes.**

Historically the trend had been for suspects in Active Threat incidents to commit suicide when contacted or cornered by law enforcement. Recently the trend has been to inflict as much carnage as possible in the shortest amount of time and then attempt escape. When confronted by law enforcement, the recent trend has been for suspects to either engage law enforcement or

to surrender. A quick response time, by even a single officer or deputy, has shown to mitigate the damage inflicted by suspects. Equally as important is the coordination and availability of resources. The Sheriff's Office understands the importance of the Incident Command System (ICS) as it relates to Active Threat situations and all sheriff's office employees receive advanced training in ICS.

**F5. Response time to an incident of five minutes or more is not acceptable. According to a 2013 FBI study, almost 70% of gun related active assailant events, last just five minutes. A third of those last fewer than two minutes.**

Mendocino County is geographically challenged, which can influence response times for law enforcement personnel. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office is continuously trying to mitigate this response time by hiring Resident Deputies who live and work in some of the most geographically challenged areas (Point Arena, Boonville, Potter Valley, Covelo, Laytonville). Resident deputies have a demonstrated history in our department of responding quickly to dangerous situations in their communities, thus mitigating dangers.

**R1. the BOS work with the County Sheriff's Department to develop a plan inclusive of law enforcement agencies (city, county, state) to place an officer in a locale where the average campus incident response time should be no greater than five minutes, (F1 - F2, F4 - F5).**

Due to the geography of Mendocino County, we have several schools which are geographically challenged. A few of these include the Spyrock School, Sherwood School, Whales Gulch and Leggett School. The county-wide training and response including several agencies will serve us well if a call of an active shooter comes out in these areas. Often, Peace Officers from Cal-Fire, Fish and Wildlife, California Highway Patrol as well as federal partners including Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service as well as Tribal Police Departments will also receive these calls. Many times deputies are few in these areas however cooperative measures are always taken allowing these partners to be force multipliers.

**R2. the MCOE work with the BOS to develop a strategic plan for the most expeditious response time to any school site incident, (F1- F5)**

During the school year, the Sheriffs Sector Commanders adjust scheduling to encompass the needs of patrols in proximities to schools. Often in areas such as Covelo, Laytonville and Leggett, deputies are ordered to respond for campus patrols directly following briefing and are encouraged to perform hi-visibility patrols throughout the school day, when not handling other calls for service.

**R3. ongoing lines of communication among MCOE, school districts and first responders be maintained, (F2 - F4).**

Sheriff's Commanders and patrol staff are in communications with the school administrators as well as school staff. Areas of concern are often identified during these conversations. Area Commanders are normally on a first name basis with school staff and are tasked with identifying needs which will enhance school safety. Many of us are connected to the schools

due to the rural nature of our county and the interactions which occur on a daily or weekly basis.

Many times during my career I have conducted walk-throughs with administrators and staff in locations such as the Spy Rock School, to assist in target hardening and to assist with escape and resistance plans. Lt. Caudillo has also assisted in these plans and has worked closely with schools throughout the county when contacted on these plans. Lt Caudillo has been one of our instructors for these trainings and is currently the Unit Supervisor with the multi-Agency SWAT team.

Continued dialogue will be needed as the threats change and morph and we will have to remain willing to stay informed and make changes to meet needs. Currently the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office is located centrally between three schools, the Ukiah High School, Pomolita Middle School and Frank Zeek Elementary. The Sheriff's Office has the ability to assist the Ukiah Police Department in responding to calls within seconds due to the geography. Also several corrections officers, detectives, Sheriff's Command Staff and transportation officers are available during day shift when the schools are open.

Currently with the COVID-19 Pandemic, Mendocino County is facing challenges with economics as well as hiring and training. We have to remain diligent to stay ahead of the curve dealing specifically with training and response tactics. Currently personnel and training costs will be scrutinized on all levels; however during these times we must stay the course or face serious ramifications of not doing so. The results of not being prepared for these situations will be a cost greater than any of us are willing to pay. Therefore training and personnel have to remain on the forefront. In order for this to happen, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors will have to make hard decisions during these financially trying times. The solution to this is already codified within the Constitution of the State of California, which clearly states the following:

*" Sec 35 (a) The people of the State of California find and declare all of the following:*

*(1) Public safety services are critically important to the security and well-being of the State's citizens and to the growth and revitalization of the State's economic base.*

*(2) The protection of the public safety is the first responsibility of local government and local officials have an obligation to give priority to the provision of adequate public safety services."*

Thank you for your consideration of the information provided within this report.

Respectfully,

Sheriff Matt Kendall