



## SPECIAL SECURITY EDITION

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## Understanding “Safe Rooms”

2009 brought us great developments in technologies geared toward mitigating responses to critical incidents such as active shooters and no greater advancement than the integration of hardened areas “often referred to as safe rooms”, with building intelligence. School systems now have the option to incorporate these specially-outfitted areas into their school design and to have them integrated with the building’s security and life-safety systems. These special rooms consist of fortified door locks electronically connected to the security system, as well as alerting systems that indicate duress or safe conditions. They can be manipulated (locked or unlocked) by school administration or by first responders in the event of an emergency to enhance response times of first responders. The remote unlocking feature is highly desired by SWAT teams as it gives them complete incident command during a critical incident. These door locks have been specially fitted with armor protection and can easily be incorporated into existing access control systems for daily operations. Further developments of the concept has been the incorporation of ballistic laminates applied to the glass areas of these special rooms. This allows for the open-room feeling desired by many administrators and teachers, yet provides an advanced level of protection.

Schools now have a choice. Building new schools without taking modern-day security events into consideration is foolish. Architects are now learning how to design these rooms and to incorporate them into their plans for future schools. Some schools have chosen to retro-fit these rooms yet new schools will capitalize most due to the economic benefit of specifying the right equipment prior to construction.

## What is Our Government Saying About This Technology?

### Louisiana Legislature

#### 2007 Regular Session

#### House Resolution No. 41

“Whereas, Baton Rouge Fire Chief Ed Smith and Baton Rouge Police Chief Jeff LeDuff endorsed the technology for its safety aspect for their officers and fire-fighters and its ability to provide real-time information about an emergency for successful mitigation; and

Whereas, using Virtual Command Technology, Baton Rouge police and fire departments experienced a significant performance increase over current response procedures and practices.

# What if we street-tested this concept?

We asked several agencies to participate in a free-play exercise as they responded to identical incidents using both conventional and virtual command technologies to see if there was any impact on the final outcome.

The results are most impressive.

An actual "Active Shooter" drill was performed in Baton Rouge in May 2008. The SWAT teams participating in the drill were from the following agencies; Baton Rouge Police Department, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Department and the Louisiana State Police. Emergency medical response was provided by Baton Rouge EMS. In addition, 120 civilian student role players, as well as teachers and administrators participated in this massive drill.

Over the course of two days, SWAT teams were given identical scenarios containing active shooter components, including armed suspects, simulated casualties and school lockdown procedures. Each SWAT team ran the scenario once using the conventional methods they understood before virtual command and then once utilizing the resources provided by virtual command.

Each time these teams were armed with the virtual command tools they excelled in their responses. They were able to move quicker through the building in their pursuit of the suspect(s); thereby increasing their chances of stopping the shooter either through apprehension or termination. Additionally, EMS was able to provide the medical support needed on the scene in a more expeditious way due to SWAT's fast actions.

Here are the results of the two-day exercise;

## Day One

Conventional Response

11 Killed , 14 Wounded

Response Utilizing Virtual Command

1 Killed, 1 Wounded

## Day Two

Conventional Response

23 Killed, 24 Wounded

Response Utilizing Virtual Command

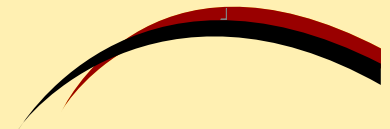
1 Killed, 4 Wounded

Creating an environment whereby our responders are able to obtain the intelligence they need in their plan formulations to critical incidents provides a marked advantage over conventional methods. Providing safe areas for building occupants to retreat until the threat is over works hand-in-hand with these enhanced response tools. The results are clear.



## Principles Behind the Concept.

Too often have our first responders arrived on the scene of a critical incident without being provided with the information necessary to effectively plan their actions. Modern facilities have a wealth of electronic information that simply is not being communicated in the right manner. This information can now be transmitted in real-time directly to squad cars and fire engines so these responders can be armed with the information they need to maximize their performance. The situational awareness enhancements being delivered by Virtual Command is proven to mitigate risks faster, thereby saving lives and increasing odds of apprehensions. Now building occupants can retreat to hardened areas while responders begin the process of gathering intelligence necessary to mitigate the risk.





## Architects and Engineers Can Contribute to the Defense

Current building codes and requirements do not take gunfire into consideration. Although lock manufacturers have done an excellent job of improving the grade levels for locks found in current construction specifications, they simply do not consider the fact that defense against a potential armed intruder exists.

Additionally, door locks and electronic access control systems should be placed on an intelligent, network enabled system which could be remotely administered by incident commanders.

Architects and engineers should work with security consultants in their design of new construction projects. Consultants well-versed in the field of incident command and responses to critical incidents can help the design community connect the dots to create an environment which will enhance situational awareness. Current building design consists of code-driven fire and life-safety system requirements usually mandated by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) or UL (Underwriter's Laboratory) but is usually not considerate of technologies which would enhance situational awareness.

Certain building technologies should be compiled in a single format that responders can easily interpret and administer, if needed in an emergency. These technologies can include access control systems, intrusion detection devices, video surveillance systems, intercom systems, fire alarm systems, building HVAC controls, network-controlled devices, digital signs and messaging boards.

Proper planning and design will maximize the implementation of responder-sensitive measures either during construction or at a post construction point.

## Time is Critical in Response to Active Shooters

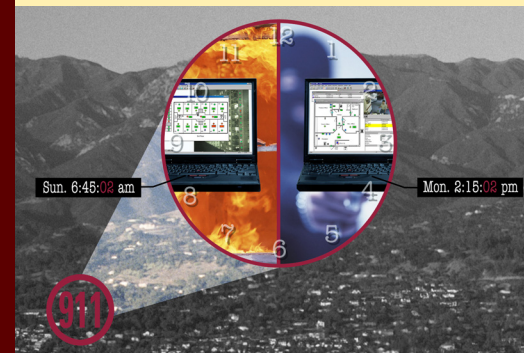
**“The sooner the shooter can be contained, captured or neutralized, the fewer the casualties incurred.”**

North American SWAT Training Association

### What is an Active Shooter?

An **active shooter** is defined as "... an armed person who has used deadly physical force on other persons and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims."<sup>1,2</sup>

1. El Paso County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy #731, Rvsd. 01/01/04
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active\\_shooter#cite\\_note-policy\\_manual-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_shooter#cite_note-policy_manual-0), Dec.17,2009



## Funding Solutions for Virtual Command

Several grant sources are available that are aimed at enhancing defenses against active shooters.

- US Dept. of Justice (COPS Secure Our Schools Grants)- <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>
- US Dept. of Education (REMS) - <http://rems.ed.gov/index.cfm>
- FEMA—Det. Of Homeland Security—<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/uasi/index.shtm>
- Various other grant sources can be found at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)



## CORE Product Line

Core delivers a multitude of technologies integrated in a customizable package designed to enhance existing security and life-safety components within a structure. Core is based on an open architecture platform and can be customized to fit almost any application.

Core Responder

Core Remote Command

Core Mass Communicator

Core Patrol

Look for our next issue focusing on the firefighting benefits of virtual command technology.

## In Remembrance

It is our responsibility, as designers, administrators, parents and community leaders to ensure the safety of building occupants and we should always remember the tragic incidents witnessed in our lifetime so we might work harder to provide that safety.

Nov. '09—Ft. Hood (12 Lost Lives, 31 Wounded)

April '09—N.Y.—Immigrant Center (13 Lost Lives)

April '07—Virginia Tech (32 Lost Lives)

Oct '06—PA Amish School (5 Lost Lives)

**Journal of Virtual Command  
ISSUE 01 JANUARY 2010**



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