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First responders take part in active shooter training

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First responders from the Western Kentucky University Police Department, University of Kentucky Police, Bowling Green Fire Department and Medical Center from the command post stationed outside on the Avenue of Champions participated in active shooter training at the residence hall on Thursday, July 28, 2022. The training runs through Friday, July 29, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., runs the first responder agencies to coordinate their actions, locate the threat, perform first aid on a potential active shooter. (Grace Ramey/photo@bgdailynews.com)

Grace Ramey

Emergency personnel and members of several law enforcement agencies have converged on Western Kentucky University's campus this week to take part in training exercises to aid in their response to a potential active shooter.

Douglas Keen Hall is the staging area for the training scenario, which began Wednesday and continues through Friday.

Officers representing the Bowling Green Police Department, Warren County Sheriff's Office, Kentucky State Police and Western Kentucky University Police have been on hand to train, working in concert with the Bowling Green Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services.



"It's a great training we get to have," WKU police Officer Melissa Bailey said. "God forbid something like this were to ever happen here, but we want the community to know

that we actively train on these types of things so that we are prepared for something like this if it ever were to happen.”

Four training sessions have been held each day, with first responders across different agencies working together to coordinate their actions during an emergency involving an active shooter.

Bailey said the BGPD has organized the training exercises for a few years now, and WKU’s facilities are typically used to host the sessions.

Pains are taken to simulate how officers would respond in an actual scenario.

**Husband was in tears af
this photo and wanted a**

Tips and Tricks

Bailey said one officer from each training team is typically sent in alone to go through the building for a couple minutes to locate the threat.

“Over the years, we have changed from certain rapid deployment styles where we wait for two or three officers to get there,” Bailey said. “Now, if you’re the first one on scene, you go in and address the threat. We don’t wait around for anybody, our job is to go in and save peoples’ lives.”

Backup officers then arrive to find the first officer and learn what help is needed in the moment, and more people filter into the location every few minutes, performing any first aid on victims and communicating with emergency workers at a command post outside to let them know what resources are needed.

WKU police posted on social media earlier this week to inform the public about the training, letting people know that blank rounds would be fired and to expect a significant presence of emergency vehicles outside Keen Hall.

Bailey said the training is invaluable in allowing first responders to shore up their communication skills in a pressure-filled situation.

“We’re so used to working within our own individual agencies,” Bailey said. “When you get everybody in the mix, it sounds simple, but it’s really difficult when you have a fire alarm going off and all these different things going on and you’re trying to get everybody to focus on a task and know what they need to do.”

Participating agencies will debrief in a couple weeks to assess their responses and discuss ways to improve and what might be added to future training scenarios, Bailey said.

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