



# HOW SAFE ARE OUR SCHOOLS?

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It's a normal winter weekday in a small suburban town. People on the streets are suddenly startled by the rush of several county sheriffs' cars in full pursuit headed down the main street. The cold air becomes more chilling when it looks like they are going toward the local high school.

The police car radios are buzzing non-stop, the swap team has been alerted and there is that slight bit of anxiousness in the normally calm cadence of professional voices.

Something very wrong is happening at the high school.

When the first car arrives on scene a pleading principal directs the first responders to the cafeteria area. No mistake, there are shots being fired. At this point, waiting for back up is just a line in the academe manual. Once inside the officers try to coordinate their efforts and relay critical info back to the county's Emergency Communications Center miles away, but all they get is this loud "bonk" from their only lifeline, a land mobile, 4 watt, Government Issue radio. The radios can't get into the emergency system that the county just up-graded for millions. Bottom line the whole well planned, top notch system doesn't work when needed most.

It's an old school with very thick walls, in an out- of- the-way area. To make things worse, the cafeteria is actually in the basement. The emergency radio signals, which are abundant outside, don't penetrate the old school house. The officers are on their own, no direction, no way of warning the others and no way of asking for help. More shots ring out!

In asking "how safe are our schools" one critical question has got to be, can the first responders effectively communicate anywhere within the building? No EC macro system can reach every in –building space and never will. All Emergency Communications systems need to be augmented by in-building distributed antenna systems to truly be mission critical especially in schools.