



ASHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff B. Phil Howell

For Immediate Release
September 3rd, 2024

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Sheriffs School Disaster Training Summer Exercises

This summer, the Ashe County Sheriff's Office changed how we prepare for the worst-case scenarios that we hope never come to our corner of the state. As an all-new program visioned and initiated by Sheriff Howell, the training is a blend of Rapid Deployment and situational exercises designed to train our local law enforcement for dark situations.



"It's very obvious that we never want to see these situations anywhere, nonetheless here in Ashe County. Each of us send those prayers for the safety of our children, but we are also training for the worst. We have been trying this for a few years but didn't have the right instructor to carry it forward. The program is a blend of active shooter, domestic response as well as building our no-shoot/shoot scenarios" ~ Sheriff Phil Howell.

ASHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
140 LAW ENFORCEMENT DR, JEFFERSON, NC 28640

WWW.ASHESHERIFF.COM
336.846.5633
INFO@ASHESO.COM





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Led by Sergeant Brian Blanco, Rapid Deployment is the building block of the program. We conducted four training exercises across most of the county's schools this summer. Rapid Deployment Training combines standard law enforcement techniques in a high-impact emergency situation. "I honestly can't think of a greater responsibility that we carry, than to make absolutely certain that our deputies are prepared in the event, God forbid, the unthinkable happens. If you were to watch our training, you would see just how serious everybody takes and just how laser-focused the deputies are on learning this stuff. They obviously understand the weight of that responsibility, too." – Sgt. Blanco



The training starts in a classroom setting, where law enforcement learn the latest updates on emergencies involving an active shooter. It engages our staff with information and practical exercises to focus on proper team movements. Additionally, our staff is trained for room clearing, clearing stairways, and evacuations for victims.



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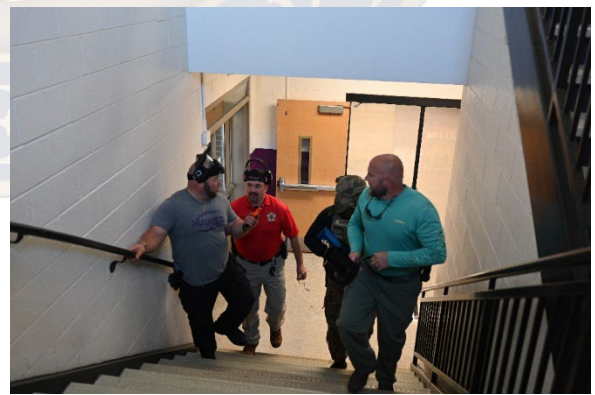
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During the training exercises, our instructors used different scenarios where staff worked in teams to respond to active threat situations. These scenarios are life-threatening and require action by law enforcement to prevent injury and death.

Our last Rapid Deployment training was conducted at Ashe County High School, where all our law enforcement staff focused on repetitive active scene scenarios. They all did a fantastic job working as a team to apprehend the shooter. Our staff takes this seriously and ensures they are doing their best to ensure the safety of our children.



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