

## PLANNING FOR THE WORST

**Robinson ISD implements software to assist first responders**

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A McLennan County school district has implemented emergency planning software aimed at making inside knowledge about its facilities easy for first responders to access during dangerous situations, including gas leaks, natural disasters or even active shooter situations.

Robinson Independent School District, the Robinson Police Department and the Robinson Volunteer Fire Department have spent the past year adopting CommandScope, and the \$2,300 program recently became fully functional for all three entities, said David Wrzesinski, the district's special programs director in charge of safety. Robinson is the first in Texas to adopt CommandScope, according to the company. It is one of many incident pre-planning programs available.

Wrzesinski said the implementation is timely, in light of the school shooting Wednesday in Parkland, Florida, that left 17 dead.

The shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School was the deadliest school shooting since 20 first-grade students and six adults were killed in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012. There have been 239 school shootings since the Newtown shooting, according to The New York Times.

Robinson's new software will ensure information first responders have is up to date and easy to share with other agencies that may assist with an incident, Wrzesinski said.



“When first responders get to the scene, it allows them to organize and map out the plan of action,” he said. “There’s not a mystery when they get on campus. They’re familiar with our campus.”

The program lets officials use their computers in patrol cars and fire trucks to access floor plans, aerial photos of campuses, information about water pressure for the nearest fire hydrants, the location of hazardous materials in science labs and more, he said.

The software will also give first responders immediate access to cameras in any building from their vehicles and 3-D mapping abilities, but that capability is still in the works, he said.

“To have all this access to where we’re not tearing doors apart — it’s going to be a whole lot quicker to get in for whatever incident we’re there for. ... It’s going to be a time-saving measure, because normally when you get there you have to call someone to get you into the building or let you know what’s going on, and now we’ll be able to access that en route to the call,” Robinson Fire Chief Gerald Groppe said.



The program also fits with first responders' approach to active-shooter situations, which is to move in as quickly as possible in an effort to confront and stop the shooter, said Wrzesinski, who also does active shooter training.

“Even with that, knowing the buildings and even knowing the cameras — the kid (suspected in the Florida shooting Wednesday) dropped his gun and blended into the crowd — but first responders can look at it,” he said. “The information they could gather, not just school shootings, they would know everything in minutes.”

Robinson Police Chief Phillip Prasifka said the access to information is vitally important. Access to floor plans and cameras can help police identify where the point of aggression may be coming from and intervene sooner in an active shooter situation, he said.

“The fact the district has taken the initiative to bring in the software and the resources and open it up to police and fire, it shows the commitment on their end to keep children safe,” Prasifka said.

Robinson ISD holds active shooter drills at least once a semester at each of its five campuses to train students and staff where to be and what steps to follow. The staff and 2,300 students in the district are taught how to create barriers between themselves and any intruder, Wrzesinski said.

The software also helps the three organizations build partnerships and forces officials to work together, instead of their first communication happening when there is some sort of tragedy, Wrzesinski said.