

# **BCMS PTO**

# **STUDENT SAFETY AT BC**

Bethlehem Central Middle School Auditorium  
November 14, 2024

# Welcome and introductions

- **Jessica Kansas**, BCMS PTO President
- **Jody Monroe**, BCSD Superintendent
- **David Doemel, Jr.**, BCHS Principal
- **Michael Klugman, Ed.D.**, BCMS Principal
- **Erin Sheevers**, BCSD Chief Technology Officer
- **Gina Cocchiara**, Chief, Bethlehem Police Department
- **Michael Berben**, Detective and SRO, Bethlehem Police Department
- **Caitlyn Krage**, Detective and SRO, Bethlehem Police Department
- **Chad Rice**, Detective, Bethlehem Police Department
- **Charles Keller**, Supervisory Special Agent, FBI Albany Division
- **Geoffrey Hunter**, Asst. Special Agent in Charge, FBI Albany National Security Division



# SWATTING/PHONE THREATS



# Recap of events

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 - THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2024**

- 6 anonymous calls threatening violence to our school community
  - 5 received by Bethlehem Police Department
  - 1 voicemail message left at BCHS
- District response to threats evolved throughout ordeal
  - Increased police presence via Bethlehem PD
  - Precautionary lockouts during school hours
  - Lockdown at BCHS/Eagle in response to Sept. 11 specific threat to football team received by BPD
  - Suspension of after school/evening activities
  - Bag checks at BCHS

# Recap of events

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024**

- Private briefing for district leadership by Bethlehem Police Department and FBI
- Agencies determined threats to be “swatting”
- Assure district there is no credible, immediate threat to our school community
- Criminal investigation is continuing; focus is outside the Capital Region
- Increased police presence to remain throughout the week

**Swatting is a deliberate and malicious act of reporting a false crime or emergency to produce an aggressive law enforcement response. The goal is to harass or menace the target, and the calls often involve reporting a fake crime like a shooting or bomb threat.**

# Recap of events

## **WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2 - MONDAY, OCT. 7**

- 5 anonymous calls threatening violence to our school community
  - All calls were received by Bethlehem Police Department
  - Five calls being investigated as part of ongoing swatting investigation

## **TUESDAY, OCT. 15**

- Bomb threat made by anonymous phone call to BCHS Counseling Office
- Arrest of a juvenile in Albany made on Oct. 16 unrelated to other 11 calls
  - Charged with Making a Terroristic Threat (D Felony) and Aggravated Harassment 2nd (A Misdemeanor)

# Safety measures implemented in recent years

- Raptor Visitor Management System
- Hardening of all entrances at our schools
- Comprehensive security audits at all buildings in 2023
- Installation of Window Security Film
- Badge Access Control System
- Door Status Monitoring System
- Safety teams and building-specific safety plans at each school
- District-wide Safety Plan and Team
- Increased mental health providers across all buildings
- Collaboration with local law enforcement on safety drills
- Meetings with local law enforcement to review safety procedures and plans
- Labeling of outdoor areas for quick identification by first responders
- Community Safety Forum(Fall 2022)
- Gaggle online monitoring
- Additional cameras have been installed at all buildings
- AEDs on each floor of buildings



# Additional safety measures being implemented or reviewed

- After-school emergency response procedures
- Coaches to review emergency procedures with parents during pre-season meetings
- Refine communication through Parent Square for more targeted messaging to parents
- Review/enhance reunification process
- Follow-up security audits
- Wearable panic buttons integrated into staff ID badges
- Additional tabletop exercises to practice scenarios; including after-hour situations
- Additional staff training to identify and assess student-made threats of violence
- Additional staff training - National Incident Management System
- Training all staff on active assailant/shooter response and mitigation





# STUDENT SAFETY



# District Level Safety Plan

- Updated annually, required by law
- Provides framework for the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans
- Identifies Districtwide Safety Team and Building Level Emergency Response Teams (BLERTs)
- District works with New York State Police, Albany County Sheriff's Department, Bethlehem Police Department, local fire departments and town officials to identify potential emergency situations on school property and off school property that could have an impact students/staff

Available to the public at  
[www.bethlehemschools.org](http://www.bethlehemschools.org)



# Building Level Safety Plan

## First level of response is always at the building level

- Detailed plans for each building are confidential but are shared with local police and other emergency response teams annually
- Plans include:
  - Building maps
  - Emergency procedures
  - Contact information and roles (incident commander, liaison, scribe, public information officer, safety officer, etc.)
  - Incident guides for more than 30 different scenarios
  - Evacuation protocols and locations
  - Reunification plans
- One-page incident guides within the plan provide detailed, easy-to-read response action steps and a list individuals who are responsible for each step

**Confidential – Not  
available to the  
public but shared  
with law  
enforcement**



# Know the drill

Don't be scared, be prepared



Drills are an important first step in keeping Bethlehem schools, students and staff safe. District staff follow strict, detailed safety protocols during emergency drills. With good training and practice, everyone involved will be better able to react appropriately in the event of an actual emergency. Drills allow administrators, staff and students to mitigate, prepare for and recover from a variety of incidents. We want our families to have a better understanding of the different drills we practice throughout the year, and the safety terms we use, so you can help your student feel prepared and safe.

## EVACUATION

What most people remember as fire drills are now known as evacuation drills. New York State law requires they be practiced

**8x a year**

When an alarm sounds or an announcement is made from the main office, everyone in classrooms and all building areas must evacuate along a designated route. Students remain quiet, there is no cell phone use and attendance is taken at the evacuation location. Students return to class once building leaders give the OK.

## LOCKDOWN

A lockdown occurs when there may be an imminent threat **INSIDE** the school. State law requires lockdown drills to be practiced

**4x a year**

All movement within the school is restricted. All students, staff and visitors must report immediately to the nearest classroom, gym or cafeteria. All doors are locked and secured. All cell phones are silenced. Everyone remains silent. Rooms remain locked until unlocked by police.

## LOCKOUT

A lockout secures the outer perimeter of the building. Students who are outdoors are brought inside. All exterior doors are locked and windows are closed and locked. In a lockout, there is

## NO CLASSROOM DISRUPTION

Anyone wishing to enter or leave the building must first be cleared by building administrator and/or police.

## MASS EVACUATION/RELOCATION

A mass evacuation drill tests protocols necessary to safely relocate students to an off-site location in the event of a real emergency. Students evacuate the school, accompanied by teachers and staff, and together move to an off-site location where they take shelter. Students travel on foot or are transported by bus depending on the distance from the designated off-site shelter area to the school.

## OTHER EMERGENCY DRILLS

### BUS EVACUATION

Three times a year, all students (whether or not they regularly ride a bus) practice how to exit the bus safely in the event of an emergency.

### SHELTER IN PLACE

In some instances, it is safer to remain inside the building, such as during a tornado or other severe weather. Students will be instructed to move to a safe location within the school.

### HOLD IN PLACE

In certain cases, such as in a power outage, an announcement to hold in place will be made. Classroom doors are closed. Students in hallways go to nearest classroom. All students and staff remain in place until further notice.

# IN AN EMERGENCY

## TAKE ACTION



**HOLD**



**SECURE**



**LOCKDOWN**



**EVACUATE**



**SHELTER**

## EXAMPLES

### Standard Response Protocol – Public Address

**Medical  
Emergency**

**Hold in your Room or Area. Clear the halls.**

**Threat Outside**

**Secure! Get inside. Lock outside doors.**

**Threat Inside**

**Lockdown! Locks, Lights, Out of Sight!**

**Bomb**

**Evacuate to (location) Shelter for Bomb!**

**Earthquake**

**Shelter for Earthquake!**

# New NYSED regulation regarding safety drills

- Annual notification to families outlining required drills
  - 8 required evacuation (fire) drills
  - 4 required lockdown drills
  - 1 Go Home Early Drill
- Parents/guardians will also be notified prior to all safety drills
  - Notification will be made within one week of planned drill
- Drills are discussed with students in a trauma-informed way
  - Language used is not scary or makes the drill seem like a real emergency
  - Drills will be announced “This is a drill. It is not a real emergency.”

Families are  
being notified  
in advance of  
all drills.



# Safety Trainings

- Incident command training for administration
- CPR/AED/First Aid certification
- Stop the Bleed training conducted by Bethlehem Police Department
- SROs and nurses are issued Narcan (naloxone) to respond to drug overdose, if needed

## All BCSD staff trained annually

- Required at the start of every school year
- Emergency Planning, Violence Prevention, Mental Health Awareness SAVE Training
- Cybersecurity - EdLaw 2d
- BCSD Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training
- Ethics Training
- Workplace Conduct
- Child Abuse Identification and Intervention
- Hazard Communication: Right to Understand



# Drills: Recognizing developmental understanding

## **K-2 Early/Developing Awareness**

Basic understanding of:

- “Get Out” or evacuate;
- “Hide Out” or stay out of sight with lights off;
- Keep Out” (i.e., that adults will lock and barricade classroom doors to keep danger out and students safe).

## **3-5 Developing/Practiced Awareness**

- Have basic understanding; AND
- Capable of understanding why school safety drills are conducted.
- Understand all safety directions and instructions.

## **6-8 Proficient Awareness**

- Have all Practiced Awareness Understanding; AND
- Able to distinguish probable dangers from all possible dangers.

## **9-12 Independent Awareness**

- Have all Proficient Awareness; AND
- Have knowledge of a range of emergency safety actions and can match them to the appropriate situation (e.g., know the situations that require evacuation versus lockdown).

# School Resource Officers (SROs)

- **Education:** Teach students about safety and crime prevention
- **Counseling:** Available to talk with students about issues they may be facing
- **Law enforcement:** Investigate criminal activity and protect school community

*SRO role is very different from the disciplinary role of a school administrator.*



## SROs at BCSD

- Detective Mike Berben and Detective Caitlyn Krage
- Agreement with the Town of Bethlehem
- SRO services began in 1986 at BCMS





# Get to know our SROs


2022-23 SRO SERIES



**Detective Mike Berben**  
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

**BETHLEHEM**

**Detective Mike Berben**  
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER



**BUILDING:** HIGH SCHOOL  
**COLLEGE:** SUNY ALBANY, BA & MA  
**HOBBIES:** FISHING & FOOTBALL

**QUESTION & ANSWER**

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL?	BIOLOGY
WHAT WOULD YOU SING AT KARAOKE NIGHT?	VANILLA ICE, "ICE ICE BABY"
WHO IS YOUR HERO?	MY FATHER

**FUN FACT**  
I always wanted to be a Physical Education teacher.

**BETHLEHEM**

## Providing curriculum & supports at BCHS

- Emergency preparedness training & assessment of school
  - SRO's drive inter-agency cooperation
- Home Visits
- Parking Lot assistance
- Faculty meetings - issues related to social media, drugs/vapes, etc.
- BPD union provides financial support for Backpack Program, guest speakers
- Crisis intervention outside of school hours

**Also assigned to Eagle, Slingerlands and St. Thomas.**

# Get to know our SROs


2022-23 SRO SERIES



**Detective Caitlyn Krage**  
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

**BETHLEHEM**

**Detective Caitlyn Krage**  
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER




**BUILDING:** MIDDLE SCHOOL  
**COLLEGE:** RCS, HVCC, SUNY PLATTSBURGH  
**HOBBIES:** 2007 HARLEY DAVIDSON & 1990 FORD BRONCO

**QUESTION & ANSWER**

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL?	CHEMISTRY/FORENSICS
WHAT WOULD YOU SING AT KARAOKE NIGHT?	HUMBLE AND KIND - TIM MCGRAW
WHO IS YOUR HERO?	MY FAMILY

**FUN FACT**  
I compete in Antique Tractor Pulls.



**BETHLEHEM**

## Providing curriculum & supports at BCMS

- Emergency preparedness training & assessment of school
- Assists with parking lot every morning
- Partnership w/MS Admin to develop & deliver "Cell Phone Informational Course" for students & their parents
- MS receives requests from parents for SRO counsel every week

Also assigned to Elsmere, Hamagrael and Glenmont elementary schools.



A photograph of a school hallway with lockers on both sides and a security camera on the ceiling circled in yellow.

# Security cameras

- 475 security cameras at all buildings
- Interior and exterior
- Police have real-time access to BC system if needed

# Building security – Technology upgrades

- 911 automatic alerts
  - When 911 is called from anywhere in district, safety team is alerted immediately
- Lockdown automatic alerts
- Auto locked doors



# Mental Health Supports

## Coordinated Care Teams (CCT)





- Every building has a Coordinated Care Team that consists of:
  - School Counselor
  - School Social Worker
  - School Psychologist
  - School Nurse
  - Principal Counseling Supervisor
- Classroom support, Small group and individual counseling, SEL lessons
- K-12 counseling referrals are a component of the MTSS framework
- SAEBRS Universal Screener





# Social-Emotional Learning

- K-5 SEL lessons delivered by School Counselors in each of our 5 elementary buildings. School Social Workers and Psychologists support the SEL curriculum.
- Middle School Counselors & Student Assistance Counselor deliver SEL lessons to grades 6-8. School Social Workers and Psychologists support the SEL curriculum.
- 9th grade SEL curriculum delivered by Counselors
- Individual and small group school based counseling by referral.

			
<b>BLUE ZONE</b> Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	<b>GREEN ZONE</b> Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	<b>YELLOW ZONE</b> Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	<b>RED ZONE</b> Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control



# Online student safety

## INTERNET FILTERING

- The district uses various different tools to monitor and filter internet access throughout the network and on district-owned devices
- Our filters block known sites associated with mature or violent content and security threats such as malware. They also work to block access to social media sites, non-educational YouTube videos, and other distractions from instruction.

## Safety Alerts

Using sophisticated artificial intelligence, our filter scans online documents and applications for concerning student behavior on school devices.

When warning signs such as:

- Suicide;
- Cyberbullying;
- School violence;

are detected, alerts are sent to designated staff for follow up. The district is looking to make this alert system more robust with alerts that combine combination of AI and highly trained safety specialists assessing data in real time.



# Q & A SESSION PANEL





# Q. Is remote instruction an option for families who don't feel comfortable sending their students in these types of situations?

**The district is prepared for remote instruction should there be a long-term need to close schools. The district is not able to pivot quickly to remote learning due to the logistical hurdles of creating accessible and equitable learning environments for all students.**



# Q. Should reunification locations be communicated publicly during an emergency?

**When reunification is necessary, pickup locations must be communicated to families. The district relies on its mass notification system in ParentSquare to relay information to families. The district is working to create a reunification system that would make this type of communication more targeted to families of students who may be awaiting release following an emergency.**



# Q. What steps will be taken to improve the safety plan if this were to happen again?

The district has already had a number of internal safety meetings to review protocols and practices that were effective and ineffective over the course of the threat period. These meetings are ongoing and have included teachers, administrators, coaches, SROs, and the Bethlehem Police Department. The district is also working with an internal committee to develop new emergency response protocols for extracurricular activities and athletic events that take place outside of the school day. The afterschool plans are being developed with other districts in the region to ensure continuity in safety plans.

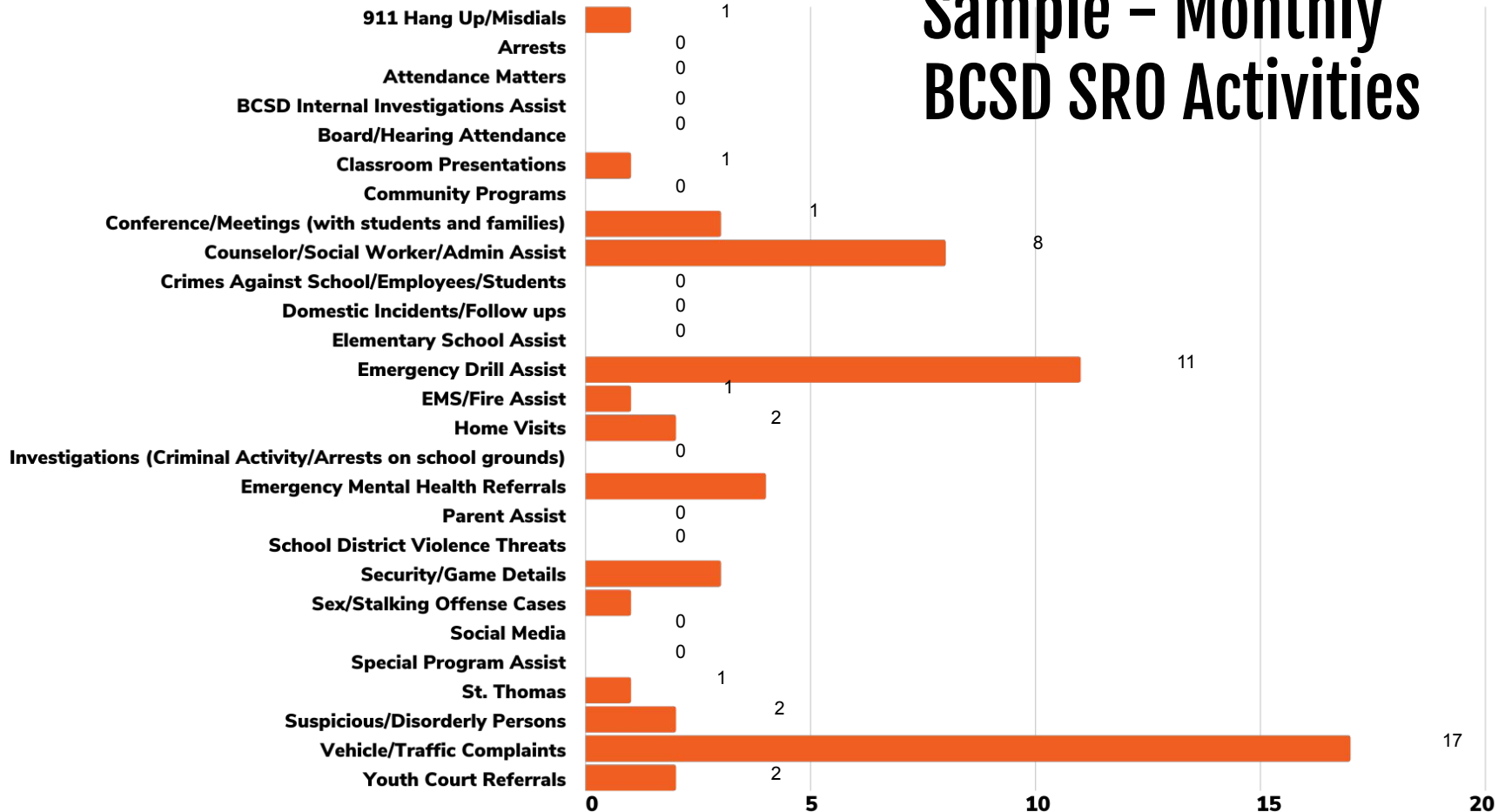


# Q. Are there goals and evaluation metrics for the SRO program?

**Goals and duties of the School Resource Officers are clearly outlined in the agreement the district has with the town of Bethlehem. The SRO agreement is posted to the district website. The SROs keep logs of their activities each day.**



# Sample – Monthly BCSD SRO Activities



## Q. How is information communicated during situations like this? What improvements can be made in terms of communication during an emergency or during reunification?

The district uses ParentSquare to communicate with families and staff in an emergency. Email and text are primary communication tools; automated phone calls are also available. The district is in the process of integrating data from athletics and extracurricular groups to provide more targeted messaging in the event of an emergency or necessary reunification of families.



## Q. What about communication for before- or after-school care in the event of an emergency?

**For onsite care providers such as School's Out, district leadership communicates directly with the provider to inform them of any decisions that would impact students in their care. Where possible, the district will communicate information regarding School's Out.**



**Q. Is there talk about replacing full pane glass exterior doors with limited glass doors, as bullet proof glass can be broken with assault weapons?**

**The district is always looking at ways to improve safety in our buildings. Capital outlay projects and bond projects often include safety and security upgrades. Projects were recently completed in which the front entrances to Glenmont, Hamagrael and the middle school were “hardened.” All schools in the district now have hardened entrances. Additional security features are being considered as part of our facilities review process.**





# Q. What security controls are in place to secure children on playgrounds at elementary schools, particularly because these areas are not fully fenced?

**During the school day, students are never left unattended on playgrounds. There are aides assigned to each recess and these aides accompany students and provide supervision and direction.**



# Q. Does the Bethlehem Police Department receive regular training regarding school violence threats?

**Yes, all SROs and department personnel are fully trained on immediate response, eliminating the threat, medical care, school clearing/evacuation and reunification in the event there is a school violence incident. Specific training from the State of New York Police Juvenile Officers Association includes:**

- **Basic School Resource Officers Course**
- **Advanced School Resources Officers Course**
- **Basic Juvenile Officer Course**
- **Advanced Juvenile Officer Course**
- **Community Resource Officer**



# Q. Would the district consider having someone assigned to monitor school grounds on a regular basis?

**Yes, the district is looking at options to increase staffing in this area. The addition of new staff involves budgetary considerations. Budget additions and the creation of new positions requires Board approval and a public vote.**



# Q. Is there talk of putting in metal detectors/police officers in all school buildings?

**Safety improvements at our schools are topics for consideration and discussion during the budget process. Development of the 2025-26 budget begins in public sessions in February 2025.**



**Q. I have attended continuing education classes which start well after the end of the day. Is someone locking the front doors so random people cannot enter before the next school day?**

**Yes. Our Operations & Maintenance department secures each building at the end of the night and sets nightly alarms.**



**Q. Can there be more signage in the athletics areas at the high school that could help direct people in case of emergency?**

**Yes. We are working with our Operations & Maintenance team and with our District Safety Team to ensure signage is visible and messages are clear.**



# Q. What are some preventative mental health measures being put in place or being planned for at the high school to assist students?

**Administrators and counselors met with groups of students who were in the Sept. 11 after school lockdown to debrief and discuss their feelings and to share the types of support we could offer to them.**

**We have a Student Assistance Counselor available for all high school students in grades 9-12. Our high school Mental Health Committee, Coordinated Care Team, and Pupil Study Team all meet monthly to discuss supports for students. Social-emotional lessons year-round focus on emotional regulation, increasing connectivity with peers, and coping strategies for moments of stress/anxiety.**



## Q. Can the teachers wear alerts around their necks, like the staff in Georgia?

The district has several ways for staff to call a lockdown when there is an imminent threat, including mobile apps. The district is always looking for new ways to make this as easy and effective as possible. Alerts attached to staff ID badges are under consideration for future upgrades.





# Additional questions for discussion

- Is there a clear chain of command for when multiple police agencies or other law enforcement respond in the event of an active shooter or other threat?
- Was the arrested individual working alone?
- Was the individual doing it as a prank or were there other motives?
- How do you distinguish between a fake threat and a real threat?
- What can we do in our home environments to protect our home computers from being utilized in swatting calls by an outside source?
- What is making it so difficult to track down these swatters?
- (BPD only) Since elementary schools do not have a dedicated SRO, how do you handle both routine and urgent patrols within those buildings? Does this result in reduced coverage at BCMS/BCHS?

