

# TechBeat

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by JTIC

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## About TechBeat



TechBeat is the monthly newsmagazine of the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center System. Our goal is to keep you up to date on technologies for the public safety community and research efforts in government and private industry.

### **Subscriptions:**

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### **The NLECTC System**

The Justice Technology Information Center (JTIC), a component of the National Institute of Justice's National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System, serves as an information resource for technology and equipment related to law enforcement, corrections and courts and as a primary point of contact for administration of a voluntary equipment standards and testing program for public safety equipment.



JTIC is part of the NLECTC System, which includes the Justice Innovation Center for Small, Rural, Tribal, and Border Criminal Justice Agencies, which focuses on the unique law enforcement challenges faced by those types of agencies; the National Criminal Justice Technology Research, Test and Evaluation Center, which provides technology-related research and testing and operational evaluations of technologies; and the Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, which supports technology research, development, testing and evaluation efforts in forensic science. In addition, a Priority Criminal Justice Needs Initiative exists to assess and prioritize technology needs across the criminal justice community.



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The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for



Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

### [WWW.JUSTNET.ORG](http://WWW.JUSTNET.ORG)

**JUSTNET News.** Includes article abstracts on law enforcement, corrections and forensics technologies that have appeared in major newspapers, magazines and periodicals and on national and international wire services and websites.

**Testing Results.** Up-to-date listing of public safety equipment evaluated through NIJ's testing program. Includes ballistic- and stab-resistant armor, patrol vehicles and tires, and more.

**Calendar of Events.** Lists upcoming meetings, seminars and training.

**Social Media.** Access our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube feeds for the latest news and updates.

**Tech Topics.** Browse for information on law enforcement, corrections and courts technologies.

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## Program Takes Multi-Faceted Approach to Active Shooter Training

### Program Takes Multi-Faceted Approach to Active Shooter Training

In the first few minutes of an active shooter incident, individuals at the scene face the threat alone, often unsure what to do. Hide? Run away? Counter the shooter? And what about helping the victims?

The First 12 Minutes, a multi-faceted training developed by the City of Falls Church, Va., provides training to administrators, teachers and school staff that addresses all of those areas, all within a three-hour window and all at no charge to the participating schools.

The program consists of 1.5-hour lecture portion and a second 1.5-hour section of hands-on training. During the lecture, representatives from the city's emergency services provide historical background on active shooter incidents in the United States and discuss response options such as enhanced lockdown, evacuation and



confronting the shooter. The hands-on portion splits participants into three rotating groups: one practices barricading doors with anything and everything within reach, one learns Stop the Bleed<sup>®</sup> techniques to include tourniquets and packing wounds, and the third goes through two lockdown scenarios: the traditional lockdown where everyone moves to a corner, then another where participants work together to plan, swarm and attempt to stop the shooter.

“If you don’t start by giving them the data about why it’s important to think about, decide on and collaborate on a response, and why it’s important to provide immediate first aid, then they won’t buy into the hands-on portion,” says Tom Polera, city fire marshal and emergency manager. “If they understand why they’re doing something, they’re more likely to retain the knowledge.”

That’s the reason, he says, for running through the lockdown training twice: when the participants sit clustered in a corner, the “shooter” usually hits the entire group with simulation (nerf) projectiles. During the second run, the swarming tactics usually bring the shooter down with few casualties.



“That’s the true ‘ah-ha’ moment when they realize why they’re learning the importance of working together, deciding who’s going to grab at each limb, who’s going for the gun, and who’s going to throw things to distract the shooter,” Polera says. “And none of this is once and done. They need to continue to practice this way when they do lockdown drills in school. We try to keep the first aid simple but they need to practice it as

well.”

In addition, the training also emphasizes the importance of clear and accurate messaging during an emergency situation. Often, Polera says, teachers and students only know that a lockdown has been called, and they don’t know why it’s being called. It could be because there was a bank robbery nearby or an active shooter in the building, and knowing that shooter’s location is also critical. If teachers know the shooter is on the opposite side of the building, they have the information they need to evacuate their students to safety: “It’s all about making an informed decision at the classroom level.”

Falls Church began implementing the training program in April 2018 and trained more than 500 participants in the first nine months. Polera became a certified instructor for a program that uses these principles and worked with other members of the city's emergency services to develop The First 12 Minutes for use in local schools, government facilities, businesses, houses of worship, and more.

“The training doesn't fit neatly into any one department, but requires cooperation from various types of emergency services, and by doing it this way, it also helps build a rapport between first responders and the community,” Polera says. The team uses feedback obtained during the training to constantly refine and improve The First 12 Minutes, and from this experience, Polera offers this advice to other jurisdictions looking to set up similar programs: Be sure the training fits into a reasonable timeframe and is comprehensive to incorporate the Stop the Bleed component.

“You hear a lot about other potential school safety solutions, but not a lot about training for teachers. Teachers are the first first responders and overwhelmingly, our teachers are thankful for being taught something empowering,” Polera says. “For anyone who has a hard time accepting it, I say this is the new normal and this is how we need to prepare for it.”

Watch a short video on The First 12 Minutes [here](#). For more information, email Tom Polera [here](#).

*Article photo: City of Falls Church, Va.*

*Main photo: City of Falls Church, Va.*





## Emerging Forensic Research Series Promotes Sharing Ideas

### Emerging Forensic Research Series Promotes Sharing Ideas

Sharing ideas and resources isn't just the name of a National Institute of Justice (NIJ)-supported school safety publication series; it's the underlying goal beneath all the work done by the projects that have belonged to the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center (NLECTC) System. That includes the NIJ Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, and there's no better example of how the NIJ FTCoE meets that goal than its new Emerging Forensic Research Webinar Series.

Starting with a webinar on Firearm and Toolmark Research in February 2019, the series has addressed topics such as toxicology and drugs, medicolegal death investigations, biology and chemistry, with more events planned later in 2019. Through the series page on the center's [website](#), the FTCoE encourages the forensic community to reach out with ideas on emerging research in the forensic sciences, and researchers have responded positively.

“Researchers help us achieve our goal of sharing knowledge about forensic science research and





best practices to a wide variety of stakeholders. We've always encouraged researchers to share updates and challenges through our webinars and podcasts, and they've always responded," says FTCoE Innovation Analyst Rebecca Shute. "It's a mutually beneficial partnership: researchers showcase their work to the community, and the community learns how the science will impact their work down the road."



The series is not just about sharing ideas. It also fosters dialogue between researchers and practitioners: "Focusing on emerging research gives our presenters a chance to share their work with multiple stakeholders during the development process and learn more about end users' needs," Shute says.

For example, in a recent webinar on forensic chemistry, researchers talked about a variety of analytical methods, ranging from Raman spectroscopy to coupling mass spectrometry with a vacuum-ultraviolet detector for the analysis of a range of evidence, including paint, body fluids, explosives and fentanyl analogs.

Shute goes on to explain that emerging research topics foster robust commentary through the webinar software's chat features, which gives the audience a chance to ask questions, provide input, and discuss challenges and opportunities. Receiving input from researchers, practitioners, potential development partners and other members of the forensic community provide the presenters with valuable insights on how to transition research into practice. The law enforcement community can also provide input, while learning about what is in development in areas of special interest, such as firearms and toolmarks.

"Our goal is to assist researchers with the transition process, starting when their research is in progress," Shute says. "By getting this important feedback at this point in the research, it can help researchers avoid eventually pushing technology at the forensic community that may not meet user needs. These webinars provide a different opportunity than a conference presentation. We wanted to give the presenters a chance to talk about their research in a different way, almost like an 'elevator pitch.' And the fact that so many of them were interested and excited to present the research in this manner has made it easy for us to span a wide variety of disciplines."

In addition to the focus on a different type of presentation, the FTCoE began switching to a new platform in April that uses a smoother, more user-friendly interface, with features such as a more interactive chat function and closed captioning. The FTCoE will continue providing access to and certificates of completion for all of its archived and upcoming webinar content. Users will be prompted to update their information in the new platform, but will still be able to access a transcript of the webinars they have attended.

To learn more about the Emerging Forensic Research Series, click [here](#). Researchers who would like to use the FTCoE platform to showcase their work to the forensic community should email [forensicCOE@rti.org](mailto:forensicCOE@rti.org).

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# Updated AMBER Alert Best Practices Guide

*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*

Updated guidelines are available to help states and regional offices recover abducted children through America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) Alerts.

The updated [AMBER Alert Program Best Practices resource](#) guide, published by the Office of Justice Programs' Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, provides a "what works" approach based on input of those who lead and oversee AMBER Alerts as part of larger missing persons and child protection programs at the state and regional levels.

The goal of an AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the community to assist in the search for and safe recovery of an abducted child. AMBER Alerts are activated in the most serious child abduction cases. The alerts are broadcast through radio, TV, road signs, cell phones and other data-enabled devices.

Read the guide [here](#).



## **Reports on Improving Safety and Wellness of the Nation's 800,000 Law Enforcement Officers**

*Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*

Two new complementary reports are available that focus on the mental health and safety of the nation's federal, state, local and tribal police officers. The reports were published by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) as required by the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017.

*Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress* includes 22 recommendations to Congress ranging from supporting programs to embed mental health professionals in law enforcement agencies to supporting the development of model policies and implementation guidance for law enforcement agencies to make substantial efforts to reduce suicide.

*Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs: Eleven Case Studies* is designed to

provide an overview of multiple successful and promising law enforcement mental health and wellness strategies with the joint aims of informing Congress, state and local government officials, and the law enforcement field. The report includes 11 case studies from a diverse group of sites across the United States.