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In this issue:

- I. NEW EXCITED DELIRIUM PROTOCOL ISSUED BY SAN JOSE PD
- II. YOUR HELP NEEDED WITH EXCITED DELIRIUM SURVEY
- III. NEW INSTRUCTOR BRINGS UNIQUE BACKGROUND TO FSRC PROGRAMS
- IV. DANGEROUSLY TIRED SGT. REJECTS EXTRA WORK, FACES FIRING
- V. FSRC'S POLICE DRIVING RESEARCH FEATURED AT CONFERENCE
- VI. IS STRESS A SEX THING?

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I. NEW EXCITED DELIRIUM PROTOCOL ISSUED BY SAN JOSE PD

Looking for guidance on a protocol for Excited Delirium calls? A recently updated training bulletin from San Jose (CA) PD might be a good starting point.

"It's the closest thing to a policy on the subject that I've been able to find," says Wayne Schmidt, executive director of Americans for Effective Law Enforcement, the organization that tracks legal issues pertaining to policing. Schmidt told Force Science News that he has searched for months for departmental policy statements on ED, with little success.

San Jose's 4-page document, created by the agency's R&D Unit and issued to all personnel by Chief Robert Davis, is designed to help officers identify and manage ED situations so that "risks to all those involved, including the delirious individual," are minimized. The bulletin notes that ED is "a serious medical condition...a disturbance of consciousness" in which the afflicted subject's violent resistance to arrest "for prolonged periods may increase the risk of death."

Step 1, the bulletin says, is to recognize symptoms suggestive of a delirious state, "which can be caused by several factors, including, among others, chronic drug use (particularly cocaine or methamphetamine abuse), substance withdrawal, and/or mental illness." Cues may include: "rambling and incoherent" speech, disoriented or delusional comments and behavior, the removal of clothing (because of "elevated body temperature"), imperviousness to pain, unusual strength, violence toward objects, hyperactivity, attraction to glass, and more than a dozen other indicators.

While officers lack the psychiatric expertise to make a firm diagnosis, a reasonable suspicion that "an individual may be in an excited delirium state" requires that the subject "be treated as if he/she is in a medical crisis and will require medical attention," the bulletin stresses. In other words, "the incident shall be managed as a medical emergency, in addition to whatever other law enforcement response may be required...including the use of reasonable force."

Specifically, the bulletin offers these recommendations:

DISPATCHER'S ROLE. If information from a reporting party leads the dispatcher to believe that an ED situation is at hand, "EMS personnel are to be dispatched and advised to stage at a location a safe distance from the scene until notified by officers that the scene is secure." If practical, "a minimum of 4 officers...will be dispatched to the incident," and they will be advised of the EMS location.

EMS' ROLE. As soon as they are notified at the staging area that the scene is secure, "EMS personnel will respond to the scene, evaluate the individual involved, administer appropriate care, and monitor the individual until he/she is delivered to an emergency medical facility."

OFFICERS' ROLE. First, request EMS if they have not been initially dispatched. If the subject is unarmed and appears not to pose an immediate threat to self or others, "officers shall, if practical, contain the subject while maintaining a safe distance and remove others who might be harmed." In a decision to arrest, try to gain the subject's voluntary cooperation with these tactics:

1. "Attempt to 'talk the person down.'" Ideally, only 1 officer conducts conversation, but if the subject is "unresponsive or non-compliant with the first officer, attempts to communicate should be made by other officers present." Officers should "project calmness and confidence and speak in a conversational and non-confrontational manner. Statements should include reassurance and [emphasize] that the officer is trying to help.

"Whenever possible, determine if the person can answer simple questions."

This will give an idea of the subject's level of coherence. "Officers should also turn down their radios.

2. Because of the subject's mental state, "statements and questions may need to be repeated several times. The person may also be fearful and extremely confused...so officers should be patient. If the subject is contained and does not appear to pose an immediate threat, there is no rush. It may take some time for the subject to calm down."

3. "Attempt to have the individual sit down, which may have a calming effect."

4. "Refrain from maintaining constant eye contact, as they may be interpreted as threatening."

5. If a relative or someone else "who has rapport with the individual can safely participate, enlist his/her assistance" in trying to gain compliance.

6. If the subject is armed or combative or otherwise poses an immediate threat, officers shall employ "reasonable and necessary" force to protect themselves and others and take the person into custody. "To the extent practical," try to minimize the "intensity and duration" of any resistance and "avoid engaging in a prolonged struggle." It may be possible to limit resistance by using several officers "simultaneously to restrain the subject quickly."

7. Once the subject is in custody and the scene is safe, EMS personnel should be called from the staging area. Some ED subjects "have gone into cardiac arrest shortly after a struggle," so the person's "breathing shall be monitored at all times and the person's position adjusted to maximize the ability to breathe." The subject should be "transported by ambulance to an emergency medical facility for evaluation and treatment."

Regardless of procedures, ED is a high-risk situation for all involved. As the San Jose bulletin acknowledges, "It is possible for a person in this condition to die, even when officers take all reasonable precautions."

Dr. Bill Lewinski, executive director of the Force Science Research Center at Minnesota State University-Mankato, notes: "San Jose's suggestions for calming an agitated subject are based on classically taught,

tried-and-true method for dealing with EDP's on the street. They are psychologically solid and have been practiced successfully with severely disturbed individuals."

(A good primary source for such methods is the textbook "Understanding Human Behavior for Effective Police Work," by Harold Russell and Allan Beigel.

It's available (used) for as little as \$5 on Amazon.com.)

Lewinski continues: "As the training bulletin points out, excited delirium subjects may be unresponsive to dialog and may need to be controlled by overwhelming force. And that raises training issues. In addition to instruction on the proper application of the TASER in these situations, officers need to learn and practice how to work effectively as a team to control these violently resisting subjects. Just grabbing a wrist here and an ankle there in an ad hoc fashion, rather than employing a coordinated group tactic, may only result in unnecessary injury and a prolonged crisis."

One tactic for group control, the Star Technique, is described in an article by popular DT trainer Gary Klugiewicz, a member of FSRC's National Advisory Board, on his website at:

<http://acmisystems.net/html/articles.asp>

[Note : Wayne Schmidt will be distributing the full San Jose training bulletin on ED as part of the handout material for AELE's next "Officer-Involved Lethal and Less-Lethal Force Seminar," scheduled for Nov. 12-14 in Las Vegas. For more information on that program, go to www.aele.org

[Meanwhile, San Jose PD's R&D Unit can be reached at 408-277-5200.]

II. YOUR HELP NEEDED WITH EXCITED DELIRIUM SURVEY

Dr. Fabrice Czarnecki, a presenter at the 2007 ILEETA training conference and a familiar figure at other law enforcement gatherings, is conducting a survey on excited delirium in conjunction with a research project he has underway.

He'd like to hear from officers and trainers with responses to these questions:

1. What questions do you want answered regarding excited delirium?
2. Do you think ED is a significant problem for law enforcement? Should we address it in police training?
3. Who do you think are the top experts on ED?

Email your answers to him at: fczarnecki@gablesgroup.com

III. NEW INSTRUCTOR BRINGS UNIQUE BACKGROUND TO FSRC PROGRAMS

A new instructor has joined the Force Science Research Center to assist in bringing the latest findings on use-of-force dynamics to law enforcement audiences.

Dr. Greg Sancier, who has 26 years' LE experience and is a PhD in clinical psychology, has been with the San Jose (CA) PD since 1985, where he currently works as senior hostage negotiator and as a trainer and member of the crisis intervention team.

"Dr. Sancier will bring a unique perspective to our presentations," says FSRC's executive director Dr. Bill Lewinski. "His dual background in real-world policing and psychological studies is a perfect blend for communicating to those who need to understand our work in order to properly control, report, and evaluate life-threatening confrontations."

Sancier will represent the Center in a day's presentation July 17 to the annual conference of the Police Protective Assn. and Major Chiefs of Police at the University of Montana in Missoula.

IV. DANGEROUSLY TIRED SGT. REJECTS EXTRA WORK, FACES FIRING

A visitor to the Force Science Research Center section of the PoliceOne.com website responds to our Transmission #70 regarding the dangers of police fatigue:

"I wholeheartedly agree that working on little sleep is dangerous, so I contested an order from a watch commander to work an additional 2 hours after already working a 12-hour overtime shift that was preceded by only 4 hours of sleep after working a nightshift. I was found guilty of being insubordinate, refusing to obey, conduct unbecoming, etc.

"An administrative lieutenant recommended termination. He didn't seem to care about my lack of sleep and the danger it posed. In fact, most of my statements in my interview regarding my lack of sleep and my belief that I was unfit to continue working that night were left out of the final report and my interview summary.

"It just goes to show that most administrators turn a blind eye to the fact that their officers and first-line supervisors are ticking time bombs when it comes to fatigue. It's easy for them to sit back and assign overtime for officers, and then go home every M-F at 5 pm, while the rest of us walk and drive around like zombies at 4 in the morning after our 5th day in a row of 12-hours shifts.

"Hopefully, my incident, which I am fighting, will open the eyes of the city and department I work for. Hopefully."

A Tired Sgt. in Calif.

V. FSRC'S POLICE DRIVING RESEARCH FEATURED AT CONFERENCE

Two presentations on findings from FSRC regarding police driving were made last month [5/07] at the annual meeting in New York of the prestigious Cognitive Neuroscience Society.

The reports concerned studies in England last summer by a research team led by FSRC technical advisor Dr. Jonathan Page, a psychologist with Minnesota State University-Mankato.

One of Page's experiments found that officers with intensive, specialized training in pursuit driving demonstrated memory skills in traffic situations far superior to officers without such training. The other focused on the difficulty of attempting to multi-task successfully while driving under stressful conditions.

Check the Force Science News archive at <http://www.forcesciencenews.com/home/detail.html?serial=49> for an earlier report on Page's work.

VI. IS STRESS A SEX THING?

Do male and female officers experience different levels of stress from such events as shooting someone in the line of duty, pursuing an armed suspect, losing a promotion to a less capable colleague, working overnights, taking abuse from a traffic violator, dating a non-cop, or seeing an offender freed by a jury?

Meredith Moran, a CJ training coordinator at the Southeastern Public Safety Institute of St. Petersburg (FL) College, wants to know--for a good cause. And you can help her find out.

As part of her work on a PhD dissertation about gender differences in police stressors, she's conducting an online survey of sworn officers that takes only a few moments. If you're willing to participate, go to www.surveyconsole.com/console/TakeSurvey?id=305933 where you'll be asked--anonymously--to rate a series of work-related situations like those mentioned above on a scale of 1 (personally non-stressful) to 4 (extremely stressful).

"Very few studies have addressed law enforcement stress as it relates to gender," says Moran, a veteran of 13 years in patrol and training. Determining if there are differences and just what they are may have important implications for training and work assignments.

If you have questions, contact her at (727) 743-6058 or Mbowman11@tampabay.rr.com

[Thanks to Tom Moy of the University of Delaware Public Safety Office for tipping us to this research project.]

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