



Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office **NEWS RELEASE**

David A. Clarke Jr.
Sheriff



2013 Sheriff of the Year

Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association

Fran McLaughlin
Public Information Officer
Cell: 414-254-9488
Phone: 414-278-5226
fran.mclaughlin@milwcnty.com

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Washington Navy Yard Massacre Renews Sheriff's Call for Armed Deputies at Milwaukee County Courthouse Complex Checkpoints

Milwaukee, WI – The massacre at the Washington Navy Yard several days ago caused Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. to take inventory of the security at the Milwaukee County Courthouse Complex to determine what changes would reduce the likelihood of an armed gunman breaching the security checkpoints. The checkpoints are a function of the County's Facilities Management Division, which reports to County Executive Chris Abele.

Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. has had his deputies routinely perform integrity checks to determine any weaknesses in the checkpoints at the Courthouse Complex, to see whether or not someone could get a gun or other weapon through. The Courthouse Complex includes the Courthouse, Safety Building and Criminal Justice Facility.

Earlier this year, an undercover deputy, who carried no credentials or other law enforcement identifiers, was able to get through the secure checkpoint at all six complex entrances with a gun tucked in her waistband, and without security discovering the weapon even after she set off the walk-through magnetometer. This was a major security breach.

Sheriff Clarke ordered sheriff's deputies posted at each security checkpoint in the Courthouse Complex until he was convinced that weapons could not get through. The staffing of those posts was paid for with overtime since this function is not in the MCSO budget.

The Sheriff put forth a report of recommendations to the County Executive on ways to make the complex a more secure environment. County Executive Abele did not respond to the Sheriff's recommendation. At the time, the County Executive doubted the intentions of the Sheriff in conducting the integrity check or the need for additional security measures. Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services Director Don Tyler indicated that he was satisfied with what was in place and refused any additional costs for staffing by Sheriff's deputies. Without money to continue to staff the positions, the Sheriff pulled the deputies from the checkpoints and the County Executive's office resumed responsibility for the unarmed security staffing by county employees.

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Statement from Sheriff Clarke

“The tragic loss of life at the hands of an assailant who weaved his way through security measures in place at the Washington Navy Yard is a grim reminder of the need for executives to continually assess security systems. No system is absolute. However, enhancements that add resiliency and redundancy can and should be recommended and acted upon by county officials. My office has made integrity checks of security systems as part of our everyday process. When there is a failure, it is usually due to a lack of urgency, adherence to protocol and complacency by humans.

In the story of the Navy Shipyard massacre from the *New York Times*, Pentagon officials said that Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel intends to review physical security and access at all Defense Department installations around the world. That reactive state is not one I want to be in very often, if at all. I insist that we are proactive and reduce the chance and opportunity for things like an armed assailant from getting past a security checkpoint. If a scuffle for a weapon occurs and God forbid, shots are fired, I want it to happen at a security checkpoint--not in a family courtroom, the Treasurer’s Office, Clerk of Courts Office or District Attorney’s Office.

The days of innocence in believing that what happened at the Navy Shipyard can’t happen here in Milwaukee are over. It is a different world today, a dangerous world and unlike some elected officials, I refuse to stick my head in the sand or cross my fingers that it won’t happen.

I am renewing my request for armed deputies staffing the security checkpoints in the Courthouse Complex. I will send a proposal to the County Executive’s office and the County Board next week,” Clarke said.

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