

PRESS RELEASE

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Seattle Police Receive IED (*Improvised Explosive Device*) Awareness Training

Most people think of Bellevue and Redmond Washington as Microsoft country. For two days this year it was Improvised Explosive Device central. Over 75 police and private security officers were given an eye opening awareness course by RISC Management instructors Al Johnson and Rich Gonzales. Many of the participants had already received IED awareness training in some form or another over the years since 2001 when terrorism rose to the top of many law enforcement agendas, yet never before, according to the participants, had they been exposed to the realities and skills necessary to safely operate in that environment.

“I didn’t know I didn’t know” laughed one police sergeant from Bellevue. He was commenting on the range of IEDs that are currently being used worldwide, not only in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, but more importantly for civil law enforcement in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Columbia. “You see it on the news and read it in bulletins, but to watch video of actual IED attacks, and hear the firsthand accounts from the instructors whose job it was to locate and disarm IEDs worldwide was the key” stated the police sergeant. From simple pipe bombs, to collar and vehicle bombs, the two instructors showed how simple household chemicals like nail polish remover and hair bleach are used in places like Thailand to make more IEDs than Afghanistan. The impact on the police was noticeable. “Right now if you find someone with boxes of Sudafed you know to look deeper as this might be a meth lab supply, however, how many people here would think the same for Acetone?” Al Johnson said in his demonstration. Al went on to show examples of bomb labs and the precursors used to manufacture home-made explosives. “All of this can be learned from the internet, not just terrorists. Kids in your neighborhoods can look this up and experiment with it and with lethal results. It is up to you to be aware of these precursors and use your ingrained police skills to know when to look a bit further.”

In addition the class presented a shocking report on Thailand’s unknown IED war, with implications for the U.S. first responders. “The Thailand IED wave is what the U.S. could look like if the social unrest of the 60s and 70s occurs today. With today’s IEDs, the level of casualties and disruption the groups in Southern Thailand are able to achieve mirrors what we

would see here, so it is important to understand what the Thais are facing and what they are doing that works, and what doesn't".

Seattle's Urban Area Security Initiative Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Equipment (UASI CBRNE) team organized the event under Alicia Schroeder, and plans to hold more educational seminars to increase the awareness of IEDs for the Seattle area in the future.