

Deputy Chief Cody Stromberg
Direct: (801) 871-3539
Cell: (801) 598-7408
cstromberg@herrimanpd.org



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UPDATE: Officer-Involved Critical Incident

HERRIMAN, Utah

On Sunday, November 20th, 2022, at approximately 3:45pm, officers from the Herriman Police Department responded to a suicidal subject at 13073 South Keegan Drive. The male subject contacted 911 emergency dispatchers indicating he was armed and was thinking of harming himself. The subject threatened to shoot anyone who came to his residence. Officers met with the subject's family members at a location away from the residence and contacted him by phone, attempting to provide him with resources and options.

During these conversations, the subject began firing shots from a semi-automatic rifle outside his home in the direction of neighboring residences. At that time, patrol officers from Herriman, Riverton, and South Jordan surrounded the subject's residence in an attempt to contain the threat. The South Valley SWAT Team was activated and responded to the scene.

A reverse-911 call was sent out to initiate a "shelter-in-place" order for nearby residences. The success of reverse-911 is dependent on the number of landlines or cell phone opt-in subscribers, so its effects are often limited. We activated a limited section of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) through Salt Lake County Emergency Management in an attempt to reach more of the immediate neighborhood. IPAWS works by identifying mobile subscribers connected to a specific cell phone tower to push notifications. Clearly, the reach of the notification was much broader than we intended, and we apologize to our neighboring communities outside the affected area for any inconvenience or confusion caused by the alert.

For several hours, specialized negotiators and members of the subject's family attempted to convince him to surrender peacefully. He made it very clear to us throughout the afternoon and evening that he was going to force officers to end his life. The subject was an active member of the Utah Army National Guard. Members of the Guard responded to the operations area and assisted our negotiators in attempting to de-escalate the situation. We are grateful to our partners from the Guard for their efforts and support.

Armored vehicles were deployed containing SWAT operators to surround the residence while negotiators attempted to talk the subject down. Every attempt made by our officers to de-escalate the situation was met with an escalating action by the subject. Throughout the negotiations, multiple rounds were fired inside the residence by the subject, oftentimes in rapid volleys. It was clear the subject was attempting to elicit a response from officers, but they showed restraint and were patient.

As the event progressed, the decision was made to tactically evacuate citizens from the homes directly adjacent to the subject residence. Members from the Unified Police Department's SWAT Team responded with an armored vehicle to begin evacuations. When the subject observed the activities of the tactical units, he began firing rounds at the armored vehicles. As he continued to engage the SWAT Team members with gunfire, the subject exited the back door of his residence, while still firing rounds, and members of the SWAT Team at that point returned fire. The subject was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The subject is identified as 38-year-old Alma Worthington of Herriman.

While this is not the outcome we had hoped for, Mr. Worthington was adamant throughout our encounter with him that this was the outcome he had decided upon. We have and will continue to make every effort to avoid armed confrontation with suicidal subjects and provide them resources and options for a path forward, but we cannot allow that person to place the lives of other citizens in danger through their actions.

Without a doubt, the armored vehicles saved the lives of police officers during this incident, and we are fortunate that none of the subject's rounds caused injury to innocent bystanders. We are proud of our officers who placed themselves in harm's way to protect others.

Utah statute requires that an independent third-party agency investigate any officer-involved critical incident. In Salt Lake County, this is accomplished through use of the Salt Lake County Officer-Involved Critical Incident Protocol. The protocol teams are made up of detectives from several jurisdictions throughout Salt Lake County, in addition to investigators from the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office. Protocol Team Two responded to this incident and will conduct the investigation. The officers involved have been placed on paid administrative leave, as is standard practice. As this is an active criminal investigation, no other information regarding the incident will be released at this time.

PTSD is real and its impact is felt by many. Our thoughts are with the Worthington family. They will bear the effects of this tragedy for many years to come, as will our officers who were forced into a no-win situation, and the residents of the surrounding neighborhood. We urge anyone experiencing mental health crisis to please reach out through the SafeUT app, the national 988 mental health crisis line, or one of the many other resources available through public and private organizations to help those in crisis find a healthy way out.

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