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Plead

Rookie cop shot wounded suspect, witnesses say

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partner, Curtis Vanover, 28, also a rookie officer, were sent to Newton Elementary School, 16411 Curtis, to investigate a report of a man threatening an employee with a weapon.

Detroit Public Schools' spokeswoman Marie Furcron said Gresham was in the school looking for his mother, who teaches there. When Gresham was told he could not see her, he got upset and the police were called.

Furcron said she had heard Gresham "was carrying a lead or iron pipe of some kind."

Gresham left the school before police arrived but the officers saw him on Ferguson and Klukowski got out of the car to talk to him.

Gresham struggled with Klukowski and grabbed at the officer's service revolver, police said. In the struggle, Klukowski was shot in the right leg and Vanover shot Gresham several times, police said.

Gresham's neighbors said he lived in the area about a year and sometimes sat on the porch rocking in a chair. Other times he would skip rope, they said.

It was the first time this year that a Detroit police officer has been wounded by gunfire while on duty. Last year, five officers were killed in shootings while on duty, including two officers who were mistakenly shot by other officers during a drug raid.

In the second police shooting Tuesday, investigators said Donna Pitts, 28, drove away from Asbury Park and Van Buren at a high rate of speed about 5 p.m., after an altercation with an unknown person.

A traffic officer, Ronald Novak, 40, followed her on his motorcycle north on Asbury Park. But when he attempted to pull her over at Six Mile, police claimed that she pointed a pistol at him and fired several



Police officers guard the scene of shooting incident on west side.

shots, which missed.

Novak, an 18-year veteran, fired four shots at Pitts, police said, wounding her in the back. She drove another half-block on Asbury Park before crashing her auto into a park car, police said.

Pitts was taken to Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn, where a spokesman said that she was in good condition and that her wound was not serious.

News staff writer Jim Tittsworth contributed to this report.

Other cities' emergency rooms close

By Dwight E.M. Angell
 News Staff Writer

As in Detroit, hospital emergency rooms in some other cities close for short periods of time. But Emergency Medical Services (EMS) handle the situations differently.

Some cities where closings are routinely expected have their own standard procedures for handling the way patients are rerouted when emergency rooms are restricted.

Still others don't have any problems, officials say, because emergency rooms are usually open to all ambulance runs.

THE WAY hospitals restrict EMS runs in Detroit has been under inspection recently. Concern was intensified Saturday by a report that the nearest hospital to a young knife-wielding victim was closed to life-threatening cases, forcing the EMS driver to go to a hospital farther away.

In Detroit, when a hospital emergency room closes to certain types of medical cases, it notifies EMS control of the restriction. That information is radioed to EMS drivers.

New York City uses a different method of controlling who closes, said Ken Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association.

New York hospitals ask permission of EMS central to close their emergency rooms, said Raske.

"A hospital does not have the authority itself for diversion. It makes the request and it has to be granted (before it can close.) If the excuse is not considered appropriate, the request is not granted."

THE PURPOSE of the policy, he said, "is to avoid the bunching of hospitals going down at the same time."

In one case, Raske said, New York EMS refused to let a hospital close its emergency service even though

hospital workers were on strike.

On the Pacific coast, Seattle uses an approach where EMS units deal directly with their base hospital, said Doug Austin, who is emergency medical technician program coordinator for the King County EMS.

All major trauma cases go to one hospital and less severe cases go to the other hospitals. EMS drivers only reroute a patient when their base hospitals can't handle the case.

BUT IN Baltimore, problems similar to those in Detroit are occurring, said Capt. John Johnson of the eastern city's ambulance services.

React

Council to probe emergency room closing policies

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what we can do," said Wayne McKenna, chief of the division of Emergency Medical Services in the Michigan Department of Public Health.

HOWEVER, HE added that budget cuts in his department have limited his ability to solve problems.

The action was prompted by reports of the death Saturday of a 17-year-old Detroit stabbing victim.

Ian Richardson was re-routed away from the hospital closest to his home, where he had been stabbed in the chest.

The case pointed to what seems to be widespread difficulties in emergency service in the city. In the Richardson incident, the closest hospital had been temporarily closed to life-threatening cases — and at least 11 of about 15 hospitals that regularly take Detroit EMS patients had restricted some part of their emergency room service during the day.

Councilwoman Maryanne Mahaffey said Tuesday she wants to examine city records that show what hospitals closed their emergency rooms to EMS patients in the past year.

Hospitals routinely tell ambulance dispatchers from Emergency Medical Services (EMS) when their

emergency rooms are too busy to accept more patients.

"EMS should analyze their logs relative to who is turned away from which hospitals, and the hours of the day, to see what pattern emerges," said Mahaffey.

"I will be asking EMS to provide the council with (hospital availability) logs for the past year."

Councilman Jack Kelley said he will ask Detroit Health Department Director John B. Waller Jr. to call a meeting of hospital officials.

Councilwoman Barbara-Rose Collins called for both a state and city investigation of hospital admissions practices.

McKenna said he became aware of a Detroit problem with emergency room closings last December.

"I haven't heard of this problem anywhere else in the state," he said.

McKenna added that on Monday, he asked Detroit officials to provide information that would allow his department to compare emergency room closings in 1986 with those in 1987.

HOWEVER, HE said he was uncertain what actions the state EMS division could take.

"At one time we had a considerable role in these matters, in planning and evaluation; but with (state) budget reductions in 1981, our staff was cut from 42 to nine," McKenna said.

"We haven't been able to take an active role since then."

Mayor Coleman A. Young, who returned to Detroit on Tuesday from the Detroit Tigers training camp in Lakeland, Fla., was unavailable for comment.

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