



Colorado Springs Police Department

General Order

1210 Assemblies & Mass Events

Section 1200 – Critical Incident Functions

Effective Date: 10/25/2024

Supersedes Date: 4/30/2021

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish general department requirements for utilizing sound judgment, proper command, and supervision within the interpretative context of [GO 101 First Amendment Rights](#) for personnel responding to assemblies or mass events.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 101 First Amendment Rights](#)

[GO 500 Use of Force](#)

[GO 1903 Body Worn Cameras \(BWC\)](#)

[GO 1028 Recording of Police Activity](#)

[GO 1220 Incident Command System](#)

[DL-500-05 Long Range Acoustical Device \(LRAD\)](#)

[DL-1210-01 Assemblies and Mass Event Operations](#)

[DL-1210-02 Public Order Response Team](#)

[DL-1210-03 Mass Arrests Operations](#)

[DL-1501-03 Acoustic Hailing Device](#)

.03 Discussion

First Amendment rights may be exercised in a variety of ways including demonstrations, rallies, marches, picket lines, or other similar gatherings conducted for the purpose of people expressing their political, social, or religious views.

When assemblies or mass events occur, any needed law enforcement response should preserve the rights of those involved while protecting the safety and security of the community. Since each situation is unique and dynamic, both commanding and supervisory personnel must plan to respond according to the nature, size, and behaviors of the crowd in an efficient and effective manner.

.04 Policy

It is the policy of the department that personnel will respond to assemblies and mass events in a manner that recognizes people have a right to organize and participate in peaceful First Amendment assemblies on sidewalks, parks, other public property, and to engage in First Amendment assembly near the object of their protest, so they may be seen and heard.

First Amendment rights are subject to reasonable restrictions designed to protect public safety, persons, and property, as well as to accommodate the interest of persons not participating in the assemblies to utilize the streets, sidewalks, and other public ways to travel to their intended destinations, or use of the parks for recreational purposes (See department policy on First Amendment Rights).

When the department responds to assemblies or mass events, CSPD will make reasonable efforts to employ non-arrest methods of crowd management as the primary means of maintaining order, prior to using crowd control methods.

CSPD personnel must utilize probable cause of unlawfulness by an individual when effecting an arrest during a mass assembly or event, in accordance with training and other applicable directives.

The Chief of Police has authorized staff officers at the rank of commander or above to act on the Chief's behalf in making official declarations and orders in assemblies or mass events, as allowed by city Ordinance 8.1.104.

This directive must be read in conjunction with [1210-01 Assembly & Mass Event Operations](#).

.05 Definitions

Command-level IC: Means an Incident Commander who is a staff officer at the rank of commander or higher.

Community Liaison Officer: An officer trained to communicate with event organizers before and during an event to help keep an event lawful.

Crowd Control: Techniques used to address unlawful assemblies, civil disturbances, or mass events to include a show of force, crowd containment, crowd dispersal equipment and tactics, and preparations for multiple arrests.

Crowd Management: Techniques used to manage lawful assemblies before and during the event for the purpose of maintaining lawful status.

Kinetic Impact Projectiles (KIPs): Terminology used in state law; in department use of force policy, this is referred to as *specialty impact munitions*. FN303 rounds and 40mm foam rounds are the only ones used by the department during unlawful assemblies and mass events, if authorized and necessary.

Legal Observer: Trained volunteers who support the legal rights of activists. They provide basic legal guidance and are independent witnesses of police behavior at protests. Legal observers are independent from the protest and do not participate as activists.

.10 Planned/Permitted & Unplanned Events

Planned/Permitted Events

A planned event is one that the department becomes aware of, either by submission of the applicable permit request through the city or other advance notice of the event, which allows for planning and resource allocation prior to the event occurrence.

Large-scale planned events will include the Special Enforcement Division (SED) Commander or designee serving as the Incident Commander (IC), acting on behalf of the Chief of Police or designee, who will coordinate all aspects of the event in advance and in accordance with appropriate directives.

Community liaison officers will be used as appropriate to contact and work with assembly or mass event leaders before and during the event.

All divisions impacted by the operation will be provided with the operations plan to ensure appropriate coordination, when needed, and provide effective deconfliction in operations.

Unplanned Events

Unplanned or spontaneous assemblies or mass events occur without prior notice or warning and often come to the department's attention through a call for service. Like planned events, these are typically peaceful events, but require assessment for appropriate police response, if any.

Absent any exigent need to immediately intervene, responding officers and supervisors on-scene will assess the assembly and complete the tasks described in [DL-1210-01 Assembly & Mass Events Operations](#).

.15 Incident Command

When it is determined an operations plan will be completed, based on the known factors of a

planned assembly or event, the IC will be identified in the operation plan and must be the rank of commander or above (“Command-level IC”).

During an unplanned event, establishment of the IC will be in accordance with [GO 1220 Incident Command System](#) and will function in accordance with [DL-1210-01 Assembly & Mass Event Operations](#). The initial IC in an unplanned event will be relieved by a higher rank depending on the scale of response needed.

.20 Recordings

All sworn personnel will utilize their body worn camera in accordance with department policies during assemblies and mass events. If there is a question about whether those policies require an officer to record in specific circumstances during an assembly or mass event, the officer should record.

Any member of the public has the right to record police activity within specific limitations, and such action is protected under the First Amendment. Department personnel will follow [GO 1028 Recording of Police Activity](#).

.30 Public Order Response Team

The Public Order Response Team (PORT) is a cadre of officers who receive specialized training in crowd management and crowd control. They will respond to large disturbances, demonstrations, and/or protests at the discretion of the IC. PORT’s responsibilities and operational guidance are detailed in [DL-1210-02 Public Order Response Team](#).

Any use of force by PORT to disperse a crowd will be authorized and directed by a Command-level IC, in compliance with department policy.

.35 Declaring an Assembly or Mass Event Unlawful

[DL-1210-01 Assembly & Mass Event Operations](#) details the procedure for declaring an assembly or mass event unlawful, including the positions that are to be consulted to make such a determination. Only a staff officer at the rank of commander or above is authorized to make this declaration, acting on behalf of the Chief of Police.

.40 Issuance of Formal Orders to Disperse

[DL-1210-01 Assembly and Mass Event Operations](#) details the procedure for issuing formal orders to disperse in an assembly or mass event. These orders may only occur after it has been properly declared unlawful in compliance with department policy.

To maximize the legal value of notifications, the department will give clear, loud verbal warnings using public address equipment; establish methods of egress for safe exit; and must allow an opportunity for participants to comply with police orders to disperse. These actions must take place before enforcement of the order to disperse an unlawful assembly, unless it is necessary to take appropriate urgent action against identified individuals who constitute a serious threat.

Use of an acoustic hailing device for announcements will conform to [DL-1501-03 Acoustic Hailing Device](#) (term used synonymously with Long Range Acoustical Device).

.50 Use of Force

Any use of force must comply with [GO 500 Use of Force](#), associated SOPs, and statutory and case law. Officers who deploy less lethal tools will only do so in accordance with equipment they have been assigned and successful completion of related training. Each use of force must be independently justified.

When other crowd management and crowd control measures are unsuccessful or cannot reasonably be used in dispersing an unlawful assembly or mass event, the department may consider using force to disperse the participants. Prior to using less lethal tools or other force to disperse a crowd, appropriate notice and ability to disperse must be given in accordance with this policy and [DL-1210-01 Assembly and Mass Event Operations](#). DL-1210-01 Assembly & Mass Event Operations includes the positions that are to be consulted to determine that force may be used in this manner. Only a staff officer at the rank of commander or above may authorize the use of force to disperse an assembly or mass event, acting on behalf of the Chief of Police. Specialized tools such as hand thrown less lethal munitions will only be deployed with authorization, and only by trained members of PORT under supervisory direction. In exigent circumstances, the Tactical Enforcement Unit may be directed to utilize these less lethal munitions as appropriate.

There are additional considerations in using force against individuals in an assembly or mass event. Officers are prohibited from:

- Discharging less lethal tools (e.g., kinetic impact projectiles, chemical irritants) indiscriminately into a crowd.
- Discharging kinetic or any other less-lethal projectiles in a manner that targets a person's head, pelvis, or back.
- Intentionally using force against clearly identifiable members of the media or legal observers, unless officers have probable cause that such individual has committed a crime other than failure to disperse.

The use of a Long Range Acoustical Device as force will comply with [DL-1501-03 Acoustic Hailing Device](#).

Nothing in this directive precludes an individual officer from taking necessary and appropriate actions to effect an arrest, prevent an escape, or prevent imminent threat of injury, pursuant to [GO 500 Use of Force](#) and associated standard operating procedures.

.60 Arrests

The IC may direct department personnel to arrest individuals or groups who disobey lawful orders, engage in acts of violence, and/or other criminal activity. Such arrests will be made only when probable cause has been established for each individual to be arrested, in accordance with [DL-1210-03 Mass Arrest Operations](#). The probable cause supporting the arrest of an individual must be detailed in the documented case report. The case report must identify the officer(s) who established probable cause for the arrest and the officer(s) who conducted the arrest, if not the same officer.

.70 Media and Legal Observers

During an assembly or mass event, it is common practice for the media to be present and provide coverage of the event. Media members frequently choose to embed within the crowd or on the periphery conducting interviews, taking photos, and recording the event. Additionally, advocacy groups often use volunteer legal observers to monitor the actions of the police.

These roles have been recognized by the courts as important to preserving the First Amendment right to peacefully assemble. Therefore, media members and legal observers are not subject to dispersal orders issued by the police.

Clearly identifiable media and legal observers will not be arrested for failing to disperse from an assembly or event area. Officers will not intentionally use force against clearly identifiable members of the media or legal observers, unless officers are legally justified in accordance with [GO 500 Use of Force](#) and associated standard operating procedures. A member of the media or legal observer's failure to disperse is not legal justification for a use of force against them.

Nothing in this section should be construed as allowing media or legal observers the right or ability to interfere with arrests or other law enforcement operations; to access secured areas the public is not allowed to access; or to violate any other provision of law.