



GENERAL ORDER

DURHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
DURHAM, NC

NUMBER:

4069 R-4

RESPONSE TO ACTIVE ASSAILANT

Effective Date: 09/01/2002

Revision Dates: R-1 01/10/2005; R-2 11/30/2011; R-3 11/20/2019;
R-4 08/08/2022

INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the Durham Police Department to protect life by any legal means possible. Officers responding to an active assailant incident shall accomplish this goal by immediately using any legal means at their disposal to make contact with the active assailant and neutralize the threat. This may include arrest, containment, or use of deadly force.

The philosophy driving this policy recognizes that the active assailant must be stopped as quickly as possible and that an incident is still an active threat as long as the suspect's actions and/or presence is preventing first responders from providing medical care to the victims, even if the shooting has stopped.

The prioritization of activities for the initial responding officers is:

1. **Stop the active assailant(s);**
2. Rescue the victims, provide medical assistance;
3. Evacuate remaining individuals; and
4. Preserve the crime scene

DEFINITIONS

Active assailant: one or more subjects actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. Subject(s) may use firearms or any other deadly weapon (knife, club, bow & arrow, explosives, etc.) to systematically or randomly inflict death or serious injury. An active assailant demonstrates intent to continuously harm others rather than commit other criminal conduct such as robbery, hostage-taking, etc.

Contact team: one or more officers who have the function of making contact with the suspect(s) in order to stop the life threatening behavior.

Rapid deployment: the swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to ongoing, life threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or great bodily injury to innocent persons.

Rescue task force: a group of police officers and medical first responders – either EMTs or Fire Department medics – that have the function of moving into the unsecured area to render aid to victims.

Static situation: the situation is no longer evolving or in motion. The suspect(s)' actions have ceased. Officers have made contact with the suspect(s) **AND** stopped the life threatening behavior or a reasonable officer would believe that the suspect(s)' actions or presence are no longer preventing officers from accessing victims to render medical aid.

Priority of Life Scale: the first priority is to preserve the lives of victims/potential victims. Second, is the safety of the first responders, and last is the suspect.

PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of First Arriving Officers

Upon notification of an active threat, all available officers will respond to the incident location. Officers handling non-emergency calls, where leaving the scene does not endanger public safety, shall clear and respond to the active threat. As officers arrive on scene they should evaluate the need to form contact teams, rescue teams, or a containment perimeter.

When encountering bystanders or victims:

- Contact teams will attempt to obtain the suspect(s)' location from fleeing witnesses;
- If witnesses are in a location where they are able to safely evacuate the area, officers will instruct them to do so. If witnesses are instructed to evacuate, responding officers will notify incident command to expect the evacuating witnesses;
- If witnesses are in a location where they are not able to safely evacuate, officers will instruct them to hide from the assailant (shelter in place). Once the situation has become static or the assailant is apprehended, those witnesses will be evacuated;
- The location of injured individuals unable to evacuate will be relayed to incident command.

Contact Teams

The first officers arriving on scene shall:

- Initiate a rapid deployment, alone or as a team, to make contact as soon as possible with the active assailant and to stop them by arrest, containment, or use of deadly force.
- Communicate with Emergency Communication and Incident Command relevant intelligence information during rapid deployment to include current location and suspect(s)' location. Once a contact team enters an impacted building or area, they will continue to move until the threat is located. If no shots are heard, they will move to the last known location of the active assailant. If an initial sweep does not locate the suspect, the contact team will conduct searches of all areas until the suspect has been located and/or the location has been secured.
- If the incident transitions to a static situation, the contact team will maintain appropriate cover and attempt to verbally engage the suspect. Sufficient manpower should be requested and directed to establish an effective containment perimeter around the suspect's location. The Department's policy regarding hostages and/or barricaded suspects (see G.O. [4030 Hostage and/or Barricaded Suspect Incidents](#)) will be followed.

Rescue Task Force

When sufficient contact teams have been deployed to engage with the active assailant, rescue task force shall be formed, which will locate and remove injured victims and direct uninjured victims out of the impacted building or area. Multiple rescue task forces may be utilized depending on the size of the facility.

While the rescue task force begins deployment, officers will stage outside of the location to direct evacuating witnesses to a safe assembly location. Officers should be assigned to the assembly location to begin obtaining information from the witnesses and evaluating medical response needs.

If individuals are injured and unable to evacuate under their own power or with the assistance of other witnesses, the rescue task force will assess their injuries and coordinate immediate first aid and rapid relocation of the injured person.

Rescue Task Force members should remember that uninjured victims may be in shock or paralyzed with fear, and do not respond to regular verbal commands.

Rescue Task Force members are to remain constantly vigilant as the rapidly changing dynamics of the incident may put them in contact with the suspect.

Containment Perimeter

As additional members and/or personnel from other agencies arrive on scene, they must assess the need for additional contact teams and deploy as appropriate. If they determine that sufficient contact teams have entered the incident scene, or at the discretion of the on-scene commander, additional arriving personnel should form a containment perimeter around the incident scene.

Communications

Gathering and disseminating information upon arrival shall be a priority. Radio restrictions initiated by Emergency Communications or on-scene commanders shall be adhered to. Intelligence information may be obtained from witnesses fleeing the scene, relayed from Emergency Communication and/or radio transmission from officers already on scene. Regardless of information received, officers arriving on scene shall maintain a high level of situational awareness and constantly assess the circumstances for threats.

As soon as practical, arriving units should attempt to obtain the following information:

- Assailant's identity;
- Assailant's physical description;
- Assailant's current location;
- Description of weapons used;
- Any tactical abilities or specialized knowledge the assailant is known to have; and

- The assailant's agenda, motives or demands.

INCIDENT COMMAND

The first supervisor on the scene, who is not actively engaged in rapid deployment, will respond to the *inner perimeter command post*, initiate the incident command system and establish the location of the *outer perimeter command post*.

All personnel are to restrict their use of the radio for emergency traffic only.

As soon as possible, an intelligence investigator should be tasked with researching social media accounts to attempt to gain information about the assailant and to assist responding officers.

If the suspect(s) is/are arrested or incapacitated, regular procedures will be followed regarding the investigation and evidence preservation.

The incident commander is responsible for ensuring that an after-action report is completed in accordance with G.O. [4021 Unusual Occurrences & Incident Command](#).

AWARENESS OF FACILITY PROTOCOLS

The Department of Homeland Security has established best practices for organizations and members of the public to plan a response to an active assailant situation. The core recommendations are that community members should escape from the impacted area if possible (run), barricade inside the impacted area if escape is not possible (hide) and be prepared to physically defend themselves if necessary (fight). Some facilities or organizations may have established specific procedures and protocols. Responding officers should look for any signs or placards posted in areas that may indicate individuals are hiding or are injured.

If a facility has a representative who identifies themselves to responding officers, that representative should be directed to the command post where they can inform the on-scene commander of the specific response plans that have been established.

EQUIPMENT

The standard issued equipment for all officers will be used for active assailant incidents. Safe entry and successful contact is best served by the use of the duty handgun, shotgun and/or patrol rifle.

TRAINING

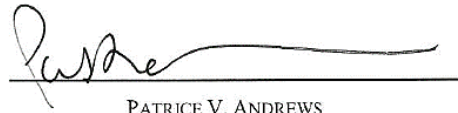
In preparation for an active assailant incident, all officers shall be trained on the following:

- Room entry techniques;
- Building clearing techniques;
- Victim rescue techniques;
- Recognition of explosives; and
- Managing radio communications & notifications.

Annually, the Training Division will identify and assess the Department's training needs and make recommendations for addressing those needs through the chain of command.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOLLOW-UP

An officer involved in a situation that required them to discharge their weapon or in which their actions resulted in death or serious injury will be required to participate in post-shooting psychological services (See G.O. [4067 Officer Involved Shootings, In-custody Deaths or Serious Injuries](#)). Counseling services and DPD Peer Support Team members will be made available to any officers requesting assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrice", is written over a solid horizontal line.

PATRICE V. ANDREWS
CHIEF OF POLICE