



GENERAL ORDERS: Chapter 30

PUBLISHED DATE: 11/10/2020

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/10/2020

APPROVED BY: Chief Dana Wingert

REVISED DATE: 10/3/2022

Crowd Management

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for managing crowds to prevent loss of life, injury or property damage by preserving the peace during demonstrations and civil disturbances while protecting individual rights.

II. Policy

The department will work to effectively manage crowds, minimize disruption to persons who are not involved and protect individual rights related to assembly and free speech. The goal of crowd management is to obtain voluntary compliance from participants and minimize any enforcement action.

III. Definitions

Civil disturbance – A gathering that constitutes a breach of the peace or any assembly of persons where there is a threat of collective violence, destruction of property, or other unlawful acts. Such a gathering may also be referred to as a riot or unlawful assembly.

Crowd control – Techniques used to address civil disturbances, to include a show of force, crowd containment, dispersal equipment and tactics, and preparations for multiple arrests.

Crowd management – Techniques used to manage lawful assemblies before, during, and after the event for the purpose of maintaining lawful status through event planning, pre-event contact with event organizers, issuance of permits when applicable, information gathering, personnel training, and other means.

Demonstration – A lawful assembly of persons organized primarily to engage in free speech activity. These may be scheduled events that allow for law enforcement planning. They include, but are not limited to, marches, protests, rallies, vigils, and other assemblies. Lawful demonstrations can devolve into civil disturbances that necessitate enforcement action.

Impact projectiles – Projectiles designed to impair a subject with minimal potential for causing death or serious physical injury when compared to conventional projectiles when used in accordance with policy and training.

Incident command system – From within the [National Incident Management System](#) framework, a standardized on-scene emergency management system that provides for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure. Incident Command is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents.

Riot (IA Code 723.1) – A riot is three or more persons assembled together in a violent manner, to the disturbance of others, and with any use of unlawful force or violence by them or any of them against another person, or causing property damage. A person who willingly joins in or remains a part of a riot, knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that it is such, commits an aggravated misdemeanor.

Unlawful assembly (IA Code 723.2) – An unlawful assembly is three or more persons assembled together, with them or any of them acting in a violent manner, and with intent that they or any of them will commit a public offense. A person who willingly joins in or remains a part of an unlawful assembly, knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that it is such, commits a simple misdemeanor.

Failure to disperse (IA Code 723.3) – A peace officer may order the participants in a riot or unlawful assembly or persons in the immediate vicinity of a riot or unlawful assembly to disperse. Any person within hearing distance of such command, who refuses to obey, commits a simple misdemeanor.

IV. Crowd management and organization principles

A. General

1. Government entities may impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner in which persons assemble and engage in free speech activity, provided the restrictions are justified without reference to the content of the regulated speech.
 - a. The department shall place only those limitations and restrictions on demonstrations necessary to maintain public safety and order and, to the degree possible, facilitate uninhibited speech, commerce, and freedom of movement.
2. Uniformed personnel shall wear their badges and nameplates or an identification number in a visible location on their person at all times.

B. Incident command

1. An Incident Command System shall be used for crowd management and civil disturbances to ensure control and unified command.
2. Organization of responsibilities shall be as follows:
 - a. A division or watch commander shall designate an incident commander (IC) responsible for overall control of a demonstration or civil disturbance.
 - b. The IC shall be responsible for reviewing operational plans and management details associated with planned demonstrations and shall implement the written plan, if any.
 - c. In the case of a widely dispersed demonstration or civil disturbance, or event with multiple locations, multiple on-scene commanders may be assigned at the discretion of the incident commander.
3. The primary objective of the IC at a demonstration or civil disturbance is to accomplish the following through the management of resources:
 - a. Protect persons, regardless of their participation in the assembly
 - b. Disperse disorderly or threatening crowds in order to eliminate the immediate risks of continued escalation and further violence
 - c. Arrest law violators, including those responsible for property damage, and attempt to remove or isolate persons inciting violent behavior when safe or feasible
4. The IC should also ensure that:
 - a. Adequate security is provided to fire and EMS personnel in the performance of emergency tasks
 - b. Support and relief for personnel are available
 - c. A secure staging area for emergency responders and equipment is designated
 - d. Liaison and staging points for media representatives are established and available information is provided as appropriate

- e. Photographs or videos are taken of any known injuries sustained by law enforcement officers or the public, if possible
- 5. Officers shall be briefed on what to expect and appropriate responses. On-scene commanders shall be responsible for ordering any officer response deemed appropriate.
- C. Crowd control tools and equipment
 - 1. May include the following:
 - a. Protective helmet, face shield and baton
 - b. Protective body shields and gas masks
 - c. Impact projectiles, chemical and other disbursement sprays, and public-address systems
 - (1) Officers deploying these tools shall be trained or specifically authorized.
 - (2) A strict inventory of these items will be maintained, detailing the issuance and deployment.
 - 2. All crowd control tools and equipment shall be used in accordance with training and policy.

V. Crowd management, intervention, and control concepts and strategies

- A. Crowd management for demonstrations
 - 1. Every effort should be made to make advance contact with event organizers and to gather important information about the event to ensure accurate assignment of personnel and resources, such as:
 - a. The type of event involved, when it is planned and if organizers have been cooperative
 - b. The number of participants expected, assembly location and movement routes
 - c. The type of permit issued, if any, and the history or conduct at past similar events
 - d. Actions, activities, or tactics that are anticipated, to include use of devices designed to interfere with a lawful arrest
 - e. Opposition to the event and if there is a history of violence between the groups
 - f. Ensuring the appropriate level of properly equipped personnel have been allocated to protect the safety of bystanders, officers and demonstrators
 - 2. When feasible, the department may prepare a written operational plan for the event. If the event will be staffed primarily by off-duty officers, the supervisor in charge of the off-duty event will be responsible for the operational plan. The plan may address the following and be distributed as necessary:
 - a. Command assignments and responsibilities
 - b. Personnel and deployment considerations to include any need for special response teams (Metro STAR, EMS, plainclothes officers)
 - c. Contact information for the event organizers
 - d. Communications plan, to include release of information to the media
 - e. Pre-event intelligence analysis
 - f. Transportation, support and relief of personnel
 - g. Staging points for additional resources and equipment
 - h. Traffic management, including perimeter security
 - i. Demonstrator devices along with equipment and personnel needed to remove the devices
 - (1) These devices are designed to slow or interfere with a lawful arrest, such as PVC or steel pipe.
 - j. Transportation of prisoners
 - k. Arrestee processing areas
 - l. Any laws or ordinances specific to the event
- B. Crowd intervention for demonstrations

1. Officers shall be deployed to monitor crowd activity. Sufficient resources to handle multiple unruly persons should be available, depending on the fluidity of the situation and degree of actual or likely disruption.
 2. Officers shall initially be positioned in such a manner as to minimize contact with the assembled crowds.
 3. When contact becomes necessary, officers should avoid engaging in conversations related to the demonstration with attendees, refrain from reacting in response to comments from demonstrators, and maintain a courteous and neutral demeanor.
 4. Persons who reside, are employed, or have emergency business within the area marked off by a police line should not be prevented from entering the area unless circumstances suggest that their safety would be in jeopardy or their entry would interfere with law enforcement operations.
 5. On-scene commanders designated by the IC, when practical will work to establish and maintain communication with event organizers and seek to obtain voluntary compliance, and relay information on crowd behavior to the IC.
 6. Supervisors should maintain close contact with their assigned officers to ensure compliance with orders, monitor behavior and disposition, and ensure that they are aware of any changes in crowd behavior or intent.
 7. Identify specific violent or disruptive individuals for arrest. When it is not possible to make an immediate arrest, identify and track suspects using cameras and surveillance. Mass arrests shall be avoided, unless necessary.
 8. Officers should ensure that a means of egress for individuals is present at all times and communicated as necessary, unless individuals are targeted for arrest.
- C. Crowd intervention for spontaneous demonstrations
1. The first officer to arrive on the scene of a spontaneous demonstration should:
 - a. Observe the situation from a safe distance to determine if the gathering is currently or potentially violent
 - b. Notify the Communications Section of the nature and seriousness of the demonstration, particularly the availability of improvised or deadly weapons, the location and estimated number of participants, current activities (e.g., blocking traffic), direction of movement, and ingress and egress routes for emergency vehicles
 - c. Request the assistance of a supervisor and necessary backup
 - d. Attempt to identify crowd leaders and agitators engaged in criminal acts
 2. The first officer or supervisor in charge at the scene should:
 - a. Deploy officers at vantage points to report on crowd actions
 - b. Establish a perimeter sufficient to contain the demonstration and prohibit entrance into the affected area
 - c. Ensure that, to the degree possible, uninvolved individuals are evacuated from the immediate area of the demonstration
 - d. Establish a temporary command post
 - e. Provide ongoing assessment to the Communications Section
 - f. Move and reroute pedestrian and vehicular traffic around the demonstration
 - g. Control unauthorized ingress and egress by participants and prevent outside attempts to assist or reinforce the participants
 - h. When appropriate, request the crowd to voluntarily disperse
- D. Crowd control for civil disturbances

1. Prior to ordering a crowd dispersal, there shall be a clear risk of violence, criminal activity, or disruption to the freedom of movement of either vehicles or pedestrians (i.e. blocking roadways or intersections).
2. Before ordering forced dispersal of a civil disturbance, the on-scene commander should determine whether lesser alternatives may be effective. These alternatives include the use of containment and dialogue, as follows:
 - a. When practical, establish contact with event organizers or crowd leaders to assess their intentions and motivations and attempt to develop a plan for de-escalation and dispersal.
 - b. Communicate to the participants that their assembly is in violation of the law and that the agency desires to resolve the incident peacefully, but that acts of violence or property destruction will be dealt with swiftly and decisively.
3. Prior to issuing dispersal orders, the on-scene commander should ensure that all potentially necessary equipment and personnel are on hand to successfully carry out tactical operations and logistical needs for making mass arrests.
4. When the on-scene commander has determined that crowd dispersal is required, every effort will be made to issue warnings prior to taking action to disperse the crowd.
 - a. The warnings shall consist of an order to disperse, that chemical agents will be used and that arrests may be made.
 - b. A second and third warning should be issued at reasonable time intervals before designated actions are taken to disperse the crowd.
 - c. Where possible, the warnings should be audio or video recorded and the time and names of the issuing officers recorded in an event log.
5. Specific crowd dispersal tactics should be ordered as necessary where the crowd does not heed warnings. These include, but are not limited to, any one or combination of the following:
 - a. Display of presence such as police lines and vehicles
 - b. Use of public-address systems
 - c. Use OC or CS crowd control chemical agents
 - d. Multiple simultaneous arrests
 - e. Law enforcement formations for the purpose of crowd movement
6. Even after a dispersal order has been given, clearly identified media should be permitted to carry out their professional duties in any area unless their presence would unduly interfere with enforcement action.
 - a. Self-identified legal observers and crowd monitors do not have the same legal status as the professional media and are, therefore, subject to all laws and orders similar to any other person.
 - (1) A supervisor may allow a legal observer or crowd monitor to remain in the area after a dispersal order if circumstances permit and if the person's presence would not unduly interfere with the enforcement action.

VI. Mass arrest

A. General

1. During a civil disturbance, it may be necessary to make arrests of numerous individuals over a relatively short period of time. For this process to be handled efficiently, safely, and legally, the following should be observed:
 - a. Mass arrests should be conducted by designated squads.
 - b. An adequate secure area should be designated for holding arrestees during processing and while awaiting transportation to a detention center.

- c. Arrest teams should be advised of the basic offenses to be charged in all arrests, and all arrestees shall be advised of these charges.
- d. Arrestees shall be searched incident to arrest for weapons, evidence of the crime of arrest, and contraband.
- e. Arrestees shall be escorted to a transportation vehicle which will take them to a secure area for processing.
- f. The arresting officer shall ensure their name, charges, location and time of arrest are readily available for the processing officers who will complete the booking form at the secure area for processing.
- g. Officers transporting to the Polk County Jail should not accept arrestees without a properly prepared booking form and shall ensure that all property is accounted for and properly processed.
- h. Anyone who is injured, to include arrestees, shall be provided medical attention. Photographs should be taken of all known injuries.

VII. Use of force

A. General

- 1. There are no exceptions to the [Use of Force Policy](#) for crowd control situations. Officers shall follow all policies pertaining to the use of force.
- 2. Unless the circumstances justify immediate action, officers should not independently make arrests or use crowd control equipment such as impact projectiles or CS chemical agents without authorization.

B. Procedures

- 1. The following restrictions and limitations on the use of force should be observed:
 - a. Motor vehicles may be used to contain, control, and direct persons as appropriate but shall not be intentionally brought into contact with them unless the use of deadly force is authorized.
 - b. Oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray may be used against specific individuals engaged in unlawful conduct, or as necessary in a defensive capacity when appropriate.
 - (1) High-volume OC delivery systems are designed for and may be used against groups of people engaged in unlawful acts or endangering public safety. When practical, such as during dispersal orders, a verbal warning should be issued prior to the use of these systems.
 - (2) Pepperball OC delivery systems may be used by specifically trained officers, with on-scene supervisor approval, against individuals engaged in unlawful acts or endangering public safety.
 - c. A baton can be used as a defensive weapon; as a means of overcoming resistance; to stop, control, or neutralize perceived threatening resistance; as a show of force; or as a means to contain or disperse a crowd.
 - d. Conducted energy weapons (CEWs) should only be used for purposes of arrest of resistant individuals when less forceful means of control have not been effective or are unsuitable and only when the individual can be accurately targeted. CEWs shall not be fired indiscriminately into crowds.
 - e. Impact projectiles shall not be fired indiscriminately into crowds. When possible, officers should seek on-scene commander approval prior to deploying impact projectiles.
 - (1) Direct-fired impact projectiles, to include beanbag and related munitions, may be used against specific individuals who are engaged in conduct that poses an immediate threat of death or serious injury or significant property damage.

- (2) Non-direct or skip-fired projectiles will generally not be used unless life is in immediate jeopardy or the need to use the devices outweighs the potential risks involved.
 - (3) A verbal warning should be given prior to the use of impact projectiles, when reasonably possible.
 - f. CS (2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile) chemical agents may be used during civil disturbances.
 - (1) Such munitions shall be deployed at the direction of a division commander or designee and only when avenues of egress are available to the crowd.
 - (2) CS may be deployed to prevent injury or disperse unlawful crowds when lesser force options are either not available or would likely be ineffective.
 - (3) Officers shall take all reasonable measures to avoid physically striking any individual with a thrown or launched CS canister.
 - (4) When reasonably possible, their use shall be announced and documented multiple times to the crowd in advance.
 - g. Canine teams may respond as backup when appropriate but should not be deployed for crowd control (i.e., containment or dispersal). Canines should remain in patrol vehicles or other secure locations and, whenever reasonably possible, out of the view of the crowd. Canines may be deployed in appropriate circumstances related to bomb detection, pursuit of suspects in buildings, and related situations.
- C. Reporting use of force
- 1. In civil disturbance situations, an individual use of force incident report is not required when officer(s) use force to push, move or strike individuals who are participating in unlawful or hostile behavior and who do not respond to verbal directions by the police.
 - a. This applies only to officers working in organized squad or team sized units as part of a skirmish line.
 - b. If force is used under these circumstances, officers shall notify their immediate incident supervisor of the use of force once the tactical situation has been resolved.
 - c. The supervisor shall report the actions on a use of force incident report on behalf of the officer(s).
 - 2. A use of force incident report is required when an officer(s) becomes involved in an isolated incident with an individual during a civil disturbance situation which goes beyond the mission of the skirmish line.
 - 3. For any use of force incident report, if circumstances allow, photographs should be taken and supervisor interviews conducted.

VIII. Deactivation

- A. Procedures
 - 1. When the civil disturbance has been brought under control:
 - a. All personnel engaged in the incident shall be accounted for and an assessment and documentation made of personal injuries
 - b. Witnesses, suspects, and others should be interviewed or questioned, as necessary or appropriate
 - c. All necessary personnel should be debriefed as required
 - d. Any equipment utilized by officers should be documented, inventoried, and replaced
 - e. All written reports shall be completed as soon as possible after the incident

IX. Training

- A. General

1. Officers will receive both initial academy training followed by periodic training on appropriate response to crowd control and management. Joint training with other law enforcement agencies will also be conducted as necessary.