



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations

Section: 406.1

Subject: Response to Selected Situations

Topic: Active Violence Incidents

Accreditation: OPR.05.01

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines and procedures when formulating a plan of action to respond to an active threat incident.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to provide an immediate response to an on-going, life-threatening situation and protect life, particularly where the delayed deployment of deputies could result in the loss, or additional loss, of life. The ultimate goal is to stop the active threat through arrest, containment or appropriate use of force.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Active Violence Incident ("AVI"): Event involving one or more suspects who participate in an ongoing, random, or systematic act of violence, demonstrating the intent to harm others with the objective of mass casualties and/or murder.
- B. Rapid Response and Deployment: The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement ("LE") resources to on-going, life threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or great bodily harm to innocent people. Rapid Response is not a substitute for conventional response tactics to a shooting call, suicidal subject or hostage situation.
- C. Contact Team: A law enforcement team consisting of one to five personnel whose primary focus is to locate, isolate, contain or eliminate the active threat. Contact teams are also responsible for preventing further casualties and creating an environment allowing for the deployment of Rescue Task Force and Extraction Task Force elements. A contact team must have a team leader designated.
- D. Rescue Task Force ("RTF"): A team or set of teams deployed to provide tactical emergency casualty care to patients where there is a ballistic or explosive threats. These teams treat, stabilize, and provide a count and location of the injured to the Incident Commander (IC) Unified Commander (UC) while under the protection of LE. Fire/Rescue personnel will wear ballistic protective equipment while operating in the Warm Zone.
- E. Extraction Task Force ("ETF"): Four to five Fire Rescue personnel tasked with moving patients from an impact area to an extraction point with a minimum of two assigned LE

- officers. This team may operate within the Warm Zone as protection resources increase and threat decreases. ETF's primary job is to move patients to a designated area. Fire-rescue personnel shall be in reflective vests or don turnout gear for easy LE identification.
- F. Incident Commander (IC): The individual responsible for the management of all incident operations at the incident or event site.
- G. Unified Command (UC): Unified Command is a component that brings together the "Incident Commanders" of all major organizations involved in the incident in order to coordinate an effective response while at the same time carrying out their own functional responsibilities. Unified Command may include other agency representatives such as School Security, Office of Emergency Management, VDOT, etc.
- H. Joint Assembly Area: An area near an active shooter event designated by UC for Fire, EMS and LE personnel to assemble for the purpose of creating RTF and EFT.
- I. Cold Zone: Areas where there is little or no threat, either as the result of geographic proximity to the threat or the securing of the area by LE (i.e., Casualty Collection Points). An area where Fire Rescue will stage to triage, treat, and transport patients once removed from the warm zone.
- J. Warm Zone (also known as the area of indirect threat): Areas that LE has either cleared or isolated the threat where there is minimal or mitigated risk. This is where the RTF will deploy, with security, to treat patients.
- K. Hot Zone: Areas where there is known hazard(s) or life threatening situation(s) that are direct and immediate. Only LE will operate in the Hot Zone.
- L. Casualty Collection Point ("CCP"): The CCP is a forward location where patients can be assembled for movement from areas of risk to the triage/treatment area. It is a temporary location to stage patients until a formal treatment area is created. Although the CCP may be used to relocate patients away from the hot zone, hazard mitigation remains the priority. Based on incident dynamics or scene geography, multiple CCPs may be required. The CCP is secured within a security perimeter and is treated as part of cold zone operations.
- M. Protective Island: A protected area within the warm zone where Fire Rescue personnel can move around unescorted. Fire Rescue must be escorted in and out of this area by LE personnel.
- N. Protective or Evacuation Corridor: A pathway secured by LE for the purpose of assessing and removing patients.

- O. Staging Area: A pre-determined location that is designated for personnel to gather in anticipation of being given further direction.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. AVI Initial Response

1. Emergency Communications Center ("ECC")

- a. When an AVI is received by the ECC, the five closest units to the scene will be dispatched. Additional units may self-dispatch depending on the location, notes of the call and/or confirmation of the incident.
- b. Notify the nearest patrol supervisor.
- c. Immediately broadcast all applicable information received from units at the scene.
- d. ECC will maintain primary radio control until the creation of IC/UC. At that time, ECC's role will be to monitor and assist as needed.
- e. Send an initial Significant Incident Alert.

2. Responding Units

- a. Considering that these events are manpower intensive and require the collective experience and effort of all units involved to resolve the situation, it is imperative that deputies respond immediately and safely adhere to the established agency policies, procedures and applicable laws.
- b. While responding, deputies should continually evaluate dispatched information to determine the best plan of action.
- c. Upon arrival, deputies should be cognizant of routes into or out of the scene as to not block roads. A clear path must remain open for the ingress/egress of rescue vehicles.
- d. The first arriving units on scene should focus on determining where the threat is occurring and if it is valid. Upon doing so through observation, witness information or other means necessary, units will update ECC of any such information gathered.
- e. If back-up units are not readily available and the threat is persistent, the first arriving deputy must be prepared to enter the premises/effected threat area to mitigate the shooter or threat presence.

- f. Unless otherwise directed, back-up deputies should respond to the first arriving unit's location. If needed, these units will form a Contact Team to address the threat.

B. On Scene Actions

1. Contact Teams

- a. Once a Contact Team is formed and the Team Leader designated, the team will deploy immediately.
- b. The Team Leader should be a senior deputy or if present, a Special Operations Section (SOS) team member. If neither is available or present, the contact team will still be formed.
- c. The Team Leader will notify ECC that the "Contact Team is deployed" along with a location.
- d. Contact Teams are responsible for entering the structure and immediately initiating pursuit of the suspect(s).
- e. Contact Teams will search the building or structure with an emphasis on locating the active shooter(s). The team will bypass victims and harmless distractions and continue to pursue the active threat. Locations of victims will be communicated to ECC & IC.
- f. Additional arriving back-up deputies:
 1. Unless otherwise directed, back-up deputies should prepare to establish the formation of additional Contact Teams and enter from a different location.
 2. Deputies may be directed to a staging area or Joint Assembly Area and given an assignment from there.

2. Inner Perimeter Responsibilities

- a. After the Contact and Rescue Teams have deployed, scene containment will begin.

- b. After notification of team deployments, additional arriving units should move to inner perimeter positions immediately surrounding the event location and notify ECC of his or her location.
- c. Inner perimeter deputies will operate on a secondary radio channel provided by ECC to avoid interfering with other operations.
- d. Inner perimeter deputies should maintain positions of cover and/or concealment and watch for suspicious activity to include any suspects attempting to break containment.
- e. Inner perimeter deputies will maintain their positions until relieved by another unit or the incident commander.

3. Supervisory Responsibilities

- a. The first arriving supervisor will advise ECC of his/her arrival and assume incident command until relieved by a higher authority.
- b. The IC will attempt to confirm the reported AVI if it has not already been done.
- c. He/she will establish a command post and confirm a primary and secondary radio channel for the Contact and Rescue Teams and the inner perimeter.
- d. The IC is also responsible for the formation of additional Contact and Rescue Teams as needed.
- e. The IC will determine if further assistance is needed and notify ECC of the request, to include:
 - 1. Additional Sheriff's personnel, including specialized/support units
 - 2. Fire and Rescue personnel
 - 3. Public Information Officer to establish a media staging area
 - 4. Additional supervisory assistance
 - 5. Any other law enforcement agency(s) or government resources that he/she deems necessary to resolve the event
- f. The IC will establish UC. UC will determine where to set up the Joint Assembly Area. UC shall jointly decide if CCP or direct extraction will be utilized for any patients.

- g. The IC or his designee will establish an outer perimeter with emphasis on re-directing vehicle and pedestrian traffic away from the scene.
- h. Once the scene has been rendered safe, the area will be secured as a crime scene. Control of the scene will be relinquished to Criminal Investigations Division personnel upon their arrival. Any personnel who entered the structure will remain on the scene until relieved by Criminal Investigations Division command staff.
- i. The IC will conduct a post-incident de-briefing to identify and correct any discovered deficiencies in the operation.

C. Equipment Considerations

1. All responding deputies shall wear body armor. Breaching equipment such as bolt cutters and sledgehammers should be considered in the event of locked or barricaded doors. Agency "bail-out" bags and first aid equipment should also be carried by all on scene personnel.
2. SOS personnel will deploy with their assigned specialized equipment.
3. Plain clothes deputies should be clearly identifiable by use of a tactical vest with the lettering "SHERIFF" clearly visible. When responding, they shall provide ECC with a description of their clothing. Plain-clothes personnel shall obey the commands of any uniformed law enforcement personnel who challenge them until their identity can be verified.

D. Suspected Explosive Devices

1. If a member of either the Contact Team or the Rescue Team encounters a suspected explosive device, he/she should take special care not to disturb it. The team may choose to do one of the following:
 - a. Report the location of the device to the incident commander and post a deputy in an unexposed, safe location to secure the area.
 - b. Report the location of the device, mark the area, and bypass the device.
2. After the event location has been declared secure, the suspected explosive device(s) will be handled in accordance with agency policy and procedures.

E. Training

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office will provide initial training for AVI events as well as updated in-service reviews to maintain proficiency. The standard for training will be an initial 20 hours, with in-service reviews of at least four hours per year.

Training may include but is not limited to:

1. Room entry techniques
2. Building clearing techniques
3. Victim rescue techniques
4. Recognition of explosives and improvised explosive devices
5. A yearly eight hour refresher RTF course for School Resource Officers