

# THE RALEIGH POLICE DEPARTMENT

1109-03

## RESPONSE TO URGENT AND HIGH RISK CALLS

### PURPOSE

This procedure is intended to provide general guidelines to officers responding to such calls as "officer needs assistance", confirmed bank and burglar alarms, assaults, incidents involving barricaded suspects or snipers and other high risk situations. Major assaults, such as active shooter incidents in highly populated areas, may require immediate deployment of police resources. Immediate, but coordinated action by the first responding officers may be required to stop shootings, a homicide, or series of homicides, in progress. Although it would be impossible to specify a detailed plan to cover all possible contingencies, this directive is intended to provide as much guidance as possible to officers who deal with these hazardous incidents.

### VALUES REFLECTED

This directive reflects our value of Service and Courage. By observing the guidelines that are presented here we strive to deal with very high risk circumstances in ways designed to protect the lives of all of those involved in such episodes – officers, victims, observers, and suspects – to the greatest extent possible.

### UNITS AFFECTED

All Divisions/Sworn Officers  
Emergency Communications

### REFERENCES/FORMS

DOI 1106-5 "Operation of Police Vehicles"  
DOI 1109-2 "Radio Communications, Response to Calls"  
DOI 1110-1 "Initial Investigation of Major Crimes"  
DOI 1109-08 "Canine Units"  
Listing of Hostage Negotiators (Raleigh Police Emergency Plan)  
Mobile Command Post/Flood Light Operators (Raleigh Police Emergency Plan)

May be Released to the Public

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## **GENERAL POLICIES**

The total circumstance of any call is seldom evident at the time of dispatch. Officers receiving calls such as assault, shots fired, or subject down calls must be alert and prepared for a broad range of possibilities. The incident should never be assumed to have already concluded, and the possibility of arriving at an in-progress call should be expected.

Regardless of the call nature provided by dispatch, officers should respond and approach with caution. The pressure to stop an on-going assault should not cause officers to place themselves in needless danger. Officers should take reasonable actions to protect those in immediate danger and then coordinate a team approach to stop the violence and to apprehend perpetrators.

Officers should not feel obligated to take quick actions which may endanger them or a hostage's safety. Officers should endeavor to seal avenues of escape and assume positions of cover. Where action is required to protect persons in immediate danger, officers have the responsibility to take reasonable actions to stop on-going threats without waiting for further authority.

When responding to urgent calls, high risk calls, and hazardous incidents as well as unknown risk calls, officers must drive with due regard for the safety of others and in a manner cognizant of traffic conditions at the time.

## **RESPONDING TO HIGH RISK CALLS**

When responding to urgent calls, high risk calls, and hazardous incidents, officers should assume that the incident is still in progress until it has been clearly established that it is not. Only units assigned by Emergency Communications or a police supervisor are authorized to engage in emergency response.

### **Response Routes and Fleeing Suspects**

When possible, officers responding to the scene should select different approach routes along likely avenues of escape. Officers should also be mindful of any suspicious vehicles or persons which may be fleeing the scene and relay pertinent information to other responding officers.

At times, officers may observe suspects fleeing from the scene of reported assaults. Unless the perpetrator is moving directly toward other potential victims, the officer's first responsibility is the life of the known victim(s), even if this results in the suspect escaping.

If it appears that the victim does not need immediate medical assistance, the suspect should be pursued. When practical, a witness or the victim should be instructed to protect the crime scene.

### **Use of Emergency Warning Equipment**

When responding to most high risk calls, officers should discontinue use of their siren and blue lights once they are within hearing distance of the location. Exceptions might be "officer needs assistance" or serious assaults in progress where the sound of an approaching siren might encourage perpetrators to discontinue the assault.

Once the use of emergency warning devices is discontinued, officers must adjust their speed and give proper regard to all traffic control devices (refer to DOI 1106-5 "Operation of Police Vehicles").

### Arrival on the Scene

The first officer to arrive on the scene should try to determine if the incident is still in progress and should direct responding units so that they are not placed in a dangerous position. If the incident is still in progress, steps should be taken to halt any violence. This may involve immediate action on the part of the first responder, if the officer reasonably believes such action is necessary and will not expose the officer or others to needless risk.

### Securing the Crime Scene

If the assailant has already fled the scene and the incident is determined to no longer be in progress, the first officer arriving should render necessary first aid to the victim and activate medical assistance and crime scene procedures. At the same time, the officer should obtain from the victim any available information concerning the suspect or the offense. The Major Crime Scene Checklist or Patrol Resource Guide should be followed.

The second officer on the scene should assume responsibility for securing the crime scene and detaining available witnesses until additional manpower arrives.

### Establishing a Perimeter

For many high risk calls which involve a building, a perimeter may need to be established to protect the safety of officers and those involved. The first unit to arrive at the scene should be positioned so as to cover the main entrance or the point of entry. The first officer should direct the approach of other units until a supervisor arrives. The second officer at the scene should take up a position to observe as much of the rest of the building as possible. When possible, officers should utilize cover and position themselves so as not to be easily seen from the building.

The first officer on the scene has the responsibility of requesting additional units to secure the perimeter if necessary. Additional units should position themselves so as to maintain eye contact with the initial units. Officers should use a triangular deployment so as to avoid crossfires and to provide cover for other responding units.

## **ROBBERY OR BANK ALARMS**

Upon receiving an armed robbery or bank alarm, the Emergency Communications Center will attempt to contact that location by phone and will ask a manager or other responsible person to step outside to meet the responding officers.

### Arrival on the Scene

Officers responding to the scene should establish a defensive perimeter as specified above. If an employee does not go outside to meet the officers, the officers should remain outside and determine from Communications if the business has been notified. If contact has been made by Communications and there is still no response, the initial officer on the scene should contact a supervisor and await further instructions.

### Robberies in Progress

If a robbery is in progress, officers should allow the robbers to leave the premises and then take the necessary action. Efforts should be taken to avoid a hostage situation.

### Robberies Which Have Already Occurred

If the suspect has fled the scene of a robbery, the first unit to arrive on the scene of a robbery should first check for any injuries that may have occurred. If there are no injuries, the first officer should assume responsibility for relaying suspect information as rapidly as possible.

The second officer to arrive should assume responsibility for securing the crime scene. Officers should then proceed according to guidelines recommended for major crimes (DOI 1110-01 "Initial Investigation of Major Crimes").

## **BURGLARIES AND PROWLERS**

Burglaries may involve either unoccupied or occupied buildings. Prowler calls may involve Peeping Toms, persons attempting to break in, or merely unidentified noises. In all cases, Emergency Communications should endeavor to determine the location of the reporting party.

### Occupied Buildings

In instances where a victim is believed to be trapped inside a premises, the first responding officer should secure the apparent point of entry and await the arrival of a backup unit. Once a backup unit arrives, the first responsibility is the safety of the victim.

- In most cases, Emergency Communications should advise the victim to remain inside the building in a secure location (i.e. a bathroom with an inside door lock.) The victim should be further advised to remain in a prone position.
- Once the building is secured, victims that are trapped inside the building should be removed prior to initiating a complete search if they can be removed safely. This step can more easily be accomplished by having Emergency Communications pinpoint the victim's location inside the building.

### Building Searches

Most building searches require a minimum of 5 officers to execute a search safely: two for the outside perimeter, one to cover the point of entry, and two to conduct the actual search. If sufficient personnel are not available, officers should concentrate on securing the perimeter until the necessary personnel are available.

- Upon approaching the building, officers should avoid congregating in a group. Officers should take advantage of existing cover and utilize a triangular approach. Officers should be conscious of noise and should be aware of lighting conditions to avoid silhouetting themselves as a target.

- Prior to entering the building, officers should announce their presence and request that persons inside surrender, even if they suspect that the building is empty. Officers should then wait a few moments and listen for noise or movement.
- One officer should cover the point of entry. Other members of the entry team should utilize the contact and cover concept.
- If suspects are encountered, they should be restrained and removed from the building. The suspect(s) should be debriefed prior to resuming the search.
- Once the building has been completely searched, officers should go back through it again while exiting.
- Upon notification of the Watch Commander, a canine can be utilized to assist with a building search.

### Prowlers

The initial response to Prowler calls would be identical to that of burglaries in progress. Officers should use a silent approach. The first officer should assume a position at one of the front corners of the house and await the arrival of a backup unit prior to initiating a search.

- Once backup support has arrived, officers should verify that persons inside the residence are safe.
- A search of the outside of the premises should include all outbuildings, roofs, refuse containers and shrubbery. Officers are to offer to search the attic and interior of the premises, to insure that someone has not gained entry without the complainant's knowledge.

### **OFFICER NEEDS ASSISTANCE**

Officers calling for emergency assistance may request as many units as they reasonably feel are needed. If the officer does not specify the number of units, Communications will initially dispatch the two closest units and a supervisor.

### Responding to Assistance Calls

Units responding to officer needs assistance calls will use all emergency warning devices until they arrive on the scene. The sound of approaching police vehicles may discourage offenders.

Units other than those assigned will not respond to officer assistance calls. This is to minimize the public danger of large numbers of emergency vehicles responding to one location.

### Arrival on the Scene

The first assisting unit to arrive on the scene will advise the Emergency Communications Center whether they should send additional units or cancel the request. As soon as possible, the supervisor should advise Communications of the situation and indicate the number of units required.

## **RESPONSE TO ASSAULT CALLS**

The Emergency Communications Center will attempt to obtain as much information as possible concerning weapons, persons involved, and whether the assault is in progress. At least two officers will be dispatched to assaults in progress.

### **Specific Assaults**

Although the general procedures to be followed in all assaults are similar, specific steps are to be followed in selected offenses.

- **Affrays:** If an affray occurs in the officer's presence, the officer should take what steps are necessary to halt the violence. This may involve arresting either one or both parties.
- **For affrays not occurring in the officer's presence:** The officer may suggest to the parties that they may sign warrants against each other if the magistrate will allow them to do so.
- **Someone Shooting:** Emergency Communications will dispatch two units upon receiving a call that someone is discharging a firearm within the City. Officers should use a silent approach and take precautions to protect themselves.
- If it appears as though the back-up unit is not needed, that unit will return to their assigned work area. The unit originally receiving the call will remain in the area until it is apparent that the call was unfounded.