

<b>YORK-POQUOSON SHERIFF'S OFFICE</b>	<b>GENERAL ORDERS</b>
<b>SUBJECT: Critical Incident Situations/Active Shooter Incidents</b>	<b>NUMBER: GO 2-59</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> January 1, 2023	<b>LAST MODIFIED DATE:</b> August 21, 2018
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES:</b> GO 2-59, September 1, 2005	<b>APPROVED:</b> <u><i>R.G. M. M. M. M. M.</i></u> Sheriff
<b>VLEPSC:</b> OPR.05.01	

## **INDEX WORDS**

Contact Teams  
 Critical Incident Situation  
 Designation of Command Responsibility  
 Incident Commander  
 Operational Control  
 Plan of Action  
 Primary Objective  
 Rescue Teams  
 Resources  
 Tactical Operations Leader  
 Tactical Response  
 Threat Conditions

## **POLICY**

Critical Incident Situations and Active Shooting Incidents have dramatically increased over the past two decades. In response to these tragedies the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office recognizes that only an immediate, non-traditional response to these types of incidents can reduce casualties.

## **PURPOSE**

The critical incident policy facilitates the understanding and coordination of initial tactical activities should a critical incident occur within our jurisdiction. It is the purpose of this policy to identify guidelines to help mitigate and control critical incident situations that may occur.

## **DEFINITION**

- Critical Incident Situation
  - An event that incorporates one or more of the following high-risk criminal situations:
    - Where ongoing acts of violence are being perpetrated by a suspect or suspects, and
    - Where a continuation of violence dangerous to life presents an eminent peril to victims and/or potential victims.
    - Where the actions of the suspect(s) do not allow, or are not conducive to, negotiations, e.g., the active shooter scenario.

- Where acts of violence, either directed or random, are the perpetrator's ultimate objective.
  - Where the taking and holding of hostages may not be the main object.
  - When the crime scene has not been contained and where the potential for violence dangerous to life persists.
- Designation of Command Responsibility
    - In the event of a critical incident, once two deputies, regardless of rank, have entered the incident scene to address the threat, the next deputy, regardless of rank, who arrives on scene, will assume command responsibility.
    - It shall be that deputy's responsibility to assume command of the situation and to coordinate the activities and operations specific to that incident.
    - This responsibility shall remain effective regardless of the deputy's rank until properly relieved.
    - The initial Incident Commander may relinquish incident responsibility to any on-scene deputy that he or she believes would promote a more competent and beneficial resolution of the incident and when notified, shall relinquish incident command responsibility to a higher-ranking officer.
  - Incident Commander
    - The person responsible for the overall command of the entire operation, including tactical and support resources committed to the incident site.
    - The Incident Commander assumes overall responsibility of the incident once on the scene and coordinates the actions and events at the site through the designated Tactical Commander.
    - The Incident Commander shall remain so empowered until relieved of responsibilities by a higher competent authority on the scene.
  - Operational Control
    - The authority authorized by the Incident Commander to direct activities and make decisions at the scene of a Critical incident.
  - Plan of Action
    - The planned actions necessary to quickly affect the beneficial resolution of a Critical incident or threat condition.
    - The plan of action is characterized by those plans that are initiated and that will remain in effect until such time that the Incident Commander can develop and issue a formal operations order.
  - Primary Objective
    - In situations so characterized, it shall be the primary objective of the first responding deputies to:
      - Stop the criminal acts being committed.
      - Protect against or minimize the loss of life to victims, hostages, deputies, and citizens who may be imperiled.
      - Apprehend suspects and secure a crime scene.

- Protect against or minimize the loss of property.
- Resources
  - All personnel and major items of equipment, which are available, or potentially available, for assignment to incidents.
- Tactical Commander/Operations
  - The person designated by the Incident Commander who has specific operational control of the crime scene from the inner perimeter forward.
  - It shall be the responsibility of the tactical commander/operations to affect the tactical response segment of the plan of action.
- Tactical Response
  - The actions and resources, which are actively deployed to neutralize a threat or to affect the timely and beneficial resolution of the incident.
- Threat Conditions
  - Critical incidents may be influenced by certain characteristic threat conditions. Some of these conditions are:
  - Crimes involving multiple weapons of various configurations.
  - Incidents involving stockpiled ammunitions and weapons.
  - Crimes involving explosives or suspected explosives.
  - Continuous or repeated sporadic firing of weapons.
  - The involvement of victim hostages.
  - Acts of violence dangerous to life, that are ongoing or eminent.
  - Lethal behavior has occurred and is likely to continue.

## **PROCEDURES**

- The Responsibilities of Command
  - In the event of a Critical incident, once two deputies, regardless of rank, make entry into the incident scene, it shall be the responsibility of the next deputy, regardless of rank, to arrive on-scene to assume command of the situation and to coordinate the activities and operations specific to the incident.
  - Numerous national incident debriefs reflect the same conclusion, the sooner a command is established, the more fluid and organized the event will progress.
  - Though the first responding deputies may need to proceed directly to the threat area, **an initial command needs to be established as soon as possible.**
  - This responsibility shall remain effective regardless of the deputy's rank until relieved.
- Incident Commander
  - It shall be the responsibility of the next deputy regardless of rank that arrives on-scene, after two deputies, regardless of rank, have made entry into the incident scene to address the threat, to assume the role of Incident Commander and shall remain so

- involved until relieved by a more senior/experienced deputy, the Sheriff, a supervisor or command officer.
- The Incident Commander shall:
  - Notify/update the Emergency Communications Center of the event as soon as practically possible.
  - Request the response of a supervisor if applicable.
  - Establish and communicate the location of a Command Post.
  - Collect and evaluate critical incident information.
  - Formulate an initial assessment of the situation.
  - Provide that assessment to the Emergency Communications Center.
  - Initiate a request for backup personnel and special equipment needs (for example: ERT, Medics, Command Bus, Off Duty Personnel to back-fill positions).
  - Formulate a plan of action and initiate an immediate tactical response.
  - Establish operational control of on-scene units, coordinate the deployment of arriving personnel, resources, equipment, and initiate the implementation of the plan of action.
  - The Incident Commander shall continually evaluate the developing situation and will arrange for the Emergency Communications Center to notify all allied agencies or adjoining jurisdictions upon determining that no additional resources are required to establish a beneficial resolution of the situation.
  - The Incident Commander may surrender their responsibilities to any on-scene supervisor that he or she believes will promote a more competent and beneficial resolution of the incident, or when directed to relinquish those responsibilities by a higher ranking officer.
- Communications
    - The Emergency Communications Center shall establish a priority protocol for any critical incident situation occurring and, as soon as possible, will notify and provide developing information to all adjoining law enforcement jurisdiction communications networks
    - Upon initial notification of a Critical incident in any adjoining jurisdiction, the Emergency Communications Center shall immediately notify the on-duty supervisor.
  - First Responder Responsibilities
    - Responding deputies will comply with all legal orders, directions and assignments that may be provided by the established Incident Commander and/or Tactical Operations Leader.
    - The first duty of responding deputies shall be to notify the Incident Commander of their arrival and location. This notification shall always be accompanied by a request for assignment.
    - Responding deputy's responsibilities/priorities during a Critical incident are:
      - Stop the violent act (Capture/Neutralization of suspect/s as soon as possible).
      - Protect the lives of those in proximity of the shooter/suspect.
      - The lives and safety of citizens in the area.
      - The safety of Law Enforcement.
      - Containment.
      - Post event investigation.

- Off Duty Personnel and self-response
  - Accountability of personnel and resources is paramount during active shooter and critical incident situations.
  - It is very likely that off duty personnel may be needed to back fill positions for routine patrol activities or provide additional manpower at the incident scene or needed for extended operational periods.
  - Off duty personnel who are in the immediate area of an active shooter or critical incident may respond to the scene under the following conditions:
    - Be properly equipped for the response.
    - Be armed with a department approved weapon.
    - Have a portable radio available.
    - Have body armor available.
    - Notify the 911 Communications Center, via radio, that you are on duty and responding to the scene.
    - Notify the 911 Communications Center, via radio, arrival on scene.
    - Report to the on scene incident commander for assignment.
  - Off duty personnel who are at home or not in the immediate area during an active shooter/critical incident, and are or become aware of the incident, shall do the following:
    - Do not Self-Respond to the scene.
    - Contact the 911 center with your availability.
    - Be prepared to be called back to duty.
    - If called to duty, respond to assigned location or area as soon as possible.
    - Do not report to incident scene unless directed to do so by a supervisor.
    - If directed to respond to the incident scene check in at the designated staging area or Command Center, if no staging area has been designated, once you arrive at the scene for assignment.
    - If directed to respond to a patrol area to cover calls DO NOT RESPOND TO THE INCIDENT SCENE.
- Tactical Responsibilities
  - The Incident Commander shall designate a Tactical Operations Leader as soon as responding resources can establish a competent designee.
  - The Tactical Operations Leader shall:
    - Have specific operational control of the crime scene from the inner perimeter forward.
    - It shall be the responsibility of the Tactical Operations Leader to affect the tactical response segment of the plan of action.
    - The tactical response shall be designed to affect a timely and beneficial resolution of the incident.
    - The scope of this response shall depend on known threat conditions, available resources to law enforcement and the likelihood of a successful tactical intervention
    - The objective of the tactical response shall be:
      - Stop the criminal acts being committed.

- 222           ▪ Protect against or minimize the loss of life to victims, hostages, deputies and
- 223           citizens who may be so imperiled.
- 224           ▪ Apprehend suspects and secure a crime scene.
- 225           ▪ Protect against, or minimize the loss of property.
- 226
- 227           ○ The tactical response shall continue until such time as the threat is eliminated or
- 228           neutralized.
- 229           ○ The threat shall be considered eliminated upon the death, physical incapacitation or
- 230           taking into custody of all criminal perpetrators at the scene.
- 231           ○ The threat shall be considered neutralized only when the perpetrator(s) ability to
- 232           endanger life is eliminated, e.g.
- 233
- 234           • When the situation evolves into a contained non-hostage involved barricaded-suspect
- 235           event
- 236           ○ The Tactical Operations Leader shall immediately inform the Incident Commander
- 237           when the event is either neutralized or contained.
- 238           ○ The Incident Commander shall provide further direction to the Tactical Operations
- 239           Leader and make other notifications consistent with agency protocol and chain of
- 240           command.
- 241           ○ In the event the situation is neutralized, the Incident Commander shall make
- 242           immediate arrangements for:
- 243           ▪ Site security.
- 244           ▪ Medical assistance to victims.
- 245           ▪ Preservation of the crime scene.
- 246           ▪ Initiation of the investigative process.
- 247           ▪ Preparations for a return to normal activity.
- 248           ▪ Evaluate the situation for the appropriate use of resources.
- 249
- 250           • Tactics
- 251           ○ The tactics that will be deployed at a critical incident will be particular to the events
- 252           occurring and the capabilities of available resources.
- 253           ○ Because of these undetermined factors, there can be no universal tactical policy.
- 254           ○ There are, however, some known factors that we must accept as reality and that must
- 255           guide our tactical decisions.
- 256           ○ Critical Incident Events and/or Active Shooter Events, require non-traditional
- 257           decision-making and tactics.
- 258           ○ Deputies must be prepared to take immediate steps to resolve situations that are life
- 259           threatening.
- 260           ○ Deputies must be prepared to act with little or no back-up for an undetermined
- 261           amount of time, dependent on the situation.
- 262           ○ Deputies must be capable of delivering a competent tactical response and of
- 263           maintaining that response until relieved by special teams.
- 264           ○ Deputies must be prepared to function in this role for up to 90 minutes.
- 265           ○ Deputies and supervisors must be able to distinguish a critical incident from a
- 266           traditional criminal event and be capable of affecting an immediate tactical response
- 267           with a likelihood of success:

- Where ongoing acts of violence are being perpetrated by a suspect or suspects and where a continuation of violence dangerous to life presents an eminent peril to victims and/or potential victims.
  - Where the actions of the suspect(s) do not allow or are not conducive to negotiations, e.g., the active shooter scenario.
  - Where acts of violence, either directed or random, are the perpetrators ultimate objective.
  - Where the taking and holding of hostages may not be the main objective.
  - When the crime scene has not been contained and where the potential for violence dangerous to life persists.
  - The tactics deployed shall be consistent with Sheriff's Office Training, which addresses a response to a Critical Incident/Active Shooter situation.
- Post-Engagement
    - Security should be the Priority
    - If the threat is neutralized, commits suicide, surrenders or is subdued, he or she shall be handcuffed/restrained.
    - Victims should be told to keep their hands on their heads until escorted to a debrief location.

## **TEAMS**

- Single Deputy Entry
  - The priority of the deputy is to make contact with the suspect safely(s) and:
    - Stop the deadly behavior.
  - The deputy should move quickly toward the suspect(s).
  - When going through crowds be prepared to protect his/her weapon and move people out of the way when necessary.
  - Once the deadly behavior has stopped:
    - The deputy should transition to a slow and deliberate approach.
    - Find cover.
    - Update their location to command and the 911 Communications Center.
    - Wait for additional units.
  - If deadly behavior starts again then the deputy should start moving rapidly toward the suspect or sound of gunfire again communicating his/her movement while moving.
- Contact Team
  - The priority of the Contact Team is to make contact with the suspect(s) and:
  - Stop deadly behavior.
  - Limit suspect's movement.
  - Prevent escape.
  - Communicate progress to responders.
  - Provide dynamic intelligence/assessment.
  - Determine victim(s) location and medical needs if time permits.

- Determine presence of explosives – type and location.
- Determine suspect(s) description and location.
- Identify type(s) of weapons.
- Rescue Team
  - The priority of the Rescue Team is to rescue and recover victims and:
  - Enter and/or approach to locate victims.
  - Extract victims to a safe area and notify the Tactical Operations Leader.
  - Notify medical personnel.
  - When multiple victims are present:
    - Expand Rescue Team if needed.
    - Emphasize custody and control.
    - Initiate identification and accountability of victims.
- Team entry expectations
  - Single deputy, contact and rescue teams should expect to encounter the following and take appropriate action:
  - Noise from alarms, people screaming, etc.
  - Confusion, victim(s) hiding, frightened, and not responding to law enforcement direction.
  - Carnage.
  - Fire and/or smoke.
  - Fire sprinkler systems operating.
  - Possible explosive devices.
  - If explosive devices are encountered:
    - Do not touch suspected devices.
    - Attempt to identify type of device
    - Observe for timing device, trip wires, lit fuse, etc.
  - Report the device location and type if known to Command/Central
  - If possible post an officer at a safe distance to control access to the affected area.
  - Move past device when part of contact or rescue team.
- Team deployment
  - Contact Teams will normally deploy with two or three members (single officer if the circumstances dictate).
  - Rescue Teams should deploy with four to five members if personnel allow.
  - The York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office does not dictate a minimum number of personnel for a team to respond nor should deputies delay response waiting for more personnel to arrive unless instructed to wait by the incident commander.
  - Normally, the first two deputies (single officer if the circumstances dictate) or other law enforcement personnel will deploy as Contact Team #1.
  - Additional arriving units will be formed into subsequent teams and will be assigned by the Incident Commander as either additional Contact Teams or Rescue Teams.
  - Teams will continue to be formed and can grow into the number of teams that the Incident Commander feels is necessary to control the situation.



- Teams should deploy in a manner that enables them to reach the shooter in a manner that is:
  - Expedient.
  - Provides tactical advantage.
- Team Link-Up
  - Communication is a key to a safe and successful link-up of two or more teams.
  - As a team moves through the structure, it should be updating its location with command; this will allow a safer link-up.
  - A secondary team should not enter into the immediate area controlled by another team until they establish communication with that team.
- Immediate Action Plan
  - Once the threat is neutralized or mitigated, the team/team leader should develop a “What if Plan”.
  - The plan should be simple and communicated to all members.
  - The plan should be utilized if another threat emerges taking into consideration the following:
    - Rendering first aid and evacuation of injured persons
    - Communication is vital, pass on to Command as much information about how many victims and their locations.
    - Categorize injuries (Serious/Critical or Minor).
    - Deceased individuals shall be left on scene and not moved unless absolutely necessary to access and treat injured persons.
    - Locating and evacuation of locked down persons.
- Procedure once threat is neutralized
  - A team of four (when possible) will be used to open locked doors/rooms.
  - Rendering aid and evacuation of injured persons should be paramount.
  - Obvious deceased persons shall be left in place.
  - One person will open the door using a key or appropriate Breaching tool.
  - Once Door is opened, team will announce “Sheriff’s Office” several times, before entering.
  - Because surviving offenders may try to intermix with innocent people, the occupants should be given the command to “Put their hands on their heads and turn away from the door.”
  - The team will enter room with weapons drawn being prepared for the possibility of an unknown threat.
  - The occupants shall be moved with their hands on top of their heads to a location designated by Command.
  - If the room is barricaded to a point where entry cannot be made, Command will be notified and will decide what alternate breach and evacuation method will be used.

### **Post incident considerations**

- Once an active shooter or critical incident scene is secure the actions following the incident are just as important as the incident itself. The following should be considered following any active shooter or critical incident:
  - Crime scene management
    - Crime Scene Security.
    - Appropriate and adequate personnel to process crime scene/Mutual aid requests.
    - Notification of Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.
  - Establishment of a Re-Unification Center
    - Re-uniting those present during incident with family members or loved ones.
    - Transportation of victims from incident scene to Re-Unification Center.
    - Notification of family and or loved ones of deceased victims.
    - Debrief of those present during incident.
    - Resources available for those present during incident.
      - ❖ Counseling services.
      - ❖ Clergy.
      - ❖ Food and water.
      - ❖ Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) counseling for first responders.
  - Completion of a detailed After Action report detailing the following:
    - Description and time of the incident.
    - Description and time line of the response.
    - Description and time line of post incident activities.
    - Lesson Learned from the incident.