



UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Affiliation: Command Guidelines

Subject: Response to Incidents of Violence

Number: 450-08

Approved: 10/29/2020

By: AC Stephen Higgs

Last Reviewed: 8/26/2025

By: BC Nate Bogenschutz

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for response to a reported scene of violence.

PROCEDURE:

- 1.0 When Operations personnel respond to an incidence of violence that is a threat or perceived threat to our personnel:

NOTE: When responding to an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) where an immediate response for command/control is needed to integrate immediately with law enforcement into a Unified Command. Refer to Unified Fire Authority Operational [Guideline 450 – 31 “Rescue Task Force”](#).

- 1.1 Operations personnel shall stage a safe distance from the incident scene until the scene is determined to be secure by law enforcement on scene.
- 1.2 Operations personnel who are on the scene, which is escalating to a threat of violence to themselves or other members, may back out of those situations until the scene can be secured by law enforcement.
- 1.3 If Operations firefighters find themselves as a victim in a hostage situation, being physically threatened, or in any other similar types of situations, they should utilize the codeword “Utah” to advise dispatch that their safety has been compromised. It should be standard practice for all team members to have a portable radio to communicate with others and dispatch.
 - 1.3.1 It is preferred that the units will use the codeword (“Utah”) as part of their unit ID, if possible, over the radio. For example, “Utah Medic Engine 104 has arrived”. However, if unable to use it as part of their unit ID, the codeword could be used at other times, such as during the open mic window after pushing their Orange Button, upon acknowledgement to dispatch on a Code 4 or 10-4 check, or over the telephone to dispatch.
 - 1.3.2 Unless the dispatcher (VECC) hears the codeword or other suspicious noises or dialog during the open mic window after an orange button has been pushed, they will follow **VECC Procedure OP-0018**, Fire Orange Button Activation.
 - On a fire, follow the **MAYDAY** procedure
 - On a medical, perform a Code 4 or 10-4 Check on them
 - Not on a call, perform a Code 4 or 10-4 Check on them



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1.3.3 If the dispatcher hears the codeword, or other suspicious noises or dialog during the open mic window, or does not get a response to Code 4 Checks, they will treat the situation as a threat and expedite law enforcement to the incident, until proven otherwise.

1.3.4 Should a Code "Utah" instance occur, the fire dispatcher will immediately notify the following parties of the situation:

- Police Dispatch
- Appropriate Battalion Chief
- VECC Supervisor
- Others as necessary or requested

2.0 Scene safety is the responsibility of all personnel.

2.1 All personnel should be aware of a possible occurrence or recurrence of violence on any scene. When enough personnel are available, one member, preferably the Captain, should be assigned as an observer to watch for escalation of violence on the incident scene.

2.2 Personnel shall wear attire that clearly identifies them as Firefighters.