

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Subject Barricade/Hostage Situations and Other Unusual Incidents		
Topic	Series	Number
HSC	805	05
Effective Date February 15, 2011		
Rescinds: General Order 309.1 (Barricade/Hostage Situations and Other Unusual Incidents) Effective Date November 7, 1986		

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I. BACKGROUND

Members of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) respond to varying calls for service, some routine while others are extremely dangerous. The response to these calls is one of the most challenging and demanding situations for law enforcement officers. In some situations officers are confronted with individuals who have little or no regard for human life, including their own. Additionally, an individual in these circumstances may not be in complete control of his/her mental faculties.

First responders must rely on their training, use extreme caution and think tactically in an attempt to accurately assess the situation and take the proper course of action.

The purpose of this order is to establish policy and procedures to be followed by members of the Department at the scene of barricade/hostage situations, active shooter situations, acts of terrorism or any other unusual incidents.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the MPD to resolve hostage, barricade and other unusual incidents by preserving the lives of hostages, the public, and the police while apprehending the involved suspect(s) swiftly and safely.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. For the purpose of this order, the following terms shall have the meanings designated:
1. Active shooter – One (1) or more subjects who participate in a random or systematic shooting spree or other acts of violence capable of causing mass casualties. The overriding object of the active shooter is mass murder, rather than other criminal conduct, such as robbery, or kidnapping.
 2. Barricade Situation – Situation where an individual resists being taken into custody by seeking refuge in a building or other protected area, while using or threatening to use deadly force against him/herself or others, and ignoring orders to surrender.
 3. Contact Team – Team of officers assembled from those first arriving on the scene. The number of officers assembled would be based on the size of the building to be entered and the intelligence immediately available on the scene. However, due to tactical considerations there should be a minimum of two (2) officers on the contact team.
 4. Crisis Negotiators – Specially trained personnel who negotiate with individuals who refuse to surrender.
 5. Emergency Response Team (ERT) – Team comprised of tactical and negotiation teams and support staff assigned or detailed to the Homeland Security Bureau, Special Operations Division (SOD).
 6. Incident Commander (IC) – Member responsible for the management of all operations at the incident site, including the development and implementation of strategy, approval of orders, and release of resources. Generally, the Incident Commander will be the ranking member on the scene of the incident.
 7. Incident Command System (ICS) – Methodical tool used for the command, control, and coordination of emergency responses of all sizes. See GO-HSC-800.02 (Incident Command System) and SOP-06-02 (Incident Command System).
 8. Perimeter – Defined area. In major incidents there are three (3) perimeters:
 - a. Inner – Danger area, closest to the event location. This area, staffed by patrol personnel initially, will be controlled by ERT

- personnel upon their arrival.
- b. Middle – Area reserved for support personnel.
 - c. Outer – Area considered safe for the media/press and general public and is always located behind police lines.
9. Rescue Team – Team of officers assembled from those officers arriving on the scene after the initial contact team has been established. The number of officers assembled would be based on the size of the building to be entered and the intelligence immediately available on the scene. However, due to tactical considerations there should be a minimum of twelve (12) officers on the rescue team.
 10. Senior SOD Official – SOD Commander, or in his/her absence, the SOD Watch Commander, or in his/her absence, the highest-ranking official assigned to ERT. The senior SOD official will usually relieve the incident commander upon his/her arrival at the scene.
 11. Terrorism – The use or threat of violence to intimidate or cause panic, especially as a means of affecting political conduct.
 12. Unusual Incident – Unplanned event with the potential for personal injury and/or property damage. The event can be the result of natural or man-made situations that affect a substantial number of persons, and require police action. This includes any event with large crowds with indications that some individuals may become unruly or uncooperative as well as active shooter situations.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Barricade/Hostage Situations:

1. The first member on the scene of a possible barricade and/or hostage situation shall:
 - a. Take a position that affords protective cover.
 - b. Fire only at a visible target that is at the moment placing human life in imminent danger.

NOTE: Gunfire by a barricaded subject in the direction of officers who are adequately covered does not justify the return of gunfire).

- c. Request a district official respond to the scene.

- d. Request further uniformed assistance to ensure all potential escape routes are covered.
 - e. Inform Office of Unified Communications (OUC) of the situation and advise that ERT may be needed.
 - f. Evacuate as many citizens as possible, provided the evacuation does not place the member or the citizen(s) in danger.
 - g. Brief the district official once he/she arrives on the scene.
2. The first official on the scene of a possible barricade and/or hostage situation shall ascertain if a barricade and/or hostage situation exists and, if so, notify the District Watch Commander and with his/her concurrence.
- a. Notify OUC, advise a barricade has been declared and request the assistance of ERT.
 - b. Establish an inner perimeter.
 - c. Restrict vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the inner perimeter.
 - d. Establish a location for the Command Post.
 - e. Assume the position of Incident Commander (IC).
 - f. Identify and formulate a contact team.
3. The District Watch Commander on the scene of a possible barricade and/or hostage situation shall:
- a. Respond to the command post and assume the position of the IC.
 - b. Notify the OUC he/she has assumed the position of the IC and request a notification be made to the Field Commander.
 - c. Assess the situation and ensure:
 - (1) The subject is contained.
 - (2) The inner perimeter is secure.
 - (3) All those who can safely be evacuated have been and

those with pertinent information related to the incident are taken to the command post.

- (4) The locations of the containment team and the command post are strategically and tactically sound (relocate if necessary).

NOTE: The command post should be located in the general vicinity of the event but out of the line of fire and upwind of the event location.

- (5) The contact team has been identified.
 - (6) A radios zone is designated for the event.
 - (7) A staging area for the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) has been identified.
 - (8) A detective is requested to respond the Command Post.
 - (9) A safe staging area for the media has been identified.
- d. Notify OUC and request FEMS respond to the staging area.
 - e. Establish a middle and outer perimeter (manpower permitting).
 - f. Ensure all activities are recorded on the appropriate ICS forms and an ICS command structure has been established. [See GO-HSC-800.02]
 - g. Debrief the senior SOD official of the situation(s) and transfer the position of IC to this official.

B. Active Shooter

While containment and security are the primary objectives in most barricade situations, in an active shooter situation, **a member's primary and immediate objective is to stop the active shooter.**

Members shall be mindful any situation could escalate without warning to an active shooter situation. Conversely, an active shooter situation could de-escalate to a barricade situation.

1. The first member on the scene of an active shooter situation shall:

- a. Voice a priority over the radio and advise the dispatcher and other units an active shooter situation exists.
- b. Request the MPD Active Shooter Program be implemented.
- c. Attempt to engage the suspect(s).

NOTE: An organized contact team will consist of a minimum of five (5) active shooter trained members. However, circumstances may dictate immediate action by fewer members. Entry and attempts to engage should be made by no less than two (2) active shooter trained members. However, this order does not preclude nor prevent a member from engaging a suspect absent back-up and/or training.

- d. Prioritize his/her actions to:
 - (1) Stop the active shooter (this **must** be done first).
 - (2) Provide medical assistance.
 - (3) Rescue the victims.
 - (4) Preserve the crime scene.

NOTE: While it is important to provide medical treatment to the wounded, under these unique circumstances members must first stop the actions of the shooter.

2. The first official on the scene of an active shooter shall:
 - a. Establish an inner perimeter.
 - b. Restrict vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the inner perimeter.
 - c. Establish a location for the command post.
 - d. Assume the position of Incident Commander (IC).
 - e. Identify and formulate a contact team.
3. The contact team shall:
 - a. Go in immediate pursuit of the active shooter.

- b. Focus on making contact as soon as possible and stop the active shooter by:
 - (1) Containment;
 - (2) Arrest; or
 - (3) Use of force, to include the use of lethal force.

NOTE: In the event the contact team contains the suspect and no immediate lethal force is required, members shall be guided by the contents of this order as it relates to barricade situations.

4. Responsibilities of the Rescue Team

The Rescue Team shall:

- a. Be formed of secondary responders as designated by the IC or his/her designee.
- b. Facilitate the safe removal and evacuation of innocent and injured persons.

NOTE: Rescue team members should remember that uninjured victims may nonetheless be in shock, or paralyzed with fear, and may not respond to regular verbal commands.

- c. Remain constantly vigilant as the rapidly changing dynamics of the incident may put them in contact with the suspect.

NOTE: If an SOD member assigned to ERT, the Special Events Branch, or the Canine Unit is on either the contact team or the rescue team, he/she will assume the role of team leader.

NOTE: If either team encounters a suspected explosive device, members shall be guided by their training provided by the Explosive Ordnance Unit of SOD provided during in-service training and GO-HSC-805.04 (Bomb Threats and Explosive Devices).

C. Acts of Terrorism

Terrorism is not defined by a specific act (e.g. mass shooting, bombing), but more by the intended result of instilling fear, intimidation, causing casualties

and property damage. Terrorist acts may be perpetrated by lone assailant or by groups. Some acts of terrorism may be obvious while others are less defined and won't rise to the level of terrorism until after the event has been thoroughly reviewed.

1. The first member on the scene of a threat of or terrorist event shall:
 - a. Ascertain the validity of the call.
 - b. Request an official to respond, if it is apparent a threat of or terrorist event did occur.
 - c. Notify the OUC and request additional assistance and notifications are made to the:
 - (1) SOD Watch Commander; and
 - (2) Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).
 - d. Establish a perimeter of nine-hundred (900) feet as outlined in GO-HSC-805.04 (Bomb Threats and Explosive Devices) if possible.
 - e. Assist in the evacuation of the perimeter and prohibit access to the perimeter once established.
 - f. Put on any personal protective equipment (PPE) applicable to the incident.

2. The first official on the scene of a threat of or terrorist event shall:
 - a. Establish an inner perimeter.
 - b. Restrict vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the inner perimeter.
 - c. Establish a location for the Command Post.
 - d. Assume the position of Incident Commander.

NOTE: In instances of threats of or acts of terrorism, the Federal Bureau of Investigation may eventually become the lead agency. This designation does not mitigate or minimize the responsibilities of the MPD.

D. Special Operations Division

1. SOD shall assume eventual command of all barricades, active shooter incidents and threats of or actual terrorist events.

NOTE: The eventuality of command will not occur for events which are terminated prior to the arrival of SOD unless a determination is made by the Commander, SOD, the Watch Commander, SOD or the senior ranking SOD official.

2. The senior ranking SOD official shall:
 - a. Confer with the IC, assess the situation and ascertain if a SOD deployment is needed.
 - (1) If SOD is not needed, the senior ranking SOD official shall remain on the scene to assist and advise the IC.
 - (2) If SOD is needed, the senior ranking SOD official shall:
 - (a) Ensure notifications are made to the necessary branches within SOD and advise the preferred direction of travel and staging area locations.
 - (b) Ensure the Commander, SOD, the Watch Commander, SOD, and the CIC are notified.
 - (c) Assume the roll of Operations Chief within the ICS command structure.
 - (d) Analyze, evaluate and adjust if necessary:
 - (i) The deployment of personnel;
 - (ii) The location of the command post;
 - (iii) The size of the perimeter;
 - (iv) The locations of staging areas;
 - (v) The traffic plan; and
 - (vi) The adequacy of the established radio frequency for the event.

- 3) Upon the arrival of additional SOD assets, assume the position of the IC.
- 4) Ensure all activities are recorded on the appropriate ICS forms and an ICS command structure has been established. [See GO-HSC-800.02 (The Incident Command System)]
- 5) Ensure an after action report is prepared and forwarded through channels no later than five (5) days following the event.

E. Responsibilities of Commanding Officials

Commanding officials shall respond to events enumerated in this order and ensure all provisions contained in this order are followed.

V. CROSS REFERENCES

- A. GO-HSC-800.02 (The Incident Command System)
- B. GO-HSC-805.04 (Bomb Threats and Explosive Devices)
- C. SOP 06-02 (Incident Command System)



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<i>Amendment #</i>	<i>Page #</i>	<i>Description of Change</i>	<i>Effective Date of Change</i>	<i>Name and Title of Authorizing Member</i>
1	1-10	Removed "LAW ENFORCEMENT USE ONLY" and "NOT TO BE DISSEMINATED TO THE PUBLIC" header and footer from document.	6/10/2024	Maureen O'Connell, Director, Policy and Standards Branch