



NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL

CHAPTER: 46.14

TITLE: ACTIVE SHOOTER

EFFECTIVE: 04/15/2018

REVISED: Replaces Policy/Procedure 409

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide protocols for assessing the threat and performing rapid intervention tactics to limit serious injury or loss of life during active shooter situations. While the term “active shooter” is used throughout, this policy applies to all situations where there is an active, ongoing deadly threat, to include those from firearms, explosives, knives, and other instrumentalities.

POLICY

In situations where ongoing deadly force is being employed by a suspect and delay in taking police action could result in injury or death, the rapid intervention of officers at the scene is authorized to prevent further injuries or loss of life.

DEFINITIONS

Active Shooter—An armed person who has used deadly force on other persons and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.

Contact Team—A team of officers who make immediate entry into a location to locate and neutralize the threat posed by the active shooter.

Incident Command System (ICS)—A standardized on-scene emergency management system that provides for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure. ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. ICS can be used for all kinds of emergencies, and is applicable to small as well as large and complex incidents. In each emergency or incident, regardless of its size, the principles of ICS apply. The first on-scene officer has management responsibility.

Incident Commander (IC)—The individual, on scene (officer or supervisor) responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics, and the ordering and release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all operations at the incident site. The first on-scene officer will be the IC unless and until IC responsibilities are assumed by a supervisor or other qualified officer, up to the chief of the department, depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the incident or event.

Rapid Response or Rapid Intervention—An assessment decision made by the on-scene incident commander that the situation presented is a dynamic, active shooter incident rather than a hostage situation and requires immediate intervention by law enforcement officers to stop the shooter.

Rescue Team—A team of officers who make entry after the contact team to provide first aid and evacuate wounded individuals or officers from a hostile environment.

OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Initial responding officer(s) shall make a situational assessment based on available information from dispatched responders or officers already at the incident scene to verify that an active shooter situation exists through information provided by dispatch, from persons confined within or exiting the target location, witnesses, reports of—or sounds of—gunfire, or related means.
2. Where available and as time permits, witnesses, or others on scene should be asked about the location and number of suspects, the suspects' weapons, persons injured, the number and location of persons in possible jeopardy, and the use or location of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). (See also: **Chapter 46.3 – Bomb Calls**).
3. In those incidents where it has been determined/established the active shooter is on the scene in a fixed location, the officer(s) on the scene shall focus their response on the active shooter and determine if:
 - (a) Violence is currently taking place,
 - (b) The suspect(s) is shooting his/her weapon, or
 - (c) The shooter(s) has access to additional potential victims.
4. Upon completion of the initial, on-scene assessment, the IC shall:
 - (a) Advise Communications Services and request resources as necessary, and
 - (b) Determine whether to take immediate action alone, with another officer, or wait until additional resources are available.
5. The initial, on-scene assessment by the Incident Commander and the subsequent determination of rapid intervention does not require approval of a supervisor not already on scene. The IC will be responsible for following Departmental guidelines and reporting requirements.

RATIONALE FOR RAPID INTERVENTION

6. The responding officers shall determine whether rapid intervention is legally justified and reasonable. This decision may be based on such considerations as whether or not
 - (a) Deadly weapons are available to or have been used by the suspect;
 - (b) Victims are under the suspect's control, are readily accessible, or both; and
 - (c) The suspect poses an ongoing threat of deadly force.
7. The officer's assessment of his/her capability to effectively intervene should be based on such factors as whether:
 - (a) The officer is armed and in possession of appropriate equipment;
 - (b) It is reasonable to believe that persons will be killed or injured if immediate response to the threat is not taken;
 - (c) The size, configuration, and related physical aspects of the incident site allow for movement, stealth, cover, and related tactical needs;
 - (d) The suspect is accessible; and

- (e) The incident site offers opportunities for cover and concealment to assist tactical options, adequate routes for evacuation, or secure locations in which to hide.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

8. Communications Services shall immediately make a multi-channel broadcast on all available channels. The Commander or on-duty supervisor of the Special Operations Division (SOD) shall be notified. Communications Service shall follow the critical incident protocol in making notifications to the Command Staff.
9. The Communications Services Liaison shall assume responsibility for all notifications. All requests for support assistance will be routed through Communications Services.

METHOD OF DEPLOYMENT - INDIVIDUAL OFFICER RESPONSE

10. The majority of active shooter incidents involve one suspect, a factor that makes individual officer intervention a potentially viable option for saving lives, even if additional resources are not readily available. In some instances, an individual officer may be present within or nearby the active shooting location, such as a mall or school. Whether on or off duty, in uniform or civilian clothes, he or she may determine that immediate tactical intervention is necessary and reasonable to stop the threat. That decision should be based on the factors noted in Rationale for Rapid Deployment.
11. As soon as practical, officer(s) shall notify Communications Services that an active shooter situation exists. The officer should provide the following information and updates as available:
- (a) The identity, location, manner of dress (uniform, **plainclothes**), and proposed actions of the officer(s) at the scene;
 - (b) All available information on the suspect to include a physical description, weapons, explosives, equipment such as body armor, and suspect's current location and actions; and
 - (c) Available information on persons injured or under threat, their locations, emergency resources required, and recommended points of entry.

NOTE: The presence of plainclothes officers on the scene of an active shooter incident presents a very high risk of "friendly fire" casualties. Every effort shall be made to minimize the use, risk and exposure of plainclothes officers on an active shooter scene. Plainclothes officers shall be replaced with uniformed officers on an active shooter scene as soon as possible.

12. When displaying firearms while in plainclothes, officers shall verbally identify themselves as police officers, and conspicuously display NOPD badge and/or other police identification to alert security personnel, arriving officers, or civilians who may be armed.
13. If feasible, officers should facilitate evacuation by:
- (a) Locating points of egress from danger zones and directing people to those evacuation points if reasonably safe for them to do so; and
 - (b) Locating and directing persons hiding in unsecure locations (e.g., under desks, inside unlocked rooms) to evacuation points.
14. If evacuation is not possible, officers should:
- (a) Help locate and direct persons to safer locations, preferably with thick walls; solid doors with locks; or, in the absence of such locations, rooms that can be barricaded with heavy furniture or objects;

- (b) Direct individuals to silence all personal electronic devices, take cover, and remain silent;
- (c) Take any actions possible to distract, disrupt, divert, or incapacitate the shooter using surprise attacks and force; and
- (d) When possible, officers should assist with the injured and direct incoming teams to injured persons.

METHOD OF DEPLOYMENT - CONTACT TEAM RESPONSE

15. A contact team response to an active shooter situation is preferred in nearly all active shooter situations—irrespective of any initial actions that may have been taken. Even if the threat seemingly has been terminated, contact teams are required to render the location safe, assist in screening and orderly evacuation of persons to a designated area, and locating any other persons still in hiding.
16. Normally, only one contact team shall be deployed at any given time but additional teams may be deployed at the direction of the IC to provide tactical advantage. The IC shall ensure that each team is aware of the other teams' locations and actions. The mission of the contact team is to locate and stop the threat.
17. The contact team shall move as quickly as possible towards the active shooter. The active shooter may be armed with dangerous instruments other than a firearm. Contact team officers may have to ignore injured persons requiring medical treatment.
18. One officer on the contact team shall be responsible for broadcasting the team's progress. The contact team shall be provided a clear communications channel to provide the following types of information:
 - (a) The team's progress and location.
 - (b) The location and number of victims and their medical needs.
 - (c) The estimated number of suspects involved.
 - (d) The suspects' descriptions and weapons if known.
 - (e) The location of any booby traps or explosives. If discovered, the contact team leader shall determine whether to post an officer near it, report it, or mark it for later removal.
19. The contact team shall locate the suspect(s) in the most expeditious manner possible in order to stop the threat. In doing so, as long as locating and neutralizing the threat remains the priority, officers **should not stop** to render aid or assistance to victims but may, where reasonably possible, inform them that rescue teams are forthcoming and direct them to a safe point of egress or hiding if they are ambulatory and it is deemed safe for them to do so.
20. The contact team should employ tactical advantages such as avoiding use of the main entrance to provide an element of surprise and to avoid potential booby traps or ambush.
21. The contact team should not attempt to conduct a thorough clearing of the location but should follow sounds (such as gunfire, yelling, and screaming); observe victims and bystanders; and locate the suspects as soon as possible.
22. Once the suspects have been located and the threat eliminated, the contact team should proceed to clear all portions of the location in the event that more suspects are in hiding.

23. Arriving SWAT, Emergency Response Teams (ERTs), or other officers should be called upon to help clear the location of potential suspects, locate and evacuate persons in hiding, and render safe any dangerous munitions or armament.

METHOD OF DEPLOYMENT - RESCUE TEAM

24. Once the contact team is deployed, and as officers and resources arrive at the incident scene, the IC should ensure that rescue teams are formed to provide first aid and to help evacuate victims. Rescue teams generally consist of four to six officers but may be expanded to include medical personnel or other officers as the situation dictates.
25. Rescue teams shall be organized under a team leader, deploy in tactical formations consistent with departmental training, and be prepared to respond to hostile action as rapidly changing circumstances may place them in contact with suspects. In such instances, the team shall be prepared and equipped to serve as the contact team.
26. Rescue teams shall be deployed only after the contact team has made entry, provided a status report, notified Communications Services of the location of victims, and determined that rescue efforts may begin. Wounded and injured persons shall be quickly searched, if reasonable, for weapons and removed to the designated emergency first aid area with cover and movement of such persons provided by team members. If emergency medical personnel are not yet in place, basic first aid shall be the responsibility of rescue team members until they are relieved by medical personnel.
27. Medical personnel may be permitted to accompany or respond to rescue team members if wounded persons are incapable of being moved.
28. Rescue team members shall search uninjured persons in the hostile environment before moving them to a designated safe area in the hostile environment or the evacuation site.
29. Rescue and recovery operations shall continue until the IC has declared the scene clear and safe.
30. Officers assigned to the evacuation site shall maintain custody and control of all persons and document their identities until they can be reunited with family or others. Victims and witnesses suffering from emotional and/or physical trauma or shock should be kept under the observation of medical personnel until such time as they may be safely transported to a hospital or home in the care of family or friends.

INCIDENT COMMAND AND COMMAND POST

31. The IC shall ensure that the following actions are accomplished:
 - (a) Establish Incident Command System and Command Post.
 - (b) Establish communication.
 - (c) Identify (and staff) a staging area for first responders, a second staging area for family members, and a third staging area for the media.
 - (d) Identify an additional staging area for SWAT, if employed.
 - (e) Request mutual aid if necessary.
 - (f) Organize unified interagency telecommunications if necessary.
 - (g) Establish traffic control and management (ingress and egress routes).
 - (h) Contact appropriate aviation resources to control air space for possible medical evacuation resources and to establish restricted air space for law enforcement use only.
 - (i) Request emergency medical assistance and designate a safe staging area for treatment of the injured and evacuation by EMS or medevac.

- (j) Initiate intelligence gathering on possible suspects.
 - (k) Select a safe location to place/hold evacuees, i.e., the evacuation site.
 - (l) Summon police chaplains and officers to provide information to relatives of victims.
 - (m) Coordinate with owners or officials of the target location for floor plans, site layout, and a roster (including emergency contact information as available) of employees, students, residents, visitors, or others believed to be on-site.
 - (n) Assign a recorder to document actions at the command post.
32. When SOD/SWAT arrives on the scene they shall be briefed by the current IC and will determine if and when their supervisor will assume command as IC. The change of command to SOD/SWAT shall be broadcast on all working communications channels.
33. The active shooter incident shall not be declared "safe" until the Commander of SOD/SWAT or his/her on-scene designee broadcasts that the scene has been secured by SOD/SWAT. This does not mean the incident has been concluded. Active shooter incidents are lengthy, can require multiple shifts and possibly days to investigate before the scene can be released.

REPORTING AND DEBRIEFING

34. The initial responding officer shall be responsible for preparing the original incident report unless assigned to another officer by the officer's supervisor.
35. The Commander of the SOD is responsible for the internal after-action report if SOD has assumed responsibility on the scene prior to a Code 4.
36. As soon as reasonably possible after the incident, a debriefing of essential personnel involved in the incident shall be conducted. It will be done by the Commander of the unit responsible for the after-action report if SOD has not assumed responsibility on scene prior to a Code 4, or the Commander of SOD if SOD has assumed responsibility for the scene.
37. The debriefing shall identify both positive and negative aspects of the deployment with the intent of addressing areas in need of improvement and to determine whether changes in operational protocols, policy, or training may be warranted as a result.

TRAINING

38. The Department shall provide active shooter training to all commissioned members. Whenever possible, simulation training exercises should be utilized in real-life facilities such as schools, churches, and public venues.