

"Keep Orlando a safe city by reducing crime and maintaining livable neighborhoods."

ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1306.2, GUIDE FOR HOSTAGE, SUICIDAL, AND BARRICADED FELONIOUS PERSON SITUATIONS

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POLICY: This directive has been written as a guide for watch commanders and supervisors to assist them in handling hostage, suicidal, and barricaded felonious person situations. This directive establishes guidelines for the call-out of the SWAT and Crisis Negotiation teams and provides a set of guidelines for watch commanders to follow when handling these situations.

In most cases, potentially violent people involved in crises can be defused without resorting to tactical intervention. The first "assault" should be psychological. Crisis negotiators should be used in conjunction with the SWAT Team to talk the person out. If necessary, more drastic measures can always be taken at a later point.

The primary goal of any watch commander who is facing the task of resolving a potentially hazardous situation shall be the preservation of human life. There is no premium placed on quick action. Experts agree, in almost all cases time is on the side of the authorities and the longer it takes to neutralize the situation the less risk there is of losing lives.

Once a situation has been contained in a specific location, time is on your side. Stop and think before you act.

When faced with a potentially life-threatening situation, watch commanders shall utilize all resources available to them to reduce the risk of injury or death. When assessing the need to call out SWAT or the Crisis Negotiation teams, the watch commander in charge of the situation must ask themselves if they are certain the patrol officers or investigators on the scene are fully trained and capable of dealing with the situation themselves. If there is any doubt in the watch commander's mind as to the ability of the officers on the scene to handle the situation, they should call on those members who have been specially trained to safely deal with those situations. If a potentially life-threatening situation exists, the Department should not be concerned with the overtime cost of calling SWAT members or negotiators back to duty. Special teams are highly trained to respond to critical incidents and should be used whenever possible.

The safety of all who are impacted by these types of incidents is our primary consideration.

PROCEDURES:

1. CARDINAL RULES

There are many facets to handling crises. Very few hard and fast rules can be applied. The Department has adopted four cardinal rules:

- a. Under no circumstances will we trade hostages. Department members will not turn themselves or any other citizens over to a hostage taker in exchange for the release of hostages.

- b. Under no circumstances will we trade weapons. This includes giving the hostage taker "dummy weapons" or "booby-trapped weapons."
- c. Face-to-face crisis negotiations with armed suspects are a high-risk exercise. Face-to-face negotiations in this regard shall not normally be done without the CNT, SWAT, and incident commanders' approval. In cases where exigent circumstances exist, and face-to-face negotiations with an armed subject are commenced, the face-to-face negotiation situation shall be turned over to the appropriate command structure (CNT commander, SWAT commander, and incident commander) at the earliest opportunity.
- d. After the appropriate command structure is in place, the authority to order the use of deadly force on command shall be approved by the High-Risk Incident Commander, a Deputy Chief, or the Chief of Police. In cases where exigent circumstances exist, a watch commander may authorize the use of deadly force on command. If a watch commander authorizes the use of deadly force in this regard, they shall first consider that clear justification exists to use deadly force. Watch commanders shall follow the current version of P&P 1128, Response to Resistance and Apprehension Techniques.

2. ACTIVATION OF SWAT AND NEGOTIATION TEAMS

SWAT and Crisis Negotiation teams should be activated in the following circumstances:

- a. A contained person is holding others against their will and is threatening the lives or safety of others.
- b. A contained felonious or actively wanted person, believed or claimed to be armed, and refuses to surrender.
- c. An armed person in a public setting, threatening to take their own life, has the apparent ability to do so and refuses to surrender.
- d. A sniper or terrorist is involved in any incident, including HAZMAT situations.
- e. Whenever a commanding officer believes a SWAT or crisis negotiation response is in the public's or the Department's best interest.

SWAT and Crisis Negotiation teams may be activated by any member of the rank of lieutenant or higher. Activation of the teams may be accomplished by contacting the Communications Division and requesting the teams respond. The Communications Division has an established system for the call-out of the negotiators and SWAT members and will make the appropriate contacts upon request for a call-out.

Prior to the activation of the Crisis Negotiation Team, the Patrol Sergeant and On-Duty Watch Commander shall take the following steps to preserve the scene and actionable intelligence to assist in the successful resolution of the incident:

- a. Ensure all witnesses have been interviewed and any officer involved in witness interviews remain on scene until debriefed by a CNT Negotiator. Patrol officers shall maintain responsibility of any witnesses until relieved by a CNT Negotiator.
- b. If the witness has pertinent information such as phone numbers, social media accounts, and/or messaging systems in which they use to communicate with a barricaded subject and/or hostages, the patrol officer shall maintain custody of that device until relieved by CNT.
- c. Initial responding patrol officers will neither leave the scene nor transport any victim, witness, or suspect from the scene until the CNT Team Leader has been briefed. The only exception shall be if there is a medical emergency, other exigency, or approval from the Watch Commander.
- d. Once CNT negotiators arrive on scene, CNT specific responsibilities shall be turned over to CNT negotiators.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WATCH COMMANDER

3.1 INITIAL CONTACT

The on-duty watch commander will personally contact and brief the designated High-Risk Incident Commander (HRIC) as soon as possible. Based on the specific incident, if the watch commander and HRIC decide to make initial contact via phone or public address system (either using equipment in a police vehicle or bullhorn), the Crisis Negotiation Team Commander will be immediately contacted.

The watch commander can assign a sworn member to initiate contact with the person to ask them to end the situation peacefully and surrender to the police leaving all weapons within the building. This initial contact should not last no longer than 15 minutes. Under no circumstances will another person be allowed to talk directly to the person (e.g. family, friend, chaplain, etc.) If after a reasonable attempt is unsuccessful, a CNT/SWAT callout may be initiated. The barricaded subject's phone number should not normally be communicated via radio.

After initial contact has lasted fifteen minutes without resolution, the watch commander shall make the appropriate notifications and request the teams. The dialogue may continue between the sworn officer and the suspect until the CNT arrives. The CNT Commander will then decide whether the officer who made the initial contact will continue the dialogue.

3.2 NOTIFICATIONS

When the decision is made to activate SWAT and/or Crisis Negotiations teams, the watch commander will instruct Communications to notify the appropriate Patrol Division Commander, the Patrol Services Bureau Commander, and the Chief of Police.

The watch commander shall have Communications issue a staff page with a brief synopsis of the incident and include the watch commander's phone number for contact purposes.

3.3 HOSTAGE, BARRICADED, OR SUICIDAL PERSON SITUATIONS

The on-duty watch commander will have initial command of the hostage, barricaded, or suicidal person situation until relieved by a higher authority or the HRIC. When dealing with suicidal persons in a public setting, it is important to remember they will sometimes vacillate between suicidal and homicidal tendencies. In many cases, they not only pose a threat to themselves but to everyone around them. If the watch commander has reason to believe a suicidal person is armed with a dangerous weapon and poses a threat to others, the subject should be treated with the same amount of caution as any hostage taker or armed barricaded person. The following is a list of tasks that should be accomplished or coordinated by the on-scene watch commander:

- a. Contain the suspect or person in crisis.
- b. Identify and communicate the Danger Zone, aka Hot Zone. This area of the incident is where immediate threats and life hazards of exposure exist. Officers should be positioned behind hard-cover. Entry to the danger zone are under the authority of the Incident Commander, absent the necessity to stop active killing/dying.
- c. Establish an inner perimeter (scene area). The purpose of the inner perimeter is to contain the subjects within the crisis site and to prevent unauthorized movement into the crisis site thereby facilitating control of the situation. Consideration should be given to assigning a K-9 team and sage equipped/trained officer to the inner perimeter to provide a less lethal means of apprehension for an absconding subject.
- d. Establish the outer perimeter. The outer perimeter should be established far enough from the inner perimeter to provide a buffer zone between the crisis area and the public. This perimeter will eliminate or greatly reduce the danger to all persons outside the situation and allow crisis management personnel (police, fire, medical) to operate in an unhindered manner.

- e. Do not allow the person to become mobile once they have been contained. Staff should be assigned to control travel routes and surveillance locations during the initial phase of the incident. The Department's vehicle pursuit policy should be followed as outlined in the current version of P&P 1120, Vehicle Pursuits.
- f. Notify the High-Risk Incident Commander.
- g. Evacuate any bystanders or injured persons in immediate danger. (A complete evacuation of the scene should not be done until the situation is stabilized and tactical operations are in place.) If the person is armed with a firearm or other deadly weapon which could pose a threat to other persons in the immediate vicinity, advise the people in the scene area to remain inside their homes or offices and out of sight (aka Shelter-In-Place) until the SWAT Team can safely evacuate them.
- h. Establish a mobile or central command post, and notify (email) the appropriate chain of command according to the current version of P&P 1119, Operational Notification of Police Incidents.
- i. Establish an assembly area and designate a person to meet the arriving personnel, if needed.
- j. Call out SWAT and Crisis Negotiation teams, if needed.
- k. Request fire rescue personnel to standby within the outer perimeter in case medical services are needed.
- l. Designate a Media Staging area just inside the outer perimeter and limit access only to media. The Department's Media Relations and Public Information Office (PIO) should be notified as soon as practical and requested to respond to the scene. The PIO should ensure a free flow of information to the media per Department policy.
- m. Notify the Criminal Investigations Division Commander and the Major Crimes Section Commander, if deemed necessary.
- n. Notify the appropriate persons within and outside the agency, such as command members.
- o. Follow the Department's policy for any response to resistance and/or chemical agent deployment as outlined in the current version of P&P 1128, Response to Resistance and Apprehension Techniques.
- p. Establish communications with other agencies under the current version of P&P 1122, Police Radio Communications. Suicide hotlines and other counseling services may be contacted for relevant information.