

ORLANDO POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE
1306.1, GUIDE FOR HOSTAGE, SUICIDAL, AND BARRICADED PERSON SITUATIONS

EFFECTIVE:	07/10/06
RESCINDS:	1306.0
DISTRIBUTION:	ALL EMPLOYEES
REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY:	HIGH RISK INCIDENT COMMANDER
ACCREDITATION CHAPTERS:	17
CHIEF OF POLICE:	JOHN W. MINA

CONTENTS:

1. PHILOSOPHY
2. CARDINAL RULES
3. ACTIVATION OF SWAT AND NEGOTIATION TEAMS
4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WATCH COMMANDER

POLICY: This directive has been written as a guide for watch commanders and supervisors to assist them in handling hostage, suicidal, and barricaded person situations. The Department's philosophy concerning the handling of these situations is explained. 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.

This policy will be reviewed as specified in the current issue of P&P 1627, Written Communications Control and Distribution System.

PROCEDURES:

1. PHILOSOPHY

The following section explains the Department's philosophy concerning the handling of hostage, suicidal, and barricaded person situations.

In most cases, potentially violent people involved in crisis situations can be defused without resorting to violent 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. Experience has shown that negotiating is almost always successful. It is important to note that the majority of hostages and officers killed during the course of such situations are killed during the rescue attempt.

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. In fact, experts agree, that 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 the SWAT or Crisis Negotiation teams, the watch commander in charge of the situation must ask him/herself if he/she is absolutely certain that 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, he/she should call on those persons who have been specially trained to safely deal with those situations. If a potentially life-threatening situation exists, the watch commander should not be concerned with the overtime cost of calling SWAT members or negotiators back to duty. Special teams that are highly trained for response to critical incidents should be used whenever possible. Safety of Department members, innocent people, hostages, and suicidal or barricaded persons is our primary consideration.

2. CARDINAL RULES

There are many facets to handling crisis situations. 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 commander's, SWAT commander's, and incident commander's approval. In cases where exigent circumstances exist, and face-to-face negotiations with an armed subject is 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, he/she shall first consider that clear justification exists to use deadly force. Watch commanders shall follow the current issue of P&P 1128, Use of Force.

3. ACTIVATION OF SWAT AND NEGOTIATION TEAMS

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

- a. A contained person who is holding others against their will and is threatening the lives or safety of others.
- b. A contained person who is believed to be or claims to be armed and refuses to surrender.
- c. A contained person who is armed and is threatening to take his/her own life, and has the apparent ability to do so, and refuses to surrender.
- d. A sniper or terrorist is involved in any incident.
- e. Anytime a command officer believes a SWAT or crisis negotiation response is in the public's or the Department's best interest.

Contained persons may include those inmates appearing in the Orange County Courthouse or incarcerated in any jail facility in the City limits.

The Crisis Negotiation and SWAT 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 that 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.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WATCH COMMANDER

4.1 INITIAL CONTACT

The on-duty watch commander will personally contact and brief the designated High Risk Incident Commander as soon as possible. Based on the specific incident, if the watch commander and High Risk Incident Commander decide to make initial contact via phone or public address system (either using equipment in 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 for the purpose of asking him/her to end the situation peacefully and surrender to the police leaving all weapons within the building. This initial contact will 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 unsuccessful, a CNT/SWAT callout will 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 initial contact will continue the dialogue.

4.2 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.

4.3 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 High Risk Incident Commander. When dealing with suicidal persons, it is important to remember that they will sometimes vacillate between suicidal and homicidal tendencies. In many cases, they not only pose a threat to themselves but everyone around them. Bearing this in mind, should the watch commander have reason to believe that a suicidal person is armed with a dangerous weapon, the subject should be treated with the same amount of caution as any hostage taker or 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. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Do not allow the person to become mobile once he/she has 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 issue of P&P 1120, Vehicle Pursuits.
- e. Notify the High Risk Incident Commander.
- f. 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 until the SWAT Team can safely evacuate them.
- g. Establish a mobile or central command post, and notify the appropriate chain of command according to the current issue of P&P 1119, Operational Notification of Police Incidents.

- h. Establish an assembly area and designate a person to meet the arriving personnel, if needed.
- i. Call out the SWAT and Crisis Negotiation teams, if needed.
- j. Request ambulance or fire rescue personnel to stand by in a safe zone within the outer perimeter for the eventuality that medical services are needed.
- k. Designate an area outside the outer perimeter for news media liaison and limit access of the media to safe zones. The Department's Media Relations should be notified as soon as practical and requested to respond to the scene. Media Relations should ensure a free flow of information to the news media in accordance with Department policy.
- l. Notify the Criminal Investigations Division Commander and the Violent Crimes Section Commander, if deemed necessary.
- m. Notify the appropriate persons within and outside the agency, such as command members or helicopter pilots.
- n. Follow the Department's policy on use of force and chemical agents as outlined in the current issue of P&P 1128, Use of Force.
- o. Establish communications with other agencies in accordance with the current issue of P&P 1122, Police Radio Communications. Suicide hot lines and other counseling services may be contacted for relevant information.