



POLICY STATEMENT

Critical Incidents

SU Policy Number: 404-400.0

ORIGINATING OFFICE

Department of Public Safety

PURPOSE

To specify policy and procedures for initial responding units during critical incidents involving active shooters, barricaded suspects, hostage situations, and/or suicidal subjects

OBJECTIVE

Critical incidents that may involve active shooters, barricaded suspects, hostage situations, or suicidal subjects pose an extreme danger, not only to officers who seek to arrest or to subdue them, but to other persons as well. Good judgment demands that a tactical plan be developed rather than immediately taking action against individuals involved in these incidents. Tactical plans may also include tactics for immediate deployment during an active shooter situation. Certain preliminary procedures outlined in this directive will be followed to ensure that the Department's response is effective.

DEFINITIONS

1. **ACTIVE SHOOTER:** A suspect who is actively engaged in a shooting, and is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury.
2. **BARRICADED SUBJECT:** Any individual who is reasonably believed to be a threat to commit serious bodily injury or death to self, hostages, responding officers, or others, and who is in a stronghold position, or who is facing arrest, and has barricaded himself to avoid arrest.
3. **SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT):** A team of specially trained law enforcement officers who possess specialized skills and training to effectively resolve high risk incidents.
4. **CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM (CNT):** A team of specially trained law enforcement officers who attempt to resolve a critical incident through direct negotiation/communication with the suspect.
5. **CRITICAL INCIDENT:** Any situation or call for service in which an individual has used or is threatening to use deadly force against self or others, and is able to hold or is currently holding the responding officers at bay by threatening to use that force, or a situation where a subject is facing arrest, and has barricaded himself.
6. **HOSTAGE:** Any person held by another against their will by force or threat of force, either expressed or implied with the intent to use that person as leverage for a specific gain.
7. **INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS):** A standardized on-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow the immediate designation of an incident commander to coordinate and direct emergency response.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Shippensburg University Police Department to attempt to resolve critical incidents in a peaceful manner through communication and/or negotiation with the suspect whenever possible, or through the appropriate and reasonable amount of force necessary to resolve the situation. It is the policy of the Department to make every reasonable effort to affect the safe release of any hostages and to protect the safety of innocent bystanders during these types of incidents.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The first responding officers to a critical incident will encounter one of two situations:
 - a. A critical incident that involves an active shooter or a suspect/subject who is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury, or
 - b. A critical incident that does not involve a suspect/subject who is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury
2. The two above-listed categories can change back and forth from one category to the other.
3. For critical incidents involving an active shooter or a suspect/subject who is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury, responding officers will:
 - a. Assess the situation, and protect themselves, other responding officers, and uninvolved Citizens through time, distance, and shielding, as necessary
 - b. Request additional officers as needed to prevent the immediate escape of the suspect
 - c. After assessing the situation and associated dangers, utilize the incident command system (ICS) to immediately attempt to locate, engage, isolate, and eliminate the threat by implementing tactics that they have been trained to use
 - d. Rely on sound tactics and immediate actions, such as contact teams, in order to resolve the incident
 - e. Keep in mind that the primary objective of officers responding to such incidents will be the preservation of life
4. For critical incidents that do not involve a suspect/subject who is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury, responding officers will:
 - a. Assess the situation, and protect themselves, other responding officers, and uninvolved Citizens through time, distance, and shielding, as necessary
 - b. Request additional officers as needed to prevent the immediate escape of the suspect
 - c. Attempt to stabilize the situation, but not initiate any tactical action other than that which is necessary to protect civilian bystanders and officers from injury
5. Locate the exact scene of the incident.
6. Determine the exact nature of the incident, if possible
7. Communicate the nature and location of the incident to the dispatch officer via police radio, directing other responding units on the safest route of approach and any staging location
8. Begin to isolate the incident by controlling pedestrian and vehicular access to the area
9. Stabilize the situation until sufficient back-up personnel have arrived to establish an inner and outer perimeter, so that a planned tactical response can be developed.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Communications Officer plays a vital role in the successful resolution of any critical incident. The Communications Officer will

1. Notify county dispatch who will alert allied agencies to respond to the scene to assist with the incident.

2. Coordinate the assignment of both responding personnel to appropriate radio channels per the responding supervisor's direction
3. Notify Chief of Police, Lieutenant, SU President, VP Admin and Finance, VP Student Affairs, VP Academic Affairs and Media and Marketing
4. Notify medical and fire personnel to respond as instructed
5. Provide communication support and notifications as required by on-scene personnel
6. Coordinate communication with any other agency, should the need arise, including those with specialized capabilities, such as the Pennsylvania State Police Aviation Unit.

RESPONDING SUPERVISOR(S):

1. First responding supervisors at the scene of a critical incident will:
2. Evaluate the situation to verify the exact location and nature of the incident
3. Determine the need for any appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), and implement its use for all affected officers
4. Determine the need to activate SRT Units from allied agencies
5. Establish an inner and outer perimeter restricting unauthorized access to the scene, and preventing the escape of any suspects
6. Arrange for the safe evacuation of bystanders or uninvolved civilians from the scene by either removing them from the location, or by directing them to a less vulnerable position within the established perimeters
7. Establish a command post outside the line of sight/fire of the suspect, when feasible
8. Ensure radio discipline, and restrict unnecessary radio transmissions as much as possible
9. Request medical and fire personnel, as needed
10. Arrange for the evacuation of any injured persons
11. Establish a staging area
12. Establish a media staging area outside of the outer perimeter and separate from the command post
13. Maintain tactical control of the situation
14. Notify and brief arriving officials as needed
15. Watch for fatigue in officers assigned to the scene, and arrange for relief as needed
16. Coordinate with other agencies, as needed for control of the scene, or for the surveillance or pursuit of the suspect, should the incident become mobile
17. Designate an officer to record information concerning units involved in the incident, and events taking place.

CRITICAL OFFICIALS:

1. Certain designated Critical Officials will be notified whenever a critical incident has taken place. On-scene supervisors will assume command and control of the Department's response to the critical incident, and will only relinquish this on-scene operational responsibility to a higher ranking officer of the Department who arrives at the scene, and then only after ensuring that there has been a detailed, thorough briefing about the incident and the steps taken to this point to resolve the incident.
2. The on-scene supervisor will be responsible for authorizing any use of force involving on-scene units.
3. Dean of Students will be responsible for the evacuation and reunification of students.
4. Ensure transportation is obtained to evacuate students to the predetermined location
5. Use established procedures to document/categorize students at this location
6. Prepare a list of unaccounted students
7. Make notifications as it becomes necessary

SRT:

Pennsylvania State Police and or Cumberland County SRT will be utilized should the need arise to utilize a Special Response Team

CNT:

Pennsylvania State Police and or Cumberland County CNT will be utilized should the need arise to utilize a Crisis Negotiation Team

INTERRUPTION OF TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Control of communication between a suspect and the “outside” during a critical incident is often essential to the successful resolution of an incident. The demands, intent, and motivation of the suspect are often identified through conversations with the suspect. When these conversations occur outside the control of the law enforcement agency attempting to resolve the situation, a timely successful resolution of the incident is jeopardized. Therefore, it is essential that the suspect’s access to contacts outside the Department be restricted during management of the critical incident. This can be partially accomplished by limiting the suspect’s ability to use hard (non-cellular) telephone lines through the cooperation of the telephone company. The on-scene commander will determine if this measure is needed and to instruct the Communications Section to contact the telephone company to restrict access to any telephone line available to the suspect.
 - a. 2010 Pennsylvania Code Title 18 - CRIMES AND OFFENSES
 - b. Chapter 57 - Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance
 - c. 5704 - Exceptions to prohibition of interception and disclosure of communications.
 - d. Any investigative or law enforcement officer or any person acting at the direction or request of an investigative or law enforcement officer to intercept a wire or oral communication involving suspected criminal activities where the officer or the person is a party to the communication and there is reasonable cause to believe that:
 - i. the other party to the communication is either:
 - a) holding a hostage; or
 - b) has barricaded himself and taken a position of confinement to avoid apprehension; and
 - ii. that party:
 - a) will resist with the use of weapons; or
 - b) is threatening suicide or harm to others.

USE OF SPECIALIZED COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT:

1. During a hostage/barricade situation in which local service is unavailable, there undoubtedly will arise the need to establish telephone communication between the Department and the suspect.
2. The PA State Police possesses an alternative telephone device known as a “throw phone,” a station-to-station telephone, which allows the Department to control conversation with the suspect. This device is available for use in a hostage/barricade situation, and can be used upon authorization from the on-scene commander/supervisor. Use of this device will be documented in the “After Action Report.”
3. Likewise, there may be need to use other listening and/or communication devices to assess the threat posed by the suspect and to aid in the resolution of the crisis. Any device used in this situation will be used in accordance with applicable state and federal law, and will also be documented in the “After Action Report.”

AFTER ACTION REPORTS:

1. After each critical incident, "After Action Reports" will be generated, and will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. Each "After Action Report" will have all related incident reports attached.
2. "After Action Reports" may include the "SRT Mission Report" and/or an administrative memorandum from the "primary negotiator" on the CNT, which will be approved and signed by the senior supervisor on the responding CNT element. These forms/information will be obtained from PSP within 7 days at the conclusion of the incident.
3. The "After Action Report" will include a documented review of policy and training needs that are identified during the incident.
4. "After Action Reports" will be submitted within fourteen (14) days of the critical incident.
5. "After Action Reports" will be reviewed by the Chief of Police

RECISSION

APPROVALS

Executive Management Team; 2/26/2020

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