

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

403.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIRST OFFICER AT THE SCENE

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Upon receipt of a report of a hostage taking or barricaded suspect situation, responding officers shall:

- (a) Notify the E911 Control Center of the nature and most specific location of the incident, and request the response of a Supervisor and additional personnel or resources as dictated by the situation.
- (b) Request the use and isolation of a radio channel for the sole use of incident personnel, considering the need to communicate with other units and police agencies.
- (c) Contain the situation to the smallest possible area consistent with officer/citizen safety and attempt to prevent the escape of any involved suspects.
- (d) Gather information relating to the numbers and types of casualties and request appropriate emergency medical assistance. The safety of officers involved in rescuing victims or bystanders must be foremost. Therefore, any rescue or evacuation attempt may have to be delayed until the situation is stabilized and the rescue can be conducted safely. Victims and bystanders should not be evacuated through the suspect's field of fire, if practicable.
- (e) Direct responding units or agencies indicating any hazard zones to be avoided.
- (f) Position responding personnel so that:
 1. A "cross-fire" situation does not occur.
 2. Officers make the best possible use of cover and concealment.
 3. Officers have an available escape route.
- (g) Establish an inner-perimeter around the situation denying access to the area and to prevent the escape of the hostage taker/barricaded subject.
- (h) Request additional units to establish an outer perimeter and begin diverting vehicular and pedestrian traffic away from the scene.
- (i) Secure all witnesses and keep them at a safe point outside of the inner-perimeter for interviews.
- (j) Use only that force required by the situation, authorized by law and allowed by Department policy.
- (k) Begin making notes of observations, suspect's actions, demands and deadlines given, and any other communications. A suspect's exact words should be recorded whenever possible for later use by hostage negotiators.

It is preferable that a trained hostage negotiator conduct communications with the suspect. However, circumstances may result in communications from the suspect being directed to the first officers on the scene. When communicating with the suspect officers should:

Syracuse Police Department

Supplemental Manual

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

- (a) Remain calm, regardless of the suspect's statements or actions.
- (b) Identify themselves as police officers and by name.
- (c) Inform the suspect that the officer has the situation outside under control and expects the suspect to keep the situation inside under control.
- (d) Allow the suspect to speak without interruption. This will help calm him and provide intelligence regarding the incident.
- (e) Avoid eliciting demands from the suspect. Seemingly innocent questions may give him the opportunity to make demands.
- (f) Avoid giving the suspect orders that may escalate the situation.
- (g) Minimize the seriousness of the attempted crime and do not acknowledge the deaths of others. Inform the suspect that the condition of victims is not known.
- (h) Make no unsolicited offers.
- (i) Avoid calling attention to the victims. In hostage situations, officers shall not refer to victims as hostages when speaking to the suspect.
- (j) Be as honest as possible and make no attempt to trick the suspect.
- (k) Ask the suspect to clarify any statements that are not clearly understood.
- (l) Never dismiss any request by the suspect as trivial.
- (m) Never set a deadline or agree to a deadline set by the suspect.
- (n) Do not make alternate suggestions to the suspect.
- (o) Do not introduce any non-law enforcement personnel into the communications process.

Officers shall not expose themselves to the suspect in order to communicate with him.

Under no circumstances shall officers exchange themselves or any other person in order to obtain the release of hostages.

Officers shall not surrender their weapons, or provide or offer to provide the suspect with weapons or equipment.

In the event a hostage taker attempts to employ a hostage as a human shield and leave the containment area, officers should make all reasonable attempts to keep the suspect contained. Officers should consider the following factors when deciding what measures to take to keep the suspect contained:

- (a) Danger to the public if the suspect escapes containment.
- (b) Danger to the hostage if the suspect is permitted increased mobility.
- (c) Officer's ability to contain the suspect.
- (d) Suspect's history of violence.
- (e) Type of weapon possessed by the suspect.

Syracuse Police Department

Supplemental Manual

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

- (f) Degree to which the officer's use of force is justified.

In the event a suspect decides to surrender before a perimeter or Immediate Action Team has been established, officers shall develop a plan for a controlled surrender. The suspect and all officers should clearly understand the plan before the surrender occurs. The suspect should be given clear instructions throughout the surrender process. All persons exiting the scene shall be considered to be potential suspects due to the possibility that all criminal accomplices have not been identified.

403.2 DUTIES OF FIRST SUPERVISOR AT THE SCENE

Agency Content

The Supervisor should stabilize the situation and avoid rushing the pace of activity. Obtain as much information about the situation as possible from the initial responding officers, make notification to the following personnel and request their response to the incident:

- (a) Shift Command Officer.
- (b) Chief of Police/Duty Chief, to designate a Critical Incident Commander.
- (c) An on-duty SWAT Unit Commander supervisor to assist in the placement of personnel, and tactical assessment of the incident.
- (d) Detective(s) to gather background information regarding the suspect & incident.
- (e) An on-duty Hostage Negotiator to communicate with the suspect.
- (f) An on-duty SWAT Team Member, to coordinate the initial tactical response.

Coordinate a timely and tactical response by arriving personnel.

Organize and brief subordinates relative to the incident and their duties.

Isolate and secure the area, and

If possible to accomplish safely, initiate any necessary evacuation of bystanders or victims within the inner perimeter. If evacuation is unnecessary or impractical, protect the public in place.

Establish a command post in a safe and accessible location within the outer perimeter. Notify the 911 Center by phone of the address and telephone number of the command post location and the safest, open route for other responding personnel. When establishing a command post, the following factors shall be considered:

- (a) Proximity to the scene.
- (b) Accessibility to responding personnel.
- (c) Availability of radio and telephone communications. Major incidents may require three or four telephone lines and the use of cellular telephones should be considered if land-lines are not available.
- (d) Availability of parking, electricity, water and toilet facilities.
- (e) Ability to segregate and secure the command post from unauthorized personnel and the public.

Syracuse Police Department

Supplemental Manual

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

1. The command post should not be established in the line-of-fire of the incident scene.
2. Ensure that vehicular and pedestrian traffic has been adequately diverted.

Establish a staging area (preferably within the outer perimeter as space and location permit) to which responding units will report. Assign an officer to log arrivals, deployment and availability of staged personnel.

Ensure that all responding units are advised as to the identity of the Incident Commander, the location of the command post, staging area and any special instructions regarding the incident, including areas to avoid when responding.

Request emergency medical services and Fire Departments to stand by at the staging area if the incident dictates such support.

Act as Incident Commander until relieved by a superior officer.

403.3 DUTIES OF THE INCIDENT COMMANDER

Agency Content

Upon assuming command of the incident, the Critical Incident Commander shall:

- (a) Have the ultimate decision making authority and responsibility for the operation.
- (b) Be responsible for the safety of victims and the general public.
- (c) Have responsibility for the safety of personnel and resources employed in the operation.
- (d) Establish the mission priorities.
- (e) Organize, brief and assign subordinates.
- (f) Delegate authority to subordinates commensurate with their responsibilities.
- (g) Determine strategy and tactics for coping with the incident.
- (h) Designate various locations as staging areas, triage areas, landing zones, etc.
- (i) Be responsible for the security of all operational areas.
- (j) Be responsible for maintaining a chronological log of actions and events.
- (k) Be responsible for all documentation pertaining to the incident.
- (l) Have responsibility for the decision to amend, suspend or terminate operations.
- (m) Have responsibility for demobilizing personnel and equipment utilized in the operation.
- (n) Conduct a post incident debriefing and critique the operation.
- (o) Report all failures of policy, procedures and equipment to the Chief of Police.
- (p) Make recommendations for the improvement of operational effectiveness to the Chief of Police.

Syracuse Police Department

Supplemental Manual

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

The Incident Commander shall operate the command post in accordance with the procedures established by the "Critical Incident Response and Management policy."

The Incident Commander may utilize such resources as may be necessary to accomplish the mission. These resources may include, but need not be limited to:

- (a) Emergency Response Team (SWAT, CRU, Hazardous Devices Unit).
- (b) Canine teams.
- (c) Detectives to interview witnesses and victims, and to obtain any required warrants for search and arrest.
- (d) Public utility personnel to assist in the isolation of the scene (e.g.; telephone, electric, water, etc.).
- (e) Evidence technicians to record the incident, including overall photos of the scene, locations of officers, and any significant developments at the site.
- (f) Fire department and emergency medical service personnel and equipment.

403.4 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM PROCEDURES

Agency Content

When activated in response to hostage or barricaded suspect incidents, the Emergency Response Team unit Commanders shall be responsible for:

- (a) Assessment and evaluation of the tactical problems.
- (b) Advising the Critical Incident Commander of available options.
- (c) Developing and executing the tactical response to the incident.
- (d) Assembling personnel and equipment as necessary.
- (e) Briefing and deploying team personnel.
- (f) Coordinating tactical response actions with the Critical Incident Commander.
- (g) All documentation pertaining to the team activities.
- (h) Demobilizing team members and equipment utilized in the operation.
- (i) Conducting post-incident debriefings and critiques of team operations.
- (j) Making recommendations for the improvement of team operational effectiveness to the Chief of Police.

The appropriate Emergency Response Team squad leaders shall be responsible for:

- (a) Inspecting team members to ensure that they are properly equipped and that all equipment is functional.
- (b) Assigning members individual tasks necessary to complete the mission.
- (c) Relaying information and instructions to squad members.
- (d) Upon arrival at the incident scene, Emergency Response Team personnel shall respond to the Command Post to receive instructions and to be deployed to an

Syracuse Police Department

Supplemental Manual

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

appropriate position. Officers who have been relieved by an Emergency Response Team member shall report to the staging area for further assignment.

- (e) Non-Emergency Response Team personnel shall be responsible for maintaining the outer perimeter and for the security of the command post, staging, media and other areas.

The Emergency Response Team shall be responsible for:

- (a) Suspect containment.
- (b) Reconnaissance operations for the purpose of obtaining intelligence.
- (c) Rescue of victims or bystanders from within the suspect's field of fire.
- (d) Assaulting the suspect's position, when necessary.
- (e) Ensuring that proper chase/surveillance vehicles are in place and controlling routes if the suspect is permitted to depart the scene.
- (f) Tactical neutralization of the suspect, when authorized and necessary.
- (g) Apprehending the suspect and recovering hostages. All subjects encountered by team members during these operations shall be handcuffed, to include subjects injured or killed. Persons discovered at the scene may be previously unidentified accomplices or hostages sympathetic to the hostage taker due to Stockholm Syndrome.
- (h) SWAT Unit members shall not use force, including firearms or chemical agents, without prior approval of the SWAT unit Commander unless necessary to defend their lives or the lives of others from the imminent use of deadly physical force by a suspect. SWAT unit members shall use only the minimum force necessary to terminate the incident. All use of force shall be in accordance with Article 35 of the New York State Penal Law, and Departmental directives.
- (i) Upon resolution of the incident, team members shall return to police headquarters for debriefing and demobilization.
- (j) Team members shall submit appropriate report(s) to their unit Commander describing his or her actions during the incident when directed to do so.

403.5 HOSTAGE /SUSPECT NEGOTIATIONS

Agency Content

Whenever possible, negotiations with barricaded suspects shall be conducted by a trained hostage negotiator. Negotiations should be conducted from a secure area through the use of a secure line or telephone lock out. Face to face negotiations should be avoided. The Incident Commander or his designee shall be the only personnel authorized to have contact with the negotiator, unless others are specifically requested by the negotiator. Only one person shall act as a negotiator or have contact with the suspect at any time.

Negotiators shall immediately relay all information of intelligence value to the Incident Commander. Negotiators should attempt to:

- (a) Identify the suspect(s) involved, and learn their intent.

Syracuse Police Department

Supplemental Manual

Hostage and Barricade Incidents

- (b) Obtain intelligence information pertaining to the suspect or hostages (i.e. location, number, and condition).
- (c) Arrange the release of hostages.
- (d) Induce the suspect to surrender.

Negotiations shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- (a) Negotiators shall not have the authority to make unilateral decisions regarding the demands of suspects.
- (b) Negotiators may use food, beverages, blankets and similar rewards to induce the release of hostages.
- (c) Negotiators shall not, under any circumstances, offer weapons or the exchange of other persons for the release of hostages.
- (d) The introduction of outside parties to the negotiations such as attorneys, priests or relatives should be avoided.
- (e) Whenever a suspect is known to be on medication, negotiators should have access to a medical doctor who can provide advice regarding the potential effects on the suspect.

Negotiators should, when possible, be advised as to any tactical actions to be taken, and shall assist by placing the suspect in a position of disadvantage during tactical operations.

Whenever a non-English speaking suspect confronts a negotiator, the negotiator may utilize the language line service through the Communications Control Center.