



MIDDLETON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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POLICY
13.1.1.11

SUBJECT: **Hostage Situation**

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MRR

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Definitions

Hostage: A person held against his or her will by an armed, potentially armed, or otherwise dangerous suspect who has demonstrated by action, word, or deed willingness to do the person harm in order to compel another party to act or refrain from acting in a particular way, or for personal gratification. Hostage situations occur in a wide variety of operational environments, including open air, accessible structures, hardened strongholds, and vehicles.

Safety Priorities: The basis for the agency’s operational and tactical decisions and comprising the following:

- Hostages
- Innocent involved civilians
- Police officers
- Suspects

Triggering Point: Specific predetermined circumstances that will justify the initiation of direct action to prevent or stop a particular course of suspect behavior (such as physical or sexual assault on the hostage or setting the structure on fire).

Inner Perimeter: A close proximity boundary maintained by first responding officers. It is designed to contain the situation to the smallest possible area and prevent access to the target location by persons from the outside. Staffing and responsibility of the inner perimeter may be transferred to other members of the department, responding mutual aid assisting departments or the special weapons and tactics team, depending on the nature and duration of the incident.

Outer Perimeter: A boundary outside the inner perimeter maintained by patrol officers and designed to prevent unauthorized persons from entering the area of the critical incident.

Policy

This agency shall generally respond to and take necessary steps to free innocent persons who are endangered and being held illegally against their will. During situations that involve conventional hostage takings, this agency shall deploy first responding officers to contain the situation and suspects involved when appropriate, pending the arrival of personnel specially trained in negotiations and tactical problem solving. This policy does not prohibit properly trained and equipped first responding officers from taking direct and immediate action—up to and including deadly force—in cases where a hostage is facing death or great bodily harm and the officers' reasonable actions have a high probability of neutralizing the deadly threat or preventing the situation from escalating.

Resolution Strategy

This agency shall take direct action—up to and including the use of deadly force—to ensure the safe release of a hostage facing death or great bodily harm. Positive progress shall be defined as developments that increase the probability of the safe release of the hostages, as opposed to the mere passage of time. While it is true that the passage of time may increase the opportunity for such developments, it is also true that a viable rescue opportunity presented and ignored may be lost forever.

Procedures

Initial Response

- a. Upon receipt and evaluation of the initial call, dispatch shall send patrol officers and if requested by the Incident Commander, notify the tactical and negotiation teams.
- b. The first responding officer shall assume the role of incident commander (IC) and be responsible for conducting an initial situation and response analysis, determining what resources will likely be required based on the available information, and providing this information to communications. The officer should also be aware that police presence can be a catalyst for suspect response and that he or she must be prepared to take appropriate action should the situation demand it, regardless of the status of additional personnel responding. The officer shall then direct arriving resources to specific positions or the staging area that he

or she designates. The officer shall continue functioning as the IC until relieved by a superior officer or an officer with specialized training or expertise in fulfilling this role. Communications shall be continuously updated on officer positions and status and informed if the incident command responsibilities are transferred to another officer.

- c. The IC shall confirm that the staging area maximizes the safety of the responding units, and ensure that one officer is assigned at all times to brief arriving personnel.
- d. The IC shall establish communications and appropriate radio channel(s).
- e. The IC shall consider the agency's safety priorities and then establish an inner perimeter to contain the problem if such containment is in furtherance of the primary mission objective. During this process, all non-police personnel shall be taken from the inner perimeter to an appropriate location for intelligence debriefing.
- f. The IC shall assess the suspect's options and related triggering points and then set a contingency plan in motion to counter such options, based on the totality of the circumstances presented.
- g. The IC shall ensure that the appropriate specialized resources have been requested (the TRT team, hostage negotiations and psychological services, the fire department, and so on) and ask that communications keep him or her apprised of specialized unit response status.
- h. The IC shall notify the Operations Commander, Chief of Police and other appropriate personnel as needed.
- i. The IC shall notify appropriate ambulance(s), rescue, fire or other needed equipment.
- j. The IC shall continuously evaluate the situation and determine whether the opportunity for, or a need of, immediate intervention exists. The decision should be based on a variety of factors, including the following:
 - 1) Whether the failure to act could reasonably be expected to result in the loss of life or the loss of additional life.
 - 2) Whether sufficient numbers of properly trained and equipped police personnel are available to effectively neutralize the threat.
 - 3) Whether the target location can be entered or the suspect engaged without inappropriately increasing the risks to the innocent person or persons being held.
 - 4) Whether immediate intervention could limit or preclude the suspect's access to additional victims.
- k. When the circumstances suggest an immediate intervention is necessary and appropriate (i.e. active shooter), a properly trained and equipped contact team shall be formed under the supervision of the most qualified officer on scene. The mission of the contact team may vary based on the circumstances presented, but generally the focus is on locating, neutralizing, and apprehending the suspect or cutting off the suspect's access to hostages or containing the suspect in an area that will limit the suspect's movement and opportunity for escape.

Secondary Response

The IC is responsible for ensuring that a variety of tasks are addressed during the secondary response phase, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Establish an outer perimeter and initiate the evacuation and handling process for those inside. Special consideration shall be given to the handling of those who refuse to be evacuated.
- b. Establish a command post location outside the suspect's line of fire and sight.
- c. Initiate an investigation to determine exactly what has occurred and locate, isolate, and debrief victims and witnesses. Debriefing should include obtaining information about the suspect and hostages where relevant and available, specifically the following:

- 1) Name
 - 2) Physical description
 - 3) Clothing description
 - 4) Military background
 - 5) Criminal history
 - 6) Weapons
 - 7) Mental state and condition, and the names of treating clinicians
 - 8) Circumstances involved in the immediate situation
- d. Obtain the telephone number and physical location of the telephone (if hardwire) in the suspect's location.
 - e. Consider whether it is logical, necessary, and appropriate based on the facts presented to use the telephone in advance of TRT and negotiations to establish communications and attempt to affect the release of the hostages.
 - f. Select a location for media response and designate a person to interact with them prior to the arrival of the agency public information officer.
 - g. Select a location for those responding on behalf of the hostages and designate an officer to interact with them. Make outer perimeter-personnel aware of the presence of those responders and consider that they may attempt to enter the stronghold.
 - h. Make contact with the person most knowledgeable concerning the floor plan of the target location, including specifics related to keys, doors, locks, fortification, windows, alarms, and any other physical information that might help the resolution efforts.
 - i. Establish and maintain a log that documents the activities that have occurred and the location and identification of the assigned personnel.
 - j. Brief the TRT and negotiations teams upon their arrival.
 - k. Assist the TRT team as it relieves the inner perimeter containment personnel.
 - l. Ensure that all officers relieved report to the command post for reassignment.