

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



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SUBJECT: Hostages/Barricaded Subjects		
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I. POLICY:

In hostage/barricaded subject situations it shall be the policy of the Department to consider the lives of the hostages, civilians, and members to be of the utmost importance. Members involved will, whenever possible, enhance the prospects of peacefully resolving the incident through communication with the suspect. The department will develop and maintain the ability to use alternative approaches to resolve the incident should communications fail and, in hostage situations, will make every reasonable effort to affect the safe release of the hostage(s).

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Barricaded Subject:** Any individual in a "stronghold position" who is reasonably believed to be a threat to commit serious bodily injury or death to hostages, police officers, themselves, or others in the community.
- B. Hostage:** A person who is held against his/her will by the threat of, or actual use of force. No distinction should be made as to how or why the victim was taken hostage. The hostage is usually held as security for the fulfillment of certain demands by the suspect(s).
- C. Crisis Negotiation Team:** Members who are specially trained to resolve, through negotiation, selected incidents that have a significant potential for violence.
- D. Special Response Team (SRT):** Members who are specially trained and equipped to aid in the safe resolution of high-risk incidents and apprehension. They are utilized on an as needed basis.

III. PROCEDURE:

- A. Safety Priorities:** The safety of involved persons shall be prioritized as follows:
 1. Hostages;
 2. Innocent Bystanders;
 3. Police Officers; and

4. Suspect/Subject(s).

B. Patrol Officer Duties: Patrol Officers confronting hostage/barricaded person incidents shall not initiate tactical actions other than those necessary to protect the lives and safety of others as listed in the safety priorities. Officers shall then:

1. Notify a Field Supervisor of the incident and circumstances;
2. Contain and isolate the incident scene to as small an area as is safe and practical by establishing inner perimeter containment. As time and resources permit, outer perimeter containment should be established to control pedestrian and vehicular traffic into the area.

EXCEPTION: In the event of an "in-progress" violent situation, members should take appropriate and immediate action to stop the suspect from any further violent/assaultive behavior.

3. Whenever possible, evacuate injured persons, bystanders and occupants of affected buildings/areas as soon as possible and move them to a point beyond the outer perimeter. Members should consider the use of construction equipment or other available vehicles that can defeat the potential threat. The scope of the evacuation is dependent upon the threat, but generally will always include, but not be limited to:
 - a. The residence; and
 - b. In the case of a business or apartment complex, that level and/or floors immediately below and above the suspect.

C. Field Supervisor(s): The ranking member on scene within the inner perimeter shall be in command until relieved by the SRT Commander or Team Leader. The ranking member on scene within the outer perimeter shall be in command until relieved by higher authority (Patrol Commander, Chief of Police, etc.). Before relief by higher authority, the appropriate Field Supervisor(s) within the inner and/or outer perimeter shall:

1. Ensure that the SRT Commander has been notified with all pertinent information;
2. Ensure the establishment of an inner and outer perimeter, command post and staging area (considering location, accessibility, and safety);
3. Be sure that the responsibility of evacuation, traffic control, and crowd control is established and that routes for emergency vehicles and safe approach/travel routes for all responding officers/vehicles have been designated;
4. Evacuate all injured persons;
5. Ensure that the Crisis Negotiation Team, Chief of Police, Patrol Commander, Public Information Officer (P.I.O.), and Detective Commander have been notified;
6. Make provisions for recording personnel assignment and a chronological record of events, when possible, by designating a "logistics officer" at the command post and/or staging area. The logistics officer(s) will keep the P.I.O. updated as to the incident's events;

7. Ensure that necessary fire and emergency medical units are made available at the staging area, along with any other units or equipment (i.e. surveillance, K-9 Teams, pursuit vehicles, Red Cross), when appropriate;
8. Inform any arriving news media of the name of the P.I.O. contact officer. All news releases must have prior approval of the Chief of Police. A restricted area for media relations shall be established beyond the outer perimeter; and
9. The Officer(s)-In-Charge (O.I.C.) shall make all attempts to handle the situation within the Department. However, he/she may request assistance from outside agencies (via the chain of command) as the situation dictates (i.e. for purposes of traffic control, crowd control, etc.).

D. Special Response Team (SRT) Commander: The SRT Commander, or his/her designee, shall relieve the Field Supervisor at the "inner-scene", assuming inner perimeter command and control. The SRT Commander shall evaluate the situation to determine SRT staffing/equipment needs and ensure their deployment (See also SRT Operations Manual). He/she shall also:

1. Assist the Officer-In-Charge of the outer perimeter, Command Post, etc. in assessing the situation and formulating/providing the O.I.C. with recommended tactical alternatives;
2. Maintain communications with the Command Post and keep them informed of all developments;
 - a. News media releases concerning inner perimeter activities shall be made through the PIO with permission from the Chief of Police **after** consultation with the SRT Commander.
3. Deploy counter "Marksman Observer" and entry teams, as necessary;
4. Ensure that personnel maintaining the inner perimeter maintain firearms discipline and are provided with logistical support, including periodic relief by other SRT members, when available;
5. Prepare appropriate logistical plan(s) to include diagrams of the location in question;
6. Ensure that appropriate communication exists with all other agencies involved within the inner perimeter, when appropriate (i.e. Drug Strike Force, etc.);
7. Ensure establishment of an inner perimeter "tactical operations center", if necessary;
8. Authorize the use of force, including the introduction of chemical agents. This will be done in conference with the Chief of Police, whenever possible. The level of force used by officers will be consistent with Department Policy/Procedures;
9. At the resolution of such an incident, ensure that a thorough preliminary investigation is conducted BEFORE clearing Detective personnel into the scene (i.e. searching for booby-traps, chemical agents that have not yet exploded, etc.);
10. Initiate and coordinate the writing of a comprehensive "after-action" report in a timely manner and debrief the SRT members as soon as practical following the incident; and

11. Initiate and coordinate the debriefing of all other members involved in the incident. This debriefing will occur as soon as practical following the incident.

E. Special Response Team (SRT) Leader: The SRT Leader will assist the SRT Commander in supervising SRT activities within the inner perimeter. He/she shall also:

1. Evaluate the situation to help determine SRT staffing and equipment needs, ensure their deployment, and assume inner perimeter control, when necessary;
2. Maintain contact with the SRT Commander;
3. Formulate tactical resolution options;
EXCEPTION: In an emergency situation, the SRT Leader may have to make an emergency rescue without time to give proper notice to the SRT Commander or higher authority.
4. Make sudden contingency plans for a suspect's options, including surveillance and control of travel routes;
5. Coordinate the establishment of video and audio surveillance equipment;
6. Communicate and coordinate intelligence information with the Crisis Negotiation Team; and
7. Coordinate the deployment of needed specialized vehicles (i.e. pursuit vehicles, heavy equipment vehicles used for protection, etc.).

F. Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) (See also SO1601 Crisis Negotiation Team): The CNT will be utilized to establish communications with the suspect(s). The CNT functions as a subdivision of the Special Response Team. The CNT Supervisor will designate a "primary negotiator" from the team. The CNT shall:

1. Obtain all pertinent information about the hostage taker(s), hostage(s), hostage site, and other intelligence information.
2. Under the direction of the SRT Commander, the negotiators will attempt to establish an open line of communication with the suspect(s), and will:
 - a. Conduct negotiations on behalf of the Department, attempting to negotiate the release of hostage(s) and the surrender of the suspect(s);
 - b. Keep the SRT Commander/Detective Commander apprised of the progress of the negotiations and information obtained, including the psychological and physical state of the suspect(s), hostage(s), weapons involved, and any pertinent information or changes in the tactical situation; and
 - c. Coordinate any professional assistance (Psychiatrist, Psychologist, etc.) or third party negotiator, if necessary.

G. Detective Commander: The Detective Commander will determine staffing in order to obtain vital information that would assist in the operation (i.e. interviewing witnesses, released hostages, etc.). He/she will also:

1. Designate a location to conduct these interviews and will coordinate the debriefing of the hostages following the incident;

2. Keep the SRT Commander/CNT apprised of any information obtained by Detective members concerning the hostage taker(s), hostage(s), hostage site, and other intelligence information;
3. Keep the Command Post/PIO informed of the information obtained by the CNT/Detective Staff so that the primary negotiator can give his/her full attention to the situation/hostage taker(s); and
4. Assist the CNT in locating any requested professional assistance (Psychiatrist, Psychologist) or third party negotiator, if necessary.

H. Hostage Situation Consideration(s): During a hostage situation, the jeopardy to the hostage is continuous and uninterrupted until he/she is released. The hostage(s) should never be considered safe until he/she is secured by authorities.

1. Although tensions may rise and fall, it is only an indicator of the temporary safety of the hostage.
2. Because the victim is in constant danger while being held hostage, the Department will make every attempt to secure his/her release at the earliest opportunity.
3. It may become necessary to rescue the hostage at the expense of the hostage taker.
4. If a hostage rescue is necessary, the primary mission will be to rescue the hostage(s). All other missions (i.e. arrest, securing evidence, etc.) are secondary.
5. Once released, hostages are in police custody. A member will be assigned to maintain direct control over them until they have been debriefed. They will then be removed from the area by a police escort and released to a responsible party (i.e. family member, clergy, DFS, Juvenile Officer, etc.).

I. Reporting: The Offense Report shall be the responsibility of the primary responding officer. All other members having individual knowledge of pertinent facts concerning the event shall complete the appropriate supplemental report(s).

Chris Connally Chief of Police

Date