



# CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

## GENERAL POLICE ORDER



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| EFFECTIVE DATE:<br>OCTOBER 30, 2024     | CHAPTER:<br>4 - Field Operations | PAGE:<br>1 of 8 | NUMBER:<br>4.07.11 |
| SUBJECT:<br>ACTIVE THREAT RESPONSE      |                                  |                 |                    |
| CHIEF:<br><i>Dorothy A. Todd, Chief</i> |                                  |                 |                    |

*Substantive changes are italicized*

**PURPOSE:** To empower the patrol officer or first responder to confront an active *threat* when any delayed response or a failure to act constitutes a greater risk than waiting for a specialized response. To establish a plan of action for first responders to follow when such an active *threat* event occurs.

**POLICY:** **It is the policy of the Cleveland Division of Police** to prevent death or serious harm to uninvolved persons. Officers responding to an active *threat* incident shall have the authority to and shall attempt to make immediate contact with and stop the active *threat*. Secondly, responding officers shall deny the active *threat* access to additional victims and shall rescue injured/potential victims. Officers shall rely on their Rapid Action Immediate Deployment (RAID) training to quickly and efficiently mount an immediate response prior to the availability of a tactical unit. In active situations, delayed response can result in additional loss of life or serious physical harm.

This policy shall not be construed to mandate that responding officers place themselves in harm's way in a manner that is beyond the officer's capabilities (e.g., skill, training, experience, equipment, and responding environment). RAID deployment is not a substitute for a specialized response by officers specifically trained for such encounters.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Active Threat** - the suspect's activity and use of a firearm (or any other deadly instrument, device, machine, dangerous ordnance, or deadly hazard) is causing or attempting to cause immediate death and/or serious physical harm in a well populated area (target rich environment), such as a school, church, business, or any other public place. The activity is continuing and there is an immediate and ongoing threat of death or serious physical harm to potential victims. Escape from a law enforcement response is generally not a priority of the active *threat*. Active *threats* may have planned diversionary *obstacles* to permit themselves more time to accomplish their primary task. Active *threats* may have deployed improvised explosive devices (IED) or other "booby traps" to impede a law enforcement response or to magnify the harm intended. The suspect(s) may also employ an "ambush" to maximize harm to emergency responders. The active *threat* may also be just one member of a team of assailants. Active *threats* may be wearing body armor. Active *threats* will generally be very familiar with the physical layout and other details of the event environment.

**Contact Team** – a single officer (*Solo Response*) or team of officers who are already on scene or the first to arrive on scene of an active *threat* event. These officers will be the first to enter the area/building and their mission is to find and stop the *threat*.

**Dynamic Situation** - the situation is evolving very rapidly along with the suspect(s) *actively engaged in*

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*causing death or serious physical harm.*

**Rescue Team** - a team of first responders consisting of the following groups who enter the area/building to render medical aid, evacuate or both to the injured/wounded.

1. Team of six (6) CDP officers
2. Team of four (4) CDP officers and two (2) EMS medics
3. Team of four (4) CDP officers and two (2) Fire Fighters
4. Team of four (4) CDP officers, one (1) EMS medic, and one (1) Fire Fighter

**Static Situation** - the situation is not evolving or in motion. The suspect's actions have ceased or appear to be contained, such as when the suspect has barricaded him/herself in a room and the suspect's deadly actions have been suspended.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### I. Rapid Action Immediate Deployment (RAID) Considerations

#### A. The aggressive and deadly behavior is active.

1. The event is ongoing and the suspect(s) is actively engaged in causing death or serious physical harm by way of a firearm, edged weapon, or any other deadly instrument, device, machine, dangerous ordnance, or deadly hazard.
2. The incident location potentially contains multiple suspected victims, such as:
  1. Schools and day care facilities.
  2. Crowded public parks, playgrounds, recreation areas.
  3. Sporting events, *special events*, other public venues.
  4. Hospitals.
  5. Shopping malls, retail stores.
  6. Places of business/employment.
  7. And other locations.

#### B. Citizen/Officer Rescue.

1. A citizen or police officer is suffering from a serious injury and a delayed rescue may prove fatal.
2. The suspect may, or may not, be actively involved in an assault, however, an assault is imminent and immediate rescue is critical.
3. Due to the location and/or condition of the victim(s), an immediate rescue may be

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necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm.

## II. First Responders

- A. The first officers on the scene are likely to be uniformed patrol officers assigned to the Patrol Section, but may also be the nearest officer from any unit or an off-duty police officer in civilian clothing who is already on scene (refer to General Police Order 4.08.08 Officer Safety: Off Duty and Plain Clothes). The first responding officers' actions are critical to the event's outcome. An initial responder oversees the scene as the ad-hoc incident commander, until relieved by a superior/command officer. Assumption of incident command may be based on rank, expertise, or experience. The name, rank, and assignment of the incident commander shall be made immediately clear through all channels of incident communication.
- B. Assess the Situation by Conducting a Scene Assessment
  - 1. Establish an Incident Command. The senior or most experienced officer on the scene shall accept this responsibility until a superior officer arrives.
  - 2. Make a rapid assessment and request appropriate resources:
    - 1. Additional officers.
    - 2. Additional weaponry/equipment.
    - 3. Emergency medical personnel.
    - 4. SWAT.
    - 5. Traffic Unit.
    - 6. Field Forces.
    - 7. Division of Fire.
    - 8. Bomb Squad.
    - 9. Mutual Aid.
  - 3. Determine if immediate action and rapid deployment is appropriate.
- C. Communications
  - 1. The incident commander shall transition to the appropriate tactical channel as the event progresses. *Until then, first responders will utilize the District channel of the incident, keeping the air clear for the contact and rescue teams. Once an appropriate tactical channel is identified, the incident commander will ensure CCS assigns appropriate personnel to assist and monitor the channel.*

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2. Important information must be made available to responding units.
  1. Number of suspect(s).
  2. Physical and clothing description of suspect(s).
  3. Description of suspect weapon(s).
  4. Last known location or movement of suspect(s).
  5. Special information about the incident location.
  6. Whether plain-clothes officers are on the scene.
3. On-scene officers shall communicate the safest approach to the event based on information available.
4. On-scene officers shall establish an Incident Command Post location, even if only temporary. *Keep in mind that the Command Post should not be within line of site of the incident location and should offer some protection for responding personnel.*
5. While establishing perimeters is not a primary duty of responding officers, perimeters shall be established as permitted as additional police resources arrive on scene to handle the task.

D. Assemble Contact and Rescue Teams

1. In active situations, officers may enter alone or with fewer than the three back-up officers when perceived delay may result in additional loss of life.
2. Contact Team assignments (officers may constitute a smaller configured team as warranted by the need for an expeditious response).
  1. **Team Leader:** *Assigns team member responsibilities, formulates and implements a plan and establishes communication. The team leader can be any of the following positions:*
  2. **Point-Person:** *Deploys a shotgun/patrol rifle, or pistol if long gun is not available and provides cover for entrance and/or egress if necessary;*
  3. **Left Flank:** Provides cover on the left side of the formation, may rotate and acts as a rescue or contact officer;
  4. **Right Flank:** Provides cover on right side of the formation, may rotate and acts as a rescue or contact officer;
  5. **Rear Guard:** Deploys a shotgun/patrol rifle, or pistol and provides cover for entrance and/or egress as required;

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6. All the above positions shall also cover areas overhead and below, as threats can appear from all areas.
  
3. Contact Team Responsibilities
  1. *Equipment: Contact Team officers can increase their response capabilities by having the following equipment if available:*
    - i. *Additional Ammunition (pistol & shotgun).*
    - ii. *Medical Trauma Kit.*
    - iii. *Flashlight.*
    - iv. *Kevlar Helmet.*
    - v. *Ballistic Armor and Shield.*
    - vi. *Water.*
  2. Consider alternate entry points other than the main entry point where the active *threat* may be anticipating and preparing to respond (attack/booby trap/IED) to a law enforcement entry.
  3. Priority is to make rapid contact with the suspect and stop the violent behavior.
  4. Continue past victims (injured or not), ensuring they are not the threat, but communicate back to the Rescue Team through observation and intel from victim the following:
    - i. Victim location and medical needs.
    - ii. Suspicious packages and possible IEDs (location & type).
    - iii. Suspect description, location, and name.
    - iv. Suspect weapon(s) and equipment (e.g. body armor).
  5. Limit suspect movements and prevent escape.
  6. Communicate progress to Incident Command.
  
4. Rescue Team Responsibilities
  1. Priority is the rescue and recovery of victim(s) whether via evacuation or shelter-in-place strategies.
    - i. Extract victims to a safe area (or temporarily shelter in place).

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- ii. Notify medical personnel and escort same to victims when necessary.
    - iii. *EMS & Fire personnel shall comply with all instructions/orders from CDP officers in the rescue teams and with their professional knowledge and judgement for safety concerns in active threat scenes.*
    - iv. Debrief victims and relay event intelligence back to the Contact Team.
    - v. Communicate any possible suspect sightings, contacts, or evidence of recent suspect movements.
    - vi. *If a suspect is confronted, preferably two (2) CDP members of the Rescue Team will become a Contact Team and pursue to stop the violent behavior of the suspect(s). At least, two CDP officers shall remain with and provide safety for EMS and Fire personnel.*
  - 2. Coordinate activities with the Contact Team leader and responding personnel.
  - 3. Emphasize custody, *searching for weapons*, and control.
- E. Use of Deadly Force.
- 1. When a suspect's behavior presents an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to an uninvolved person, it may be necessary to use deadly force. The team leader has ultimate authority over team actions. Individual officers are authorized to use deadly force in accordance with *General Police Order [2.01.03](#) Use of Force - General*.
- F. Mental Preparation for Entry and What to Expect: Active *threat* situations are sufficiently unique and rare so that officers can expect an environment for which they may never be completely prepared. This environment may include but is not be limited to:
- 1. Constant or continual noise from screaming and crying people, alarms, intermittent gunfire, etc.
  - 2. Carnage, possibly even involving very young victims.
  - 3. Smoke or overpowering smells (*i.e. homemade gas, irritants*).
  - 4. Fire and sprinkler operation and possible standing water.
  - 5. Confusion and chaos with victims hiding, afraid, in shock, and not responding to commands from officers.
  - 6. *Ambush from multiple attackers from multiple vantage points (e.g., rooftops, vehicles, perimeter areas and elevated positions).*
  - 7. Encountering IEDs.

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G. Direction on responding to IEDs.

1. Visually inspect (but refrain from touching) a suspected IED for active timer, lit fuse, trip wires, etc.
2. If an IED is located, initiate protocols for Bomb Squad/IED as directed in General Police Order [4.02.03](#) Bomb Squad and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) Protocols. This includes limitations on two-way electronic communications (this includes cell phones) and appropriate evacuation distances as required.
3. Identify locations of suspected IEDs and communicate this verbally when possible.
4. Do not touch or move suspected IEDs.
5. *Mark the location of the device(s) with colored or bright indicators when available.*
6. Move past the device when part of a Contact or Rescue Team, or consider an alternate route.
7. *Anticipate secondary devices in parking areas and around the perimeter designed to incapacitate or distract first responders.*

H. Arrival of SWAT before resolution of the event

1. Coordinate and relinquish contact responsibility.
2. Assist with containment of the suspect if needed.
3. Assist with evacuation or relocation of victims.
4. Act as a guide, “pathfinder”, for SWAT.
  - a. Direct to last known suspect location.
  - b. Communicate locations of suspected IEDs.
  - c. Pass on all pertinent information regarding the situation.

I. Incident Command System (ICS)

1. The expeditious establishment of the Incident Command System will enhance the probability of a swift resolution.
2. *Procedures from GPO [4.07.02](#) Crowd Management – Incident Command System shall be adhered to for establishing incident command for active threat situations.*

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**THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.**