

# Annapolis Police Department



## GENERAL ORDER

**Number: H.14**

**Issue Date: November  
2015**

**TO:** All Personnel

**SUBJECT:** Active Shooter

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines for the rapid response to an active threat incident.

### **POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Annapolis Police Department, based on training and experience, initial responding officers have the responsibility to take immediate action to contain and if necessary neutralize any incident where lives are in imminent danger unless the circumstances prohibit.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Active Shooter** - An armed person who has used deadly force and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.

**Active Threat** – Any incident that by its deliberate nature puts lives in imminent danger. An active threat may be similar to an active shooter while not involving the use of firearms by a suspect(s).

**Immediate Action Rapid Deployment (IARD)** - The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement personnel and resources to an ongoing life threatening situation where delayed deployment of personnel could otherwise result in death or great bodily injury to innocent persons. Immediate Action Rapid Deployment tactics are not a substitute for conventional response tactics to a hostage, barricade or sniper situations.

**Contact Team** - A team made up of one to four law enforcement officers who arrive at the scene of an active shooting incident. The Contact Team shall form as soon as the incident is identified as an active shooter incident and utilize IARD tactics to locate the active shooter(s) using all necessary and lawful means to end the event.

**Rescue Team** - A team made up of two to four law enforcement officers who enter the scene after the Contact Team to render first aid to wounded persons and to remove them from the hostile environment. Rescue Teams shall also evacuate innocent persons from the hostile environment.

**Hostile Environment** - An environment in which an active shooting incident has taken place until it is declared safe by the Incident Commander following evacuations of all living persons.

**Dynamic Event** – A rapidly evolving situation in which the shooter(s) is active and in motion.

**Static Event** - A situation that is not evolving or in motion. The suspect's actions appear to be contained.

Incidents experienced across the country suggest the typical response involving containment, isolation and negotiation may not be adequate. Unlike most criminals, active shooters are likely to continue to use deadly force until intervention occurs or until the shooter decides to stop.

The active shooter concept represents a shift in patrol response tactics, equipment needs and command protocol. The concept requires initial police responders arriving on the scene have the authority and the capability to take action without waiting for commanders or for the arrival of specialty units such as the Annapolis Special Emergency Team (ASET) or the Crisis Negotiation Team.

## **I. Characteristics of an Active Shooter**

The following is a list of characteristics commonly associated with active shooter suspects. This list is not comprehensive. Each active shooter situation is unique.

- A. Active shooters usually focus on assaulting persons with whom they come into contact. Their intention is usually an expression of hatred or rage rather than the commission of a crime.
- B. An active shooter is likely to engage more than one target. Active shooters may be intent on killing a number of people as quickly as possible.
- C. Generally, the first indication of the presence of an active shooter is when he or she begins to assault victims.
- D. Active shooters often go to locations where potential victims are close at hand, such as schools, theaters, concerts or shopping malls. Active shooters may assault victims from a distance like a sniper or may engage multiple targets while remaining mobile.
- E. Tactics such as containment and negotiation, normally associated with standoff incidents may not be adequate in active shooter incidents. Active shooters

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typically continue their attack despite the arrival of emergency responders.

- F. Active shooters are often better armed than the police, sometimes making use of explosives, booby traps and body armor. Active shooters are not limited to the use of firearms in accomplishing their attacks on victims. They may use bladed weapons, vehicles or any tool that in the circumstances in which it is used constitutes deadly physical force.
- G. Active shooters may have a planned and rehearsed attack and be prepared for a sustained confrontation with the police. Historically, active shooters have not attempted to hide their identity or conceal the commission of their attacks. Escape from the police is usually not a priority of the active shooter.
- H. Active shooters may employ some type of diversion.
- I. Active shooters may be indiscriminate in their violence or they may seek specific victims.
- J. Active shooters may be suicidal, deciding to die in the course of their actions either at the hand of others or by a self-inflicted wound.
- K. Active shooters usually have some degree of familiarity with the building or location they choose to occupy.
- L. Active shooter events are dynamic and may go in and out of an “active” status; a static incident may turn into active shooter incident or an active shooter may go “inactive” by going to a barricaded status without access to victims.

## II. Response Guidelines

These are **ideal guidelines**. Officers must keep in mind that there will be little time for preparation. The officer in charge must decide in a moment whether to contain and wait for additional units or to take immediate action.

- A. The need for rapid response to an active shooter may preclude the option of requesting and waiting for the arrival of tactical units. All sworn members are authorized and expected to take immediate action, based on their training, to neutralize the active shooter and rescue victims, unless the circumstances preclude any reasonable attempt.
- B. The first officer must take charge of the active shooter incident. Assumption of tactical responsibility may be based on rank, expertise or seniority. This must be made clear to the other officers and to Communications. An officer of superior rank who is on scene and fully briefed may ultimately assume command. This must be made clear to the other officers.
- C. The officer taking charge must, based on all information available, make a situation analysis. The analysis will be continuous based on observations from others as well as the information received from Communications. The analysis

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must lead to a decision as to whether the situation is an active shooter event.

- D. If the officer in charge has determined an active shooter event exists he/she will initiate incident command. The officer in charge will determine if an opportunity exists for immediate intervention and how arriving resources should be deployed. No action will be taken that is unplanned or without controls. The command post will be manned by an officer who possesses all available information on tactical plans.
- E. The next four officers to arrive on the scene will form a Contact Team and follow audio and visual clues and/or available intelligence to find the active shooter(s) and utilize all lawful necessary force to end the event or contain the shooter(s). Obtain as much information as possible and relay this information to the command post and Communications. This information should include but be limited to, number of shooter(s), possible location, type of weapons, description of shooter(s), etc.
- F. Less than four officers will form a Contact Team only as a last resort when it is apparent that due to response time additional officers will not arrive in an expeditious manner.
- G. The Contact Team's primary responsibility is to confront the active shooter. Stopping the active shooter by arrest, containment or use of force including deadly force is their sole responsibility. They will focus on no other activity until their mission is accomplished.
- H. Once the active shooter has been stopped, the Contact Team must be aware of the possibility of additional assailants. If more shooting, audio/visual cues or intelligence information leads to the conclusion that a second, third or more active shooters are present, they will continue their mission until all active shooters are stopped. In any event, the Contact Team will continue their search until the entire building(s) have been cleared and they have stopped all active shooters. If the Contact Team is successful in containing the active shooter(s) and no innocent victims are in imminent danger, procedures for a hostage/barricade incident will be initiated.
- I. Later responding officers are not to search for an active shooter unless it is learned that the Contact Team has been rendered incapable of continuing their mission. In instances when the first Contact Team has been rendered ineffective, another Contact Team shall be formed immediately to continue their mission. If an additional Contact Team is formed, coordination between Contacts Teams is vital.
- J. Other responding officers shall form a perimeter to stop the escape of an active shooter. Active shooters emerging from cover and concealment are to be stopped by the perimeter officer using all lawful and necessary force. It should be anticipated that innocent persons will be fleeing the active shooter. Fleeing persons are to be searched and directed to a place of safety designated by the Incident Commander.

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- K. The Contact Team shall maintain radio communications providing status information and observations.
- L. Be aware of pre-planned actions taken by school officials inside the affected school. Pre-planned actions may include but not limited to classrooms being locked from the inside (lock down) and/or shelter-in-place procedures being activated.

**III. Rescue/Recovery**

- A. Once all active shooters have been stopped, the focus shifts to evacuations of all living persons from the hostile environment. The area will continue to be viewed as hostile even though no more hostile action is known to be taking place. It is possible that yet another one or more active shooters have abandoned their efforts in hopes of escape or mingling with innocent civilians.
- B. The Incident Commander at the scene shall call in all necessary resources to form Rescue Teams to search the hostile environment for wounded persons and innocent civilians in hiding. Depending upon the available resources, Rescue Teams will consist of two to four officers.
- C. Wounded persons shall be removed from the hostile environment to a triage area of safety where they will receive first aid. First aid of the wounded civilians shall be the responsibility of the Rescue Team member unless relieved by paramedics/medical personnel at the triage area.
- D. The Incident Commander may admit paramedics/medical personnel into the hostile environment if in the opinion of a Rescue Team member the wounded person cannot be safely evacuated. In this case a Rescue Team member will accompany the paramedic/medical personnel into the hostile area.
- E. Uninjured persons in the hostile environment shall be searched for weapons by Rescue Team members prior to being evacuated to a safe areas designated by the Incident Commander. One Rescue Team member is to serve as a cover officer while other team member(s) are searching for weapons.
- F. Rescue Team members shall continue to search the hostile environment until all living persons have been evacuated.
- G. Only the Incident Commander at the scene shall declare a hostile environment safe. This will normally be declared after a final search by the Annapolis Special Emergency Team (A.S.E.T.). The hostile environment now becomes a crime scene.

**IV. Communications**

- A. Upon receipt of a call indicating the possibility of an active shooter incident, the

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police Communications Operator shall:

1. Remain calm and coherent.
2. Notify the Communications Supervisor, if available, of the nature of the call, and the location.
3. Record the nature of the call, the address, and other information given by the caller including the caller's name, address and location.
4. Maintain communication with the caller until patrol units have arrived on the scene.
5. Attempt to secure detailed information from the caller concerning the incident. This shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Name and description of the assailant(s).
  - b. Exact location of the assailant(s)
  - c. Number and types of weapons.
  - d. Mental/physical state of assailant(s), i.e., alcohol or drug use, mental illness, if possible.
  - e. Possible motivation of the assailant.

B. Upon dispatch of a call involving an active shooter incident, the Police Communications Operator (PCO) shall:

1. Remain calm and coherent.
2. Dispatch the call to a primary unit, secondary units, the Watch Commander and Platoon Supervisor. This shall be a Code **Three** response for all units.
3. Require all personnel that respond to the call to advise when they have arrived on the scene.
4. Continue to advise responding units of all information received, as well as of any new developments in the situations.
5. Clear the air for responding units.

C. During the course of the call involving an active shooter incident, the Police Communications Operator (PCO) shall:

1. Monitor and assist additional responding units by advising of a safe route to the command post or staging area.
2. Once patrol units have verified that active shooter situations exist, the PCO shall notify the Commander of the Operations Division, the Deputy Chief and the Chief of Police.
3. Upon request of the on-scene commander, the PCO shall contact A.S.E.T. members in accordance with **General Order H.4**, as well as members of the C.N.T., and/or other specially trained officers or units
4. Maintain open communication with all units involved in the incident and respond expeditiously to all requests.

**V. Command and Control**

A. The first supervisor on the scene, who is not part of the Contact Team, will

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assume command upon receiving all pertinent information and until relieved by a higher ranking officer. The supervisor will perform duties as outlined in **General Order H.1** such as, but not limited to establishing a command post, designating a staging area and ensuring that an inner and an outer perimeter are established. Once relieved, the supervisor will serve as the assistant on-scene Incident Commander until relieved by the on-scene Incident Commander.

- B. Direct the Communications Section to contact the Shift Lieutenant and the Commander of the Operations Division.
- C. In case of an active shooter incident the Shift Lieutenant will serve as the on-scene Incident Commander. If a Shift Lieutenant is unavailable, the ranking supervisor will serve as the on-scene Incident Commander.
- D. Ensure the External Affairs Officer has been notified, designate a media briefing area (by the outer perimeter) and maintain news-media relations until the External Affairs Officer can be summoned and has arrived on the scene. Refer to **General Order B.7**. Expect a large media presence.
- E. The reporting responsibility may be assigned to either the post officer and/or the on-scene investigator. The Incident Commander shall insure the supervisor writes a detailed Administrative Report on all aspects of the incident, to include any additional reports which are required (Use of Force, etc.) and forward them to the Commander of the Operations Division.
- F. In accordance with ICS procedures the Operations Function will have responsibility for sheltering the public until the threat has been contained and eliminated.

### VI. External Affairs Officer

Keep abreast of all information and activity at the scene. Consult with the on scene commander regarding information that can be released to the media. Conduct briefings as dictated by the circumstances.

### VII. Notifications

At the direction of the Incident Commander, personnel will make public notifications for safety and. Actual police tactics will not be discussed. The CodeRED public notification system may also be used to disseminate information. In addition, the Annapolis Police Application can also be used. The final decision as to the information to be disseminated will be made by the Incident Commander.

Additional public safety departments and other resources may be notified if needed.

### VIII. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness and to determine any training needs.

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Chief

References
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Accreditation Standards: 46.1.10</li><li>2. General Order B.7 News Media Relations - April 2000</li><li>3. General Order H.1 Hostage, Barricade and Sniper Situations (Critical Incidents - December 2000</li><li>4. General Order H.4 Annapolis Special Enforcement Team - April 2005</li></ol>



This General Order replaces General Order H.14 Active Shooter issued January 2010.