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POLICY

It is the policy of Fairfield Medical Center's Police Department, based on training and experience, to allow initial responding officers the authority and responsibility to take immediate action to contain and if necessary, neutralize active shooter incidents.

PURPOSE

The goal of police intervention in active shooter incidents is to neutralize the threat(s) by preventing access to potential victims, rescuing injured persons and potential victims, or a movement to neutralize the shooter(s). This goal can be achieved by various means, up to and including, the use of deadly physical force.

A. Definitions

1. Active Shooter - An active shooter is an armed person who has used deadly physical force on other persons and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.
2. Immediate Action Rapid Deployment - The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement personnel and resources to ongoing, life threatening situations 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 barricaded gunman.

PROCEDURE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. It is not unusual for the SRT to arrive at the scene of a barricaded incident and find that the patrol personnel have contained the suspect within a secure perimeter. There is generally time for the SRT to deploy their personnel without serious concern of the suspect(s) escaping. Once the incident has been isolated, time enables patrol and/or SRT to formulate a structured and deliberate plan.

However, there are scenarios that require immediate action and rapid deployment of patrol personnel prior to the arrival of the tactical team. In these cases delayed deployment could have catastrophic consequences. These scenarios often involve an ongoing "shots fired or downed officer/citizen rescue." It may also necessitate the immediate and rapid deployment of law enforcement personnel to contact and prevent the escape of an armed and dangerous person(s).

Over the past several years our nation has experienced a growing trend of mass violence committed by individuals. These episodes have come to be termed "active shooter" incidents and are unique in that the behavior of the suspect(s) is very different from that typically associated with other violent behaviors. Suspect(s) generally begin to shoot at numbers of people without warning. The motives for these behaviors can range from rage, vengeance or mental dysfunction.

The incidents experienced across the country suggest that the typical police 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. These situations require the initial police responders arriving at the scene to have the authority and the capability to take action without waiting for command staff or for the arrival of specialty units such as SRT or hostage negotiators. This policy contains the following information concerning active shooter incidents:

1. Definition of the term "active shooter".
2. Characteristics of active shooter.
3. Procedures for active shooter incidents.
4. Guidelines for development of tactics for use against active shooters.

B. Characteristics Of An Active Shooter.

The following is a list of characteristics commonly associated with active shooter suspects. The list is compiled from descriptions of past active shooters and not meant to be a comprehensive list describing all active shooters. Each active shooter situation is unique.

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. Generally, the first indication of the presence of an active shooter is when he or she begins to assault victims.
4. Active shooters often go to locations where potential victims are close at hand, such as schools, theaters, concerts or shopping malls. Active shooters may act in the manner of a sniper, assaulting victims from a distance. Active shooters may also engage multiple targets while remaining constantly mobile.
5. Tactics such as containment and negotiation, normally associated with standoff incidents may not be adequate in active shooter events. Active shooters typically continue their attack despite the arrival of emergency responders.
6. 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 circumstance in which it is used, constitutes deadly physical force.
7. Active shooters may have a planned attack and may 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.
8. Active shooters may employ some type of diversion.
9. Active shooters may be indiscriminate in their violence or they may seek specific victims.
10. Active shooters may be suicidal, deciding to die in the course of their actions either at the hand of others or by self-inflicted wound.
11. Active shooters usually have some degree of familiarity with the building or location they choose to occupy.
12. Active shooter events are dynamic and may go in and out of an "active" status; a static incident may turn into an active shooter event or an active shooter may go "inactive" by going to a barricaded status without access to victims.

C. Response Guidelines.

The following seven (7) tenets set general response guidelines for active shooter incidents. Again, these incidents are sufficiently unique such that their effective handling cannot be totally reduced to procedures. These procedures are not meant to limit conventional police tactics, which are appropriate to a crisis situation. The significant factors regarding these tactics are that they represent a means of intervention available to the policy and there is the potential of elevated risk to bystanders and police. The risk is acceptable in lights of the potential these tactics have for savings lives. Another significant aspect of the active shooter tactical doctrine is that police arriving at the scene of an active shooter incident are authorized to intervene prior to the arrival of command personnel and special units.

1. Goal

The overall purpose of these tactics is to save lives and prevent serious injuries. The goal for police response at an active shooter event is neutralization by denying access to additional victims, rescuing injured victims and/or rescuing potential victims and neutralizing the threat.

2. Assume Tactical Responsibility

One initial officer must take charge of the active shooter incident. Assumption of tactical responsibility may be based on rank, expertise or seniority. However, it must be made immediately clear to the communication center and other officers, who are in charge. An officer of superior rank who is on scene and fully briefed may ultimately assume incident command. Any change in incident command will be made known to the Radio Room and other officers.

3. Situational Analysis

The officer taking charge must, based on all information available, make a situation analysis. The analysis will be continuous, taking into account new information from Radio and observations from officers and citizens. The analysis must lead to a decision as to whether the situation is an active shooter event, whether an opportunity exists for immediate intervention leading to accomplishment of one of the goals listed above, and how responding resources should be employed at the scene.

4. Incident Command

One of the first officers arriving on the scene will initiate incident command. He/she will initiate the situation analysis and determine initial deployment of responding resources. The establishment of the command post must not delay the deployment of the first contact team. At least one person possessing all available information on tactical plans will remain at the command post to brief arriving personnel. Command personnel en route to the incident will monitor the radio to gain information, but shall not obstruct ongoing intervention. Command personnel must be on scene and fully briefed before assuming incident command.

5. First Responder Tactical Intervention

When responding to active shooter incidents, the Center Police Department endorses the concept of first responder tactical intervention. It is critical that all officers, supervisors and command personnel are familiar with the definition of an active shooter as well as the tactics deemed appropriate for active shooter response. The traditional uniform responses of contain, isolate, evacuate and wait for SRT and hostage negotiators may not be adequate in an active shooter incident. The first officer on the scene will need to consider the following.

a. Rescue/Contact Team

First responder intervention will be based on opportunity. Rescue teams will be in the form of officers with an identified element leader. Team movement will be in a controlled and disciplined tactical action under the control and direction of the element leader.

b. Containment

Dedicated security elements should always be a component of intervention teams. Individual action is discouraged, as it is usually counterproductive to a coordinated, focused response to an active shooter event. Site containment will be left to the discretion of the first officer on the scene that assumes incident responsibility and initiates the situation assessment. Containment of an active shooter incident may take the form of officers serving in an "observe and report" capacity.

6. Active Shooter Site Security

No location associated with an active shooter will be considered secure until the SRT commander declares it is so. Officers assigned to security functions will maintain positions until properly relieved.

7. Lancaster Police Special Response Team (SRT):

When SRT units are prepared to deploy, the initial responding officers may be relieved or redeployed by SRT.



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