

	<b>HARRISONBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT</b> General Orders	<b>Policy Number:</b> 420
	<b>Chapter:</b> Field Operations	<b>Total Pages:</b> 5
	<b>Section:</b> Hostage and Barricade Incidents	<b>Issue Date:</b> 07/02/2021
	<b>Issued By:</b> Kelley Warner, Chief of Police	<b>Effective Date:</b> 07/02/2021
	<b>Replaces:</b> All General Orders Previously Issued Relative to Subject	
<b>VALEAC Standards: ADM.22.01 (b), OPR.05.01(d)</b>		

## A. POLICY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for instances where a hostage or barricade situation has developed. This policy does not require or recommend specific strategies or tactics for resolution as each incident is a dynamic and rapidly evolving event. It is the policy of the Harrisonburg Police Department to address hostage and barricade situations with due regard for the preservation of life and balancing the risk of injury, while obtaining the safe release of hostages, apprehending offenders and securing available evidence.

## B. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this policy. Responsibility rests with the supervisor to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated. This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

## C. DEFINITIONS

**Barricade situation** - An incident where a person maintains a position of cover or concealment and ignores or resists law enforcement personnel, and it is reasonable to believe the subject is armed with a dangerous or deadly weapon.

**Hostage situation** - An incident where it is reasonable to believe a person is:

- Unlawfully held by a hostage-taker as security so that specified terms or conditions will be met.
- Unlawfully held against his/her will under threat or actual use of force.

**Real-time location data** - Any data or information concerning the current location of an electronic device ([VA Code § 19.2-70.3](#)).

## **D. COMMUNICATION**

When circumstances permit, initial responding officers should try to establish and maintain lines of communication with a barricaded person or hostage-taker. Officers should attempt to identify any additional subjects, inquire about victims and injuries, seek the release of hostages, gather intelligence information, identify time-sensitive demands or conditions and obtain the suspect's surrender.

When available, department-authorized negotiators should respond to the scene as soon as practicable and assume communication responsibilities. Negotiators are permitted to exercise flexibility in each situation based upon their training, the circumstances presented, suspect actions or demands, and the available resources.

## **E. CONSIDERATIONS**

First responding officers should promptly and carefully evaluate all available information to determine whether an incident involves, or may later develop into, a hostage or barricade situation.

The first responding officer should immediately request a supervisor's response as soon as it is determined that a hostage or barricade situation exists and request that the radio frequency be cleared for the incident. The first responding officer shall assume the duties of the supervisor until relieved by a supervisor or a more qualified responder. The officer shall continually evaluate the situation, including the level of risk to officers, to the persons involved and to bystanders, and the resources currently available.

The officer should brief the arriving supervisor of the incident, including information about suspects and victims, the extent of any injuries, additional resources or equipment that may be needed, and current perimeters and evacuation areas.

### **a. HOSTAGE/BARRICADE SITUATION**

Unless circumstances require otherwise, officers handling a hostage and/or barricade situation should attempt to avoid a forceful confrontation in favor of stabilizing the incident by establishing and maintaining lines of communication while awaiting the arrival of specialized personnel and trained negotiators. However, it is understood that hostage and/or barricade situations are dynamic and can require that officers react quickly to developing or changing threats. The following options, while not all-inclusive or in any particular order, should be considered:

- a. Ensure injured persons are evacuated from the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so. Request medical assistance.
- b. Assign personnel to a contact team to control the subject should he/she attempt to exit the building, structure or vehicle, and attack, use deadly force, attempt to escape or surrender prior to additional resources arriving.

- c. Establish a rapid response team in the event it becomes necessary to rapidly enter a building, structure or vehicle, such as when the suspect is using deadly force against any hostages (see the Rapid Response and Deployment Policy).
- d. Assist hostages or potential hostages to escape if it is reasonably safe to do so. Hostages should be secured and kept separated, if practicable, pending further interview.
- e. Request additional personnel, resources and equipment as needed (e.g., canine team, air support).
- f. Provide responding emergency personnel with a safe arrival route to the location.
- g. Evacuate uninjured persons in the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so.
- h. Attempt to obtain a line of communication and gather as much information about the suspect as possible, including any weapons, victims and their injuries, additional hazards, other involved parties and any other relevant intelligence information.
- i. Establish an inner and outer perimeter as resources and circumstances permit to prevent escape and unauthorized access.
- j. Evacuate bystanders, residents and businesses within the inner and then outer perimeter as appropriate. Check for injuries, the presence of other involved subjects, witnesses, evidence or additional information.
- k. Determine the need for and notify the appropriate persons within and outside the Department, such as command officers and the PIO.
- l. If necessary and available, establish a tactical or exclusive radio frequency for the incident.
- m. Establish a command post
- n. Develop a traffic plan to reroute vehicles away from affected area.

## **F. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon being notified that a hostage or barricade situation exists, the supervisor should immediately respond to the scene, assess the risk level of the situation, establish a proper chain of command and assume the role of Incident Commander until properly relieved. This includes requesting Emergency Response Team (ERT) response and apprising the ERT Commanders of the circumstances. In addition, the following options, listed here in no particular order, should be considered:

- a. Ensure injured persons are evacuated and treated by medical personnel.
- b. Ensure the completion of necessary first responder responsibilities or assignments. (ie. Contact team, Rapid Response Team)
- c. Request crisis negotiators, specialized assignment members, additional department members, resources or equipment as appropriate.
- d. Establish a command post location as resources and circumstances permit.
- e. Designate assistants who can help with intelligence information and documentation of the incident.
- f. Ensure adequate law enforcement coverage for the remainder of the City during the incident. The supervisor should direct nonessential personnel away from the scene unless they have been summoned by the supervisor or Emergency Communications Center.

- g. Identify a media staging area outside the outer perimeter and have the department PIO or a designated temporary media representative provide media access in accordance with the Media Relations Policy.
- h. Identify the need for mutual aid and the transition or relief of personnel for incidents of extended duration.
- i. Develop a traffic plan to reroute motorists away from the scene.
- j. Debrief personnel and review documentation as appropriate.

## **G. ERT RESPONSIBILITIES**

It will be the Incident Commander's decision, with input from the SWAT and Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) Commanders, whether to deploy the ERT during a hostage or barricade situation. Once the Incident Commander authorizes deployment, the SWAT Commander, CNT Commander or the authorized designee will be responsible for the tactical and negotiations response. The Incident Commander shall continue to oversee and support the ERT response throughout the deployment. The SWAT Commander and CNT Commander or the authorized designees shall maintain direct communications, at all times, with the Incident Commander.

## **H. REPORTING**

Unless otherwise relieved by a supervisor or Incident Commander, the reporting officer at the scene is responsible for completion and/or coordination of incident reports before ending his/her tour of duty unless otherwise authorized.

### **a. SWAT REPORT**

After the situation is resolved, it will be the responsibility of the SWAT Team leader or his designee to forward a written report to the SWAT Team Commander. The report will include:

- a. A critique of actions taken by the SWAT Team
- b. Any levels of force
- c. Injuries to any persons
- d. Use of weapons or chemical agents
- e. Any property damage

### **b. CNT REPORT**

After the situation is resolved, it will be the responsibility of the CNT Team Leader or his or her designee to complete an after action report and forward it to the CNT Commander. The report will include, at a minimum:

- a. A critique of actions taken by the CNT
- b. Performance of and any damage to CNT equipment
- c. Injuries to any person