



Maryland-National Capital Park Police  
Prince George's County Division



**DIVISION DIRECTIVE**

TITLE <b>HOSTAGE BARRICADE, PANIC ALARM AND ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENTS</b>		PROCEDURE NUMBER <b>PG405.2</b>	
SECTION <b>Operational Procedures</b>	DISTRIBUTION <b>A</b>	EFFECTIVE DATE <b>07/01/17</b>	REVIEW DATE <b>05/01/21</b>
REPLACES <b>PG405.2 "Hostage and Barricade Incidents", issued on 12/13/18</b>			
RELATED DIRECTIVES <b>PG405.0, 405.1, 406.0</b>	REFERENCES <b>CALEA 46</b>	AUTHORITY <i>S.R. Johnson</i> <b>Chief Stanley R. Johnson</b>	

**I. PURPOSE**

To provide supervisors and officers of this Division with procedures on how to respond in an emergency involving hostage/barricade and active shooter incidents in reference to M-NCPPC facilities/property and to establish cohesive and clear guidelines for Division personnel to follow in these incidents.

**II. POLICY**

The Department has primary responsibility for all calls for service at M-NCPPC facilities/property. The Division's policy is to ensure efficient and effective inter-agency coordination and cooperation in crisis situations.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. **Barricade Incident** - When a person takes refuge in a fortified location to avoid apprehension; these frequently involve bizarre behavior where a person has threatened the safety of himself/herself or others.
- B. **Hostage Incident** - Incidents where a person attempts to avoid apprehension by seizing captives and threatening them with injury to deter police action.

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- C. **Active Shooter Incident** – Incidents where one or more person(s) is engaged in an on-going shooting spree with the imminent threat of serious bodily injury or loss of life to others.
- D. **Contact Team** - An immediate action response formation made by the initial officer or officers on the scene to locate and neutralize the active shooter threat(s).
- E. **Quick Response Team (QRT)** – A team of officers formed to enter after the initial contact team for the purpose(s) of securing an inner perimeter, denying further access by occupants, and facilitating the evacuation of innocent occupants
- F. **Rescue Team** – A team of officers that will assist emergency rescue personnel with the rescue and removal of injured victims from the target location
- G. **Panic Alarm** - The activation of a silent panic alarm located in an M-NCPPC facility that is received by Park Police Communications.
- H. **Staging Area** – Assembly point for officers responding to hostage/barricade incidents; it should be conveniently accessible and of sufficient size to accommodate the expected personnel volume. The area shall not be used as a Command Post (CP), the location of which shall be selected by the Conflict Management Team (hostage negotiators) from the Prince George’s County Police Department.
- I. **Tactical Assault** - Physical intervention by police. Actions include the use of weapons and tactics.

## IV. OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

### Responding to Hostage/Barricade Incidents

- A. The first officer on the scene of a hostage/barricade incident will assess and verify the call. Working with the Communications Section, he/she will coordinate the establishment of an outer perimeter and position additional responding officers, until relieved by a supervisor.
  - 1. Officers should avoid any confrontations with the subject(s) in question and attempt to manage the situation until trained hostage negotiation and/or tactical personnel arrive. Officers shall not rush fortified positions. Plainclothes officers shall wear authorized identification item(s), such as police ball cap, police jacket, identification, etc. Responding officers shall:
    - a. Park vehicles in a manner to ensure access by other emergency vehicles and equipment.
    - b. Verify the incident.

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- c. Identify safe access routes to the scene and provide this information to the Communications Section.
  - d. Determine and communicate the exact location and description of suspects, emergency and support equipment required, types of weapons involved, identification and status of hostages.
  - e. Request sufficient personnel to ensure containment, to secure the scene and establish traffic and crowd control.
  - f. Seek and maintain adequate cover and concealment.
  - g. Determine the need to evacuate the area.
  - h. Locate and detain witnesses for debriefing.
  - i. Radio discipline within the proximity to an incident shall be strictly adhered to - officers shall limit radio transmissions to those necessary to the furtherance of the operation. All transmissions shall be made on the Park Police Primary Talk Group or appropriate Prince George's County Police Talk Group unless otherwise directed to another channel by the on-scene Incident Commander.
2. The primary police objective in a hostage incident is the safe release of hostages. The secondary objective is the apprehension of perpetrators or recovering the ransoms.
  3. In hostage incidents, there is rarely a need for immediate apprehension. Once the incident stabilizes captors become less likely to harm hostages.
  4. Occasionally, responding officers may have to negotiate with a barricaded subject. Officers shall exercise discretion in determining the propriety or scope of such negotiations before the arrival of the Prince George's County Police Conflict Management Team. Generally, those officers shall not:
    - a. Engage in protracted negotiations with hostage takers or barricaded subjects.
    - b. Conduct tactical assaults.
  5. When the incident stabilizes, officers shall attempt to ascertain the following information:
    - a. Floor plans.
    - b. Diagrams of neighborhoods.
    - c. Suspect identity, physical description, and mental history.
    - d. Information regarding telephones, including numbers and locations of instruments and available lines in the target area.
    - e. Reason for the barricade/hostage incident.
    - f. Weapons involved.
    - g. Location of officers in the inner perimeter, including names, ID numbers, and radio call numbers.

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- h. Persons who may be able to convince the perpetrator to surrender.
  - i. Identification of hostages, including a physical description.
  - j. Communications personnel will relay information to the PIO. The PIO will make public notifications for awareness, safety and public sheltering.
  
- B. Notifications will be made by Park Police Communications personnel to all Park Police Command Staff. When directed, the Communications Section, by alerting the Prince George's County Emergency Communications Center (E.C.C.), will make additional notifications to the Prince George's County Police Emergency Services Team (EST) and the Conflict Management Team (hostage negotiators) and to Prince George's County Fire and Rescue.
  
- C. The Prince George's County Police Emergency Services Team (EST), once on the scene, will operate in accordance with their Operational Directives on, "Hostage/Barricade Incidents."
  
- D. A Park Police Officer of Command Staff Rank shall respond to the scene and relieve the shift supervisor. The officer-in-charge (OIC) shall establish a staging area a safe distance from the scene and out of sight of the incident. This location shall be up-wind of the incident and consist of an area large enough to accommodate the Park Police Mobile Command Post, Prince George's County Police Command Bus, EST Tank Truck, and approximately 20 other vehicles.
  
- E. If an evacuation of surrounding areas is needed, it will be done by Prince George's County Police Officers with the assistance of a designated Park Police Officer. Evacuation's resulting through negotiations shall be handled by the Prince George's County Police. Names and addresses of all evacuated persons shall be recorded by the evacuating officer.
  
- F. All negotiations with hostage takers shall be handled by the Prince George's County Police Conflict Management Team or designee (i.e., MSP, PG Sheriffs, FBI, etc.).
  
- G. Following the guidelines of Division Directive PG324.0 – "Media Relations," media personnel will be directed to a media staging area, and the Park Police Public Information Officer shall maintain contact with and control of the media throughout the incident. The M-NCPPC Public Affairs Management Office (PAMO) will be notified.
  
- H. The Park Police Investigative Operations on-call Investigator and his/her supervisor shall respond to the incident and assume responsibility for the investigation of the incident and any crime occurring during the incident.

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- I. All arrests shall be made by the Prince George's County Police Emergency Services Team (EST). Suspects, once in custody, shall be turned over to designated Park Police officers for transporting and processing.
  
- J. Should a decision be made during the incident to attempt to resolve it by dynamic entry or high-risk solution; such an operation should be coordinated with the Prince George's County Police OIC on the scene before it is undertaken. Firearms discipline shall be maintained at all times. Exceptions are as follows:
  - 1. Firearms shall only be used to directly defend officers or citizens or to provide cover for personnel evacuating wounded persons. Gunfire directed at officers having adequate cover shall not justify return gunfire.
  - 2. Officers having adequate cover shall only fire when directed by the on-scene Incident Commander or when a visible target creates an imminent danger to human life.
  - 3. Except in life or death circumstances, once cover and concealment is accomplished, and the initial confrontation is contained; only the on-scene Incident Commander may authorize the use of firearms by anyone other than the Emergency Services Team (EST).
  - 4. During an EST operation, officers other than EST personnel shall not fire unless the suspect is presenting an immediate danger to human life and the line of fire is clear. Firearms discipline in such circumstances is critical because of EST proximity to the suspect(s).
  - 5. Unauthorized firearms shall not be used without permission of the on-scene Incident Commander.
  
- K. Due to the nature of these incidents, where situations may change suddenly, nothing in this directive shall preclude immediate discretionary action by officers on the scene, when necessary to protect life.
  
- L. When and however the incident ends, a critique and debriefing will be held, at a time and place designated by the Incident Commander. This shall be done with the Prince George's County Police as soon as practical. The Incident Commander or designee will complete a Commander's Log and After-Action Report.

### **Responding to Panic Alarms**

Upon receiving a panic alarm, Communications personnel will identify the officer assigned to the beat in which the alarm was activated and dispatch him/her along with the next closest officer/unit in an adjoining beat with a priority response. A minimum of two patrol officers will be dispatched to the call.

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Communications staff will:

- a. Dispatch a minimum of two (2) officers' priority to any panic alarm call.
- b. After dispatching the call, attempt to pull up any surveillance camera footage that may be available at the facility, monitor any camera activity, and provide officers with updates while they are in route.
- c. Upon the officers' arrival on scene, Communications will announce the radio status to be emergency transmissions only for officers not on or responding to the scene. All other (or routine) radio traffic or calls for service unrelated to the incident must switch to an alternate channel.
- d. Once officers have taken up established tactical positions, they will advise communications to "make the call." Communications will then call inside the facility and attempt to make contact.
- e. If successful contact is made, Communications will obtain the name, physical and clothing description of the person on the other line.
- f. The name of the contact person will be entered into the M-NCPPC employee database to verify if they are an employee.
- g. Advise the contact person to bring their identification with them and exit the facility with their hands in plain view to await further instruction by the on-scene officer.

Officers responding to the scene of a Panic Alarm situation will:

- a. Prior to their arrival, deactivate their audible sirens at a suitable distance from the facility to not alert possible suspect(s) of their arrival. Officers will exercise added caution in their response regarding traffic and pedestrians after the audible sirens have been deactivated.
- b. Upon arrival, notify the Communications Section to place all radio communications on a limited/emergency only status for the on-scene officers.
- c. Take up a tactical position on the perimeter of the facility and assess the scene.
- d. Relay any updated information to Communications via the radio.
- e. Once officers have taken up and established tactical positions, they will advise communications to "make the call."
- f. Communications will then call inside the facility and attempt to make contact.
- g. If contact is made, Communications will obtain a description (including clothing) of the contact person and advise them to exit the facility with their hands in plain view and await further instruction by the on-scene officer.
- h. The contact officer will then contact this person, confirm their identity, and question them as to the circumstances of the panic alarm activation.
- i. If the officers determine the information to be satisfactory and the panic alarm to have been accidentally activated, they will enter the facility and confirm the circumstances. Officers will advise communications of the name of the contact person as well as notify Communications prior to entering the facility.
- j. After verifying a safe facility, officers will clear the radio air from emergency transmissions only.

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- k. If a phone call is received from a possible employee to cancel prior to arrival, the responding officers will continue to respond and follow the above protocols. This is to ensure that the employee is not being coerced by a suspect.
- l. Officers must confirm that employees have not been coerced to cancel activations by former or current employees involved in or planning workplace violence or other violent crimes.
- m. It is equally important for officers responding to the scene of a panic alarm to utilize critical thinking and good judgment based upon the circumstances when dealing with Commission employees.

**Responding to Active Shooter Incidents**

- A. The first officer on the scene of an active shooter incident will assess the scene, attempt to verify if the active shooter incident is confirmed/ongoing, and provide updated information as soon as practical. Time is critical in order to mitigate the potential number of casualties. If an ongoing threat of serious injury or death is not present, then the operational guidelines outlined in the Responding to Hostage/Barricade Incidents section of this Directive will be followed.
- B. Responding officer(s) shall think critically and be prepared for the potential need to initiate a Lone Officer Entry or a contact team to dynamically address the threat in a proactive manner.
- C. When the incident is on-going, and the need to intervene outweighs the tactical decision to wait for the Conflict Management Team, the decision should then be made, based on the threat assessment at the time, if a lone officer entry should be made. If additional officers are arriving simultaneously then it is acceptable to form a Contact Team and make an immediate response as long as it does not delay the entry.
- D. The contact team should ideally consist of 3 to 5 officers, whose primary responsibility is to make entry into the target location with the goal of locating and neutralizing the active shooter threat(s) utilizing the level of force reasonable and necessary under the circumstances. The purpose of the contact team is to end further casualties and grievous bodily injury or potential loss of life.
- E. If necessary to save and reduce the number of casualties from an active threat, officers are trained to make an immediate lone officer entry with the provided tactical equipment listed in subsection H. Discretion is left to the officer(s) on the scene to take the immediate action they deem necessary.
- F. Officers must prepare themselves mentally for the possible carnage and reality of having to pass by and leave behind wounded individuals who will be secured and treated by rescue and EMS teams later. The mission is to locate and neutralize the active shooter(s). Any time lost accomplishing that mission and goal could result

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in additional loss of life and more casualties. History has shown that stopping to render aid will likely exponentially increase the number of overall victims. Rescue teams will be deployed as soon as possible.

- G. Officers should secure all cell phones, keys, or any other items that may make unnecessary noise, giving their location away.

Officer(s) shall notify Communications of their decision to enter the target location prior to making entry

- H. Contact teams should take the following equipment with them when available or practical:

- a. Breaching tool(s).
- b. Complete duty belt to include flashlight.
- c. Extra magazines and ammunition.
- d. Issued protective gas mask with carry bag.
- e. Radio with microphone and earpiece.
- f. Soft body armor with trauma plate or pad.
- g. Issued Shotgun with slugs or Patrol Rifle.
- h. Individual first aid supplies. (trauma pads & hemostatic agents)

- I. Contact team members shall be aware that additional contact teams or Quick Response Teams may be in the target location, and must maintain peak alertness, muzzle awareness, and firearms discipline to avoid crossfire situations.

- J. Contact team members should:

- a. Establish a secure point of entry.
- b. Notify the Communications Section prior to entry.
- c. Limit radio transmissions.
- d. When feasible, provide periodic updates to Communications to include casualty locations, the status of the search, and any other relevant information.
- e. Provide scene security and assist in the effort to render aid to victims, once the active shooter(s) threat and killing spree have been stopped / neutralized.
- f. Be aware of possible booby traps or secondary devices

- K. After the Contact Team has made entry, depending on the size and number of occupants in the facility, there may be a need for the formation of a Quick Response Team

- L. The primary mission of the Quick Response Team will be to assist in a more methodical search for possible suspect(s) and secure an inner perimeter to deny further access by occupants as well as assist in the evacuation of innocents. Depending on the size and layout of the facility there may be the need to form more than one quick response team.



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- M. In addition to following the above considerations for the contact team where practical; the Quick Response Team should:
  - a. Consist of 4-6 officers.
  - b. Attempt to follow the same path as the contact team.
  - c. Not stop to render aid to victims.
  - d. Designate a team leader for radio transmissions
  - e. Secure an inner perimeter inside the target location as needed
  - f. Provide radio updates on their location, any evacuees that will be coming out, and whether or not the evacuees have been checked for possible involvement or weapons
  
- N. After an inner perimeter has been established by the Quick Response Team approval may be given for the formation and deployment of Rescue Teams.
  
- O. In addition to following the above considerations for the contact team and quick response team where practical; Rescue Teams should
  - a. Ideally, consist of 4 officers; 2 for the rescue, and 2 for cover
  - b. Advise Communications prior to entry and ensure that the quick response team(s) are aware of their deployment
  - c. Transmit their location and intention to remove a victim to Communications
  - d. Use approved lifting and removal techniques such as the one-man drag, two-man drag, two-man carry, and two-man chair to avoid possible back strain / injury.
  
- P. The Communications Section shall:
  - a. Ensure that the on-duty supervisor is aware of the contact team's decision to deploy.
  - b. Coordinate the response of additional officers to the scene with the on-duty supervisor.
  - c. As soon as practical, make an announcement to all officers not responding to the scene of the active shooter incident to switch to an alternate designated radio talk group for emergency transmissions or unrelated non-emergency calls for service.
  - d. Not ask for status checks of the contact team or use the alert tone unless otherwise directed to by the on-duty supervisor or higher-ranking member of the Division.
  - e. Ensure that any responding police department (i.e., Prince George's County Police Department, etc.) is made aware of the limited radio transmissions status of the primary talk group until cleared by the contact team.
  - f. When directed by the proper authority, alert the Prince George's County Police Department Emergency Communications Center (ECC) to make notification to the PGPD Emergency Services and Conflict Management

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- Team (EST, Hostage Negotiators) and Prince George's County Fire and Rescue).
- g. Ensure Command Staff notifications have been made in accordance with Division Directive PG406.0 "Notifications."
- Q. The On-Duty Supervisor or Officer in Charge (OIC) upon arrival to the scene:
- a. Will assume command of the scene until relieved by a higher-ranking member of the Division.
  - b. Will operate in accordance with the established Incident Command System, established protocols regarding Mutual Aid Agreements with Allied Agencies, and related Division Directives.
  - c. Shall coordinate with Prince George's County Fire and Rescue/EMS to determine a staging area for casualty collection.
  - d. Shall coordinate a Command Post and staging area for additional responding units.
  - e. Shall ensure an appropriate perimeter and traffic route has been established for authorized access only and to facilitate response by emergency and rescue vehicles to and from the scene.
  - f. Shall designate a media staging area.
  - g. Shall determine the need for additional equipment and personnel.
  - h. Shall ensure that the necessary notifications have been or are in the process of being made.
- R. In the case of mutual assistance, Officers of this Division, will follow Unified Command and the primary law enforcement agency handling the incident will operate in accordance with their operational directives.
- S. A critique and debriefing will be held, at a time and place designated by the Incident Commander. This shall be done with all involved parties and Police Departments as soon as practical. The Incident Commander or designee will complete a Commander's Log and After-Action Report.

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