

STOCKTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENTS  
SUBJECT

DATE: March 12, 2019

NO: Q-8

FROM: CHIEF ERIC JONES

TO: ALL PERSONNEL

INDEX: Active Shooting Incidents  
Active Shooter  
Shooting, Active Incidents

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Stockton Police Department, based on training and experience, to allow initial responding officer(s) the authority and responsibility to take immediate action to contain, and, if necessary, neutralize active shooter incidents. This policy is in support of the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency Active Threat Plan.

II. DEFINITIONS

1. Active Shooter: An active shooter is a person(s) armed with a firearm who has used deadly physical force on other persons and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.
2. Active Threat: Suspect(s) who is actively engaged in causing or threatening to cause death or great bodily injury to others. The incident will normally contain numerous victims and potential victims and is active/ongoing when law enforcement arrives.
3. Rescue Task Force (RTF): The Rescue Task Force is a multi-disciplinary team focused on providing rapid assessment, immediate treatment and extraction of victims with a dedicated security element. The security element will normally consist of 2 police officers while the emergency medical element will normally consist of a small team of medical first responders. The Rescue Task Force team will operate in the Warm and Cold Zones and avoid any Hot Zones.

Hot Zone: The area where the threat is still active. Danger of serious injury to responders entering this zone (known explosives, active shooter...etc.).

Warm Zone: The area(s) where law enforcement has passed through and swept for hostile threats. Personnel should operate under the pretense that a threat is not expected, but cannot be ruled out completely.

Cold Zone: An area that has been cleared and/or secured.

4. Barricaded Suspect: A barricaded suspect is when a suspect(s) who is armed, believed to be armed or poses an active threat and resists being taken into custody by confining themselves to an area where their movements have been restricted by the surroundings or law enforcement. There may or may not be victims/hostages confined with the suspect(s). Tactics will be based, in part, on the suspect(s) actions and necessity for an immediate response to prevent great bodily injury and/or life-threatening situations.

III. PROCEDURE:

1. INTRODUCTION: It is not unusual for a tactical team to arrive at the scene of a barricaded incident and find that patrol personnel have contained the suspect within a secure perimeter. There is generally time for the tactical team to deploy their personnel without serious concern of suspect escape. Once the incident has been isolated, time enables patrol and/or tactical personnel to formulate a structured and deliberate plan.

However, there are also 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 contain and prevent the escape of an armed and dangerous person.

The goal of police intervention in active shooter/active threat 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 force. The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources is critical to ongoing, life-threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or great bodily injury to innocent persons. These intervention tactics are not a substitute for conventional response tactics to incidents. For example; in the case of a barricaded gunman.

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 or vengeance to mental dysfunction.

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

The active shooter concept represents a shift in patrol response, equipment needs, and command protocol. These situations require the initial police responders arriving on 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 SWAT or Crisis Negotiations.

2. 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 is not meant to be a comprehensive list describing all active shooters. 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 act in the manner of a sniper, assaulting victims from a distance. Active shooters may also engage multiple targets while remaining constantly mobile.
  - e. 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.
  - f. Active shooters are often better armed than the police, sometimes making use of explosives, booby traps and/or body armor.
  - g. 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 for the active shooter.
  - h. Active shooters may employ some type of diversionary tactic.
  - 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 hands of others or by a self-inflicted wound.
  - k. Active shooters usually have some degree of familiarity with the building or locations they choose to occupy.
  - l. Active shooter events are dynamic and may go in and out of “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.
3. **RESPONSE GUIDELINES:** The following seven 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 officers and there is the potential of elevated risk to bystanders and officers. The risk is acceptable in light of the potential these tactics have for saving lives. Another significant aspect of the active shooter tactical doctrine is that officers arriving at the scene of an active shooter incident are authorized to intervene prior to the arrival of command personnel and special units.

- a. **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 and rescuing injured victims.
- b. **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 both Dispatch and other officers, who is in charge. An officer of superior rank who is onscene and fully briefed may ultimately assume incident command. Any change in incident command will be made known to Dispatch and other officers.
- c. **SITUATION 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 Dispatch 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.
- d. **INCIDENT COMMAND:** No action will be taken that is unplanned or without controls. Command will be assumed by the first officer who will initiate the situation analysis and determine initial deployment of responding resources. At least one person possessing all available information on tactical plans will remain at the Command Post to brief arriving personnel. Command personnel enroute to the incident will monitor the radio to gain information.
- e. **FIRST RESPONDER TACTICAL INTERVENTION:** When responding to active shooter incidents, the 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 the active shooter response. The traditional uniform responses of contain, isolate, evacuate and wait for SWAT and Crisis Negotiators may not be adequate in an active shooter incident. The first officer onscene will consider the following:
  - (1) **Contact Team:** Officers arriving on the scene of an active shooter incident are authorized to intervene prior to the arrival of command personnel and special units. The goal of the Contact Team is to locate and neutralize the threat to prevent loss of life and great bodily injury to others. The necessity for immediate intervention may require officers to make solo entries, depending on the situation and circumstances.
  - (2) **Containment and Rescue Task Force (RTF):** Once the threat has been contained or neutralized, lifesaving care and victim extraction measures should be set in place. The inner perimeter should be set up to establish the WARM Zone boundaries the

RTF can operate in. Keep in mind there still may be an active threat outside the WARM Zone, such as a barricaded suspect or hostage situation that is being managed simultaneously while the RTF is operating.

- f. ACTIVE SHOOTER SITE SECURITY: No location associated with an active shooter will be considered secure until the SWAT Commander declares it so. Officers assigned to security functions will maintain positions until properly relieved.
  - g. SWAT: When SWAT units are prepared to deploy, the initial responding officers may be relieved or redeployed by SWAT.
4. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVENTION TACTICS: The Stockton Police Department will develop tactics to deal with the active shooter incidents and will provide appropriate training to personnel of all ranks. These tactics will be developed under the following guidelines:
- a. Personnel will be trained to conduct immediate assessment.
  - b. Tactics will conform to and capitalize upon existing skills.
  - c. Tactics and training will be basic and flexible. All sworn personnel will attend Active Shooter training. Active Shooter training will be conducted in two phases:
    - (1) Knowledge/Conceptual and Skill Development
    - (2) Mandatory Refresher Training