

**PHOENIX REGIONAL
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Operations at Violent Incidents
M.P. 206.01 9/15-R 12/15-SR

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for operations at violent incidents. A violent incident is defined as any type of incident in which Fire Department members may be exposed to harm as a result of a violent or threatening act. Examples of violent incidents may include but are not limited to:

- Attacks on institutions and/or places of public assembly such as schools, businesses, entertainment venues, etc.
- Domestic and international terrorist attacks
- Active shooter/mass casualty attacks
- Use of fire arms
- Ambush style attacks on emergency responders
- Normal dispatches that suddenly become violent
- Response dangers related to explosives and potential secondary devices
- Human trafficking/kidnapping rings
- Violence related to border issues
- Gang violence and networking
- Organized drug trafficking
- Home invasions

Strategic Decision Making Model and Violent Incidents

Violent incidents can be as dangerous to firefighters as structural fire incidents. Each incident has its own unique challenges for our service delivery as well as managing firefighter safety. It is imperative that our incident command system utilize the same strategic decision making model for operations at violent incidents as it does for structural fire incidents.

The strategic decision making model includes:

1. The identification of the incident's critical factors
2. Selection of the appropriate risk management plan
3. Identification of strategy
4. Development of an Incident Action Plan (IAP)
5. Identification and completion of the incidents tactical objectives

This process is ongoing and continual in which it requires a constant review/revision based on actions and conditions until the specific tactical objectives are met.

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Dispatch and Response Considerations

Incidents involving violence are especially challenging due to multi-agency responses, communication issues, chaos at the site, and management challenges. The interaction between law enforcement, fire department, and EMS becomes essential for order and organization. When responding, gather all the dispatch information available through Alarm Room, MCT and the PD tactical channel. Members can minimize the risks when responding to and operating at these events by following Phoenix Regional Standard Operating Procedures which include the following:

- Review the PTI for pertinent information. Request further details from the TRO, if necessary.
- Confirm with Alarm Room that the scene has been declared safe. Fire crews should use the assigned PD channel to confirm the scene is safe. PD uses the term “code 4” to indicate scene safety. Verify the parameters of PD’s “code 4” prior to commitment of personnel.
- Verify and monitor the correct police tactical channel in order to obtain the most complete information.
- Continually utilize the Risk Management System to assess the situation to determine if your deployment model is appropriate for the conditions, training, and equipment.
- Maintain situational awareness, which is critical during these events.
- Remain constantly aware of all aspects of the scene. Be alert to surroundings.
- Maintain two means of egress should it become necessary to leave the scene quickly.
- Assign one individual to constantly monitor the scene for safety issues.
- Anticipate scenarios pessimistically based on the nature of the dispatch.
- Consider requesting a TLO/C958 if not already assigned to the incident.

Size up

Identifying critical factors while responding to and arriving on any incident scene is imperative to a successful outcome. The size up for violent incidents should include:

- Dispatch information regarding the incident type or nature. This includes the specific type of violent action, if known (assault, stabbing, shooting, explosives, etc.)
- Location of incident and/or number of patients
- Is there a history with this address and/or person
- Does the incident nature code require units to stage
- If not, should staging be considered
- Is law enforcement on scene
- Is a Phoenix Fire Department Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO/958) on scene
- Can units communicate directly with law enforcement either face to face or with the radio
- If the scene is unsafe, can law enforcement provide a safe corridor or working area to begin triage and extrication/extraction
- If the scene is unsafe, can law enforcement begin to extricate/extract the injured patients to a safe treatment and transportation area

The initial dispatch information is rarely complete. These situations evolve rapidly and it is necessary to assume that the information, which is initially received, will change. It is important to approach these incidents slowly and cautiously. Over-committing, prior to evaluation, can pose significant danger to firefighters.

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Risk Management System at Violent Incidents

Violent Incidents can be unpredictable in their scope and nature therefore it is difficult to prepare for all aspects of a violent incident. It is imperative that responding companies employ the standard Risk Management System. The overall incident objectives for violent incidents are firefighter safety, life safety and incident control.

- We will risk our lives a lot, in a calculated manner, to save savable lives.
- We will risk our lives a little, in a calculated manner, to save savable property.
- We will not risk our lives at all for lives and property that are already lost.

“Actions in a calculated manner” require the following:

1. Incident Command established (where applicable, refer to M.P. 201.01)
2. Scene secured or safe zones in place and confirmed by law enforcement
3. Accountability system established (where applicable, refer to M.P. 201.03)
4. Safety procedures in place
5. Continuous risk assessment by all members

The use of this Risk Management System will improve the Incident Commander’s ability to provide a more predictable and safe environment in order to achieve the tactical objectives. The evaluation of risk with regard to savable property is unlikely while operating at violent incidents; however consideration is given to fire suppression scenarios during civil disturbances and arson fire incidents. Members must maintain full and complete situational awareness before and during each call, no matter how seemingly trivial the nature. Emergencies that involve developing or dynamic violence require a deliberate, measured, and systematic evaluation. In order to operate safely and appropriately while responding to and working at the various types of violent incidents that we may encounter, all members shall utilize the Risk Management System.

Staging

The first-in company/unit should either stage in quarters or out of sight until the scene is confirmed safe. All other units responding will follow established staging procedures. The Incident Commander will make the decision to continue to stage or to go into the scene. The scene is considered secure when the Incident Commander communicates and confirms “scene secured” with the TRO or via direct communication with officers on the scene. Be cautious about being “waved” in by Police Officers on the scene. The Incident Commander will convey “scene secured” to staged FD units.

Once the incident address or location is obtained and confirmed, Command or the TLO/C958 will determine a safe and secure staging location for fire resources. The Alarm Room will be informed of the incident address or location and request a premises alert for a minimum of one-quarter (1/4) mile radius.

This area will allow for PD evacuation zones and routes, and may encompass adjoining neighborhoods, large occupancies (apartment complexes, shopping malls, commercial buildings etc.) as well as providing a buffer zone for active shooter scenarios. It is crucial that the closest Battalion Chief and Shift Commander be notified immediately via the Alarm Room. If the decision to stage is made, the Company Officer shall notify Dispatch that the unit(s) is staged and state their location.

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The following is the staging procedure for violent incidents:

- Level 2 staging for first due companies should be considered until it can be determined that the scene is safe. Companies should stage out of sight at a safe distance and turn off emergency lights, so as not to attract attention.
- If the incident is within one mile of the station Companies should consider Level 2 staging in quarters. Response time should also be a consideration. If the scene is further than one mile, companies should stage in a location that allows them to reach the scene within a reasonable amount of time.
- When staged in quarters the entire crew must be on the apparatus and ready to respond to the scene. Crews must monitor both Fire and Police Department channels. Examples of incidents where this may be the best choice include: a Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO/C958) is not on scene, little or no information is available, reports that suspect/suspects not in custody, perimeter is not secure, or proximity to station, etc.
- Identify the appropriate deployment of resources.
- Establish staging, extraction, treatment, and transportation sectors early. Consider safe routing and options for rapid egress if conditions change.
- Members should remember that the crowd may be a hazard.
- Units should turn off warning lights when staged and then turn them back on when completing the response to the scene. Turning off warning lights at the scene may reduce crowd attraction to the incident.
- The best plan may be to retreat if necessary to ensure the safety of the crewmembers. Plan the escape routes ahead of time.

Situational awareness is crucial at this stage. Slow down when approaching the area and conduct a 360-degree scan by all crew members for any immediate threats. Situations can rapidly change and the potential for additional escalating violence may exist. Continually monitor all radio traffic (FD tactical, PD tactical, MCT info, etc.).

Scene/Incident Factors may include:

- Determine appropriate escape routes and safe zone
- Armed law enforcement officers
- The patients may also be suspects
- Unsecured weapons
- Uncontrolled/hostile crowd
- Ambush style attacks
- Hostile family members
- Secondary devices
- Initially non-threatening individuals can become hostile or dangerous
- No or minimal police presence on the scene
- Previous history of violence at this location
- Assess threat level at scene (if it is deteriorating, consider immediate retreat)

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Arriving on Scene

Any incident that involves PD will be assigned a PD tactical channel. Announce the arrival of your unit on both Fire and PD tactical channels, using the standard Fire Department communication order model. Consider making contact immediately with a uniformed officer. This individual is a good information resource, can be utilized as protection, or as an escort.

A formalized Unified Command (UC) should be established as soon as possible. Unified Command is defined as a structure that brings together the Incident Commanders of major organizations involved in the incident in order to coordinate an effective response while at the same time carrying out their own jurisdictional responsibilities. Unified Command (UC) links the organizations responding to the incident and provides a forum for those entities to make consensus decisions. Unified Command (UC) should consist of a Command location with representatives from all involved agencies. Unified Command (UC) improves the safety of all first responders through better communications, coordinated decision-making, and deployment of resources.

Operating On Scene

The mission of PD operations at violent incidents is to mitigate and/or eliminate the threat. Fire Department personnel must initiate and maintain effective communications with PD throughout the incident. TLO/C958 is an excellent resource for effective communications and planning.

At no time should a TLO/C958 or any fire department personnel operate within an active “law enforcement inner perimeter” unless there are extenuating circumstances. These will be determined with the best judgment on a case by case basis by Command. For example, there may be situations in which the activity is taking place within a large area or separate buildings. Operations during an active event may be carefully considered only when a Unified Command system is in place and there is a clear and precise plan communicated between all involved personnel. Formation of a Unified Command plan is critical to successfully managing the incident.

Inner perimeter or hot zone activities are extremely dynamic and fast moving with the potential to escalate quickly. An inner perimeter is defined as a forward and isolated zone where law enforcement officers are in tactical positions with protective gear and weapons engaged and their primary purpose is mitigating a hostile and/or violent incident or suspect. Fire department defines this as the hot zone.

Fire personnel WILL NOT become directly involved in law enforcement assault operations. Fire personnel WILL NOT enter an area that is not secure and/or safe to enter. If the area is not safe, the police department may have to deliver the patients to Fire personnel at the perimeter.

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Should a planned assault be scheduled by SAU, the appropriate stand by resources should be requested prior to the assault action. Coordination of these resources should be handled by the TLO/C958 in cooperation with the Battalion Chief. Safety of all First Responders is the number one priority. We cannot help others if our safety and welfare are compromised.

TLO/C958 often request FD radio silence prior to response to SAU standby operations. Remember to monitor both FD and PD radio channels. Unless otherwise directed by TLO/C958 fire companies should:

- Advise that you are on scene on both fire and PD tactical channels. Confirm with PD that the scene is safe to enter.
- Communicate with PD directly on the assigned police tactical channel or through the alarm room TRO.
- Consider utilizing Police Officer for additional safety and security.
- Coordinate safety of additional responding units including outside agencies by sharing appropriate information about the scene
- Designate one crew member to constantly maintain situational awareness.
- All Fire Department units will remain intact and under the direct supervision of a Company Officer. Do not freelance.

Communication

Establishing and maintaining good communications during violent incidents is critical. Fire Department personnel shall initiate and maintain communications like any other incident using the standard Fire Department order model and plain English.

The Incident Commander should formalize a Unified Command as soon as possible. Unified Command is a key component of successful inter-agency communications and emergency operations.

Fire department units should monitor the PD tactical radio channel and announce their arrival on both Fire and PD tactical channels.

Our radio system is not capable of all the inter-agency communications scenarios we may encounter. For example, the Phoenix Fire Department radio system can communicate with all fire departments in the automatic aid system, however we cannot communicate with all the law enforcement agencies we operate with. When unable to establish inter-agency communications via the radio system, Fire Department units will need to rely on the Alarm Room and should establish a Unified Command as soon as possible.

During pre-planned TLO/C958 operations fire department personnel may need to stay off the tactical radio system. TLO/C958 is responsible for informing fire companies to stay off the radio system prior to response.

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Emergency Medical Services at Violent Incidents

Violent incidents involving medical patients should utilize standard Command Procedures and EMS responsibilities. Command is responsible for the completion of the tactical objectives. The general tactical objectives, listed in order of priority, are:

1. Remove endangered occupants and treat the injured.
2. Stabilize the incident and provide for life safety.
3. Ensure the functions of triage, extrication, treatment and transportation are established as needed and performed appropriately.
4. Provide for the safety, accountability and welfare of rescue personnel and victims.
5. Conserve property.

In addition, the EMS tactical objectives to be completed during any multi-patient/mass casualty incident include:

1. Completion of a "Triage Report"
2. Declaration of "All IMMEDIATES Transported"

Extrication Sector

An extrication sector must be established early. This sector is responsible for locating, removing, and transporting patients to appropriate treatment areas. A critical aspect of extrication is triage. Triage is a priority and must be communicated to those assigned to the scene. The triage priority during a rapid extrication or extraction event is to identify critical/viable patients.

Face to face communications should be used within a sector whenever possible. Sector Officers may consider wearing a vest that identifies their function.

Extraction

Extraction will not take place unless coordinated through Unified Command. If viable patients exist, fire, police, or joint police/fire extraction teams should be deployed in a timely manner. This would occur under a defined Incident Action Plan, after careful consideration of the situation and the Risk Management System. Extraction teams will quickly move viable patients to the cold zone where definitive EMS procedures can be performed at a reduced risk.

Extraction Teams

Once the decision has been made to deploy extraction teams, consider the following issues.

- Police and Fire Unified Command shall be in place with good communication.
- The immediate threat must be neutralized or contained. For example, suspects are dead, in custody, fled the scene, reasonably contained or barricaded.
- Unified Command will designate specific entry and exit path for extraction teams.
- Warm zone boundaries are clearly identified to ensure personnel do not enter the "Hot Zone".
- Fire IC will consider the Risk Management System and all information available.
- Accountability is in place and tracked throughout incident.

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Extraction Team Operations/Considerations

Extraction team briefings shall include face to face communications on the following:

- Route in to and out of designated area
- Team formations
- Communication and signals
- Cover/concealment issues
- Special response considerations (hazardous materials, explosives, unknown location of shooter)
- Patient care issues
- Rapidly identify triage priorities and those already dead in the hot zone
- Primary and secondary egress routes
- Minimize exposure time
- Casualty collection areas for passing off wounded once extraction is complete
- Take only appropriate equipment and be able to operate with mobility and ease
- If the extraction team is threatened or comes under fire, follow law enforcement leads

Treatment Sector

Establish safe treatment areas for “Immediate” and “Delayed” patients. Concentrating medical resources will provide effective field stabilization and treatment as well as coordination and control. In most cases, patients may be more effectively triaged or treated if the patient is rapidly removed from the scene to a secure treatment area. Consider options for safe, rapid patient removal. While patient care and safety are our priorities, crime scene preservation should be maintained whenever possible. Close coordination with law enforcement is mandatory.

Transportation Sector

A transportation sector should be established early and away from the scene. This will facilitate accountability and the appropriate deployment to hospitals. All ambulances should report directly to transportation sector. Consider routing, staging options, and additional law enforcement for security of treatment area.

When transporting patients, the safety of First Responders remains a priority. All Volume 12 protocols should be followed when treating and transporting patients/suspects. If a patient requires transport to a medical facility, he/she should go by ambulance, not in a law enforcement vehicle. Potential suspects being transported should be cleared by law enforcement for weapons or other items that may pose a hazard to First Responders and Hospital personnel.

If the potential for violence exists, a law enforcement officer will accompany the patient in the back of the rescue (ambulance). A second officer will follow the transporting vehicle to the hospital. If the person being transported is under arrest, he/she should be secured to the gurney using restraints. At no time should a patient be transported with both wrists restrained together in the front. In this position, the patient may be able to escape the restraints and could assault First Responders. Options include restraining the wrists behind the back, or utilizing two sets of restraints to secure each wrist to the gurney.

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Destination/Receiving Hospital

In the event of multiple victims, careful coordination between the Alarm Room, area hospitals, and transportation sector should be a priority. Patients/suspects that are under arrest should be transported to an appropriate hospital and coordinated through the on scene law enforcement. Any transportation decision should take into account patient care, triage protocols, and law enforcement considerations. Security should be alerted at the receiving hospital regarding the nature of the incident.

Police/Fire Liaison

TLO/C958 Captains function as a liaison with law enforcement agencies. These individuals are an excellent resource. The TLO/C958 Captains have access to information that may be essential to Command including:

- Safe staging locations
- Routes in and out of the area
- Safe extraction/treatment areas within the hazard area
- Information about victim injuries or casualties

In the case of preplanned law enforcement operations, the TLO/C958 may be the initial Fire Department Incident Commander.

At major incidents a police supervisor will be requested to report to the Fire Command Post. When there is a need for communication and no supervisor has reported to the Command Post, a request for a supervisor should be made through Dispatch or through any police officer on the scene. The police supervisor should be requested to stay at the Command Post with the assigned liaison officer. A fire liaison officer may also be assigned to the police Command Post.

The Police/Fire Liaison Sector Officer will coordinate all activities between the departments, including:

- Traffic control
- Crowd control - establishment of fire line perimeters
- Evacuation - hazardous materials, etc.
- Fatalities
- Crime scenes
- Persons interfering with fire department operations

The assigned Police/Fire Liaison Sector Officer will be responsible for determining the specific needs of each situation and communicating them to the police supervisor. The Police/Fire Liaison Sector Officer and police supervisor should remain at the Command Post to facilitate continuing communications.

Managing a routine incident that suddenly becomes violent

Even the most routine call can suddenly become violent, stay alert at all times. The following are a few examples of routine incidents that may become violent:

- Unstable patients

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- Environments where anxiety is high
- Angry patients or family members
- Patients or bystanders that may have used drugs or alcohol

Size up and beware of areas that have a potential for violence. Remember to:

- Build situational awareness early
- Approach scene with caution
- Maintain situational awareness
- Consider designating crew member as safety officer
- Call PD early
- Trust your instincts

If a scene becomes violent, fire personnel are empowered to take appropriate actions to mitigate harm to crew and patient. This may include neutralizing the threat if necessary.

If Alarm Room/TRO has any indication that a fire crew is in trouble they are empowered to initiate an appropriate response (especially if the crew is not acknowledging them on the radio).

Terminating the Incident

Prior to terminating Command, a face to face meeting with the appropriate law enforcement representative should take place. Before leaving the scene law enforcement may request information about:

- Utilizing CR support for bystanders, witnesses, Fire and Police personnel, or CISD.
- Consider contacting AHQ and adding a premise alert in the event a routine call turned violent. This will alert companies on future dispatches that there may be safety considerations.
- Fire Department units on scene and unit roster information
- Patient transportation information including unit transporting, receiving hospital, and patient name/injuries.
- Any disturbance of the crime scene by Fire Department personnel.

Other Considerations

- Any civil disturbance has the potential of escalating into a major situation.
- The Incident Commander should escalate the response to a civil disturbance to include Chief Officers quickly in order to provide Command support and other agency liaison responsibilities.
- There are several apparatus located at fire stations (i.e. brush, ambulances, etc.) that can be staffed to substantially increase the number of units available to respond to emergencies (in groups).
- Call back of off-duty personnel and staffing of reserve apparatus may be necessary.
- Alternative facilities should be identified and utilized, if appropriately located, as a Command post and staging area if it can be easily secured.
- Consider activating the City EOC.