**PIERCE COUNTY**

**TACTICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL**

**OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE**

**RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE**

**SCOPE**

All Uniformed personnel

**PURPOSE**

To establish standardized guidelines throughout Pierce County for the safe response to incidents involving violence. To establish standardized methods throughout Pierce County for implementing Fire/EMS/Law Enforcement rescue teams for dynamic violent incidents while also minimizing risk to personnel.

**Responsibilities**

**Dispatch and Response to violent incidents**.

Based upon the information provided, dispatch will process units to respond according to one of two modes.

1. Stage for Law Enforcement
2. Proceed with caution directly into a Law Enforcement secured scene. The following information should be communicated to responding units if available.
   1. Type of violence (stabbing, shooting-handgun, rifle, etc.)
   2. Status of weapons, suspects.
   3. Number of patients.
   4. Location of law enforcement incident commander/command post.
   5. Ideal direction of approach or best scene access.
3. Dispatch should collect as much information as possible and rapidly communicate that information to responding units via radio and MDT’s.

**Responding units based upon their experience and dispatch information should**:

* 1. Call additional resources as needed.(i.e. Battalion Chiefs, Medic units etc)
  2. Don additional PPE if available. (Ballistic vests).
  3. Fire helmets are to be worn at the direction of the Officer or Incident Commander.
  4. Request the location of Law Enforcement IC.

**When units are directed to stage or make the decision to stage they should:**

1. Stage far enough away from the incident as to not become part of the incident.
2. Stage in quarters if possible and if appropriate distance. (within ½ mile of Fire station).
3. Out of sight of the incident and any crowd gathered.
4. Out of any line of fire and behind cover.
5. Have a minimum of two directions of egress without backing up.
6. Turn off warning lights while staged.

**Units called into a secured scene or moving forward from staging into a secured scene should:**

1. Proceed with caution.
2. Turn off warning lights at the scene.
3. Be aware that bystanders and/or crowd may be a hazard.
4. Have someone assigned to be a lookout.
5. Ensure that patients have been searched prior to transport/care.
6. Use good de-escalation techniques. (See Do’s and Don’ts).

If units find themselves in a potentially violent situation they should immediately retreat to a safe location. Emergency traffic and/or EMER buttons should be used if necessary.

**VIOLENT INCIDENT RESCUE TEAMS**

Command and Control

* 1. Unified command shall be in place with good communications and joint located.
  2. Unified command shall agree that an area is a “warm zone” and appropriate for Rescue team deployment.
  3. The Fire IC has the final say as to deployment of Fire resources into the warm zone.
  4. Accountability shall be in place and tracked throughout incident.

Communication

1. Rescue team members shall be in constant communication with Fire IC or designee.
2. Members of Rescue teams shall do a face to face briefing with their Law Enforcement security detail to ensure all members are familiar with their assignment.

Rescue team operations

1. Rescue teams shall brief face to face the route into the scene, team formations, identify security and EMS leads, communications/signals, cover/concealment, how to respond if an IED is located, patient care issues and primary and secondary egress routes.
2. Only immediate lifesaving EMS care should be delivered in the warm zone unless a casualty collection point is established and secured.
3. Rescue teams should remember “slow is smooth and smooth is fast”.
4. Rescue teams should preplan a patient handoff location with EMS group/division.
5. Rescue teams should only take appropriate equipment into the warm zone and keep in mind mobility is paramount.
6. The Rescue team shall not become separated, enter as a team, leave as a team.
7. If the Rescue team is threatened or comes under fire, follow the Law Enforcement leads direction.

**Definitions:**

1. **Active shooter incident**: Any incident where the suspect(s) have the means, opportunity, and intent, and are actively killing, attempting to kill, maiming, seriously assaulting, raping, torturing, or causing great bodily injury to multiple victims, with firearms, explosive devices or by any other means.
2. **Barricaded/Hostage incident:** A static situation involving an armed suspect, (with or without hostages), who has demonstrated or voiced violence, and has fortified a position of advantage in a room or building. No indication of immediate harm to any hostages.
3. **Concealment**: Protects you from observation, not weapon fire.
4. **Contact team**: A group of officers that have the intent to stop the suspect(s) deadly actions.
5. **Cover**: Protects you from observation and weapon fire.
6. **Dynamic situation**: An incident that is fluid, evolving and changing with constant movement, numerous victims, discovery of IED’s and other tactical challenges.
7. **Person with a Gun incident**: Any incident where the reporting party states that a person does or did have a gun. This would include any handguns or long guns.
8. **Rescue Team**: A group of Fire/EMS/LE personnel whose purpose is to extricate viable victims from incidents “warm” zone. A rescue team will always have LE security assigned to them.
9. **Scene safe to enter**: Law Enforcement has determined that there are no known threats in the immediate area.
10. **Shooting incident warm zone**: A portion of an incident that a Law Enforcement contact team has been through without contacting the subject(s) and have communicated the location of viable victims and is out of any direct line of fire. Non-Law Enforcement personnel will only enter the warm zone with a Law Enforcement security detail and under the IC’s direction.
11. **Stage for Law Enforcement**: Units should stage far enough away as to not become part of the incident, out of line of sight, out of line of fire and behind cover and with two directions of egress without turning around. Companies should turn off warning lights and be aware of any crowds that may pose a hazard.
12. **Static situation**: The suspect(s) stop moving and appear to be contained. An uncontained static suspect(s) can become dynamic without notice.
13. **Violent Incident**: Any incident in which personnel may be exposed to harm as a result of a violent or threatening act whether real or implied.

**Violent Incident Do’s and Don’ts**

**DO’s**

1. Be aware of your surroundings and impending danger.
2. When approaching the scene and while on- scene display a confident in control attitude (Command Presence).
3. Always look for the informal or designated leader of a potentially violent group and attempt to visually monitor and if possible and safe, make a personal contact to ease tensions.
4. Clear the scene of potentially violent materials.
5. Set up fire line tape to help secure perimeter.
6. Keep crew in sight at all times. Never leave crewmember alone.
7. Use physical barriers between yourself and potentially violent person.
8. Be subtle and non-aggressive in positioning yourself. Greet homeowner or patients with a friendly demeanor.
9. Separate disputants by taking them to an area where they can’t see or hear one another (at least two crew members together) separating them will help calm the situation.
10. Use calm quiet voice to de-escalate the situation.
11. Keep a visual on people’s hands.
12. Keep a visual on those involved with incident (don’t let them go to another room without escort etc.)

**DON’TS**

1. Don’t get lulled into a false sense of complacency.
2. Ignore the potential for violence on any call we go to, to include to and from calls.
3. Ignore your gut feelings. When it doesn’t feel right, it probably isn’t.
4. Be confrontational, be confident, but not abusive to anyone or group.
5. Be an easy target, be prepared to bail out when the need arises.
6. Don’t stand between disputants.
7. Interview stance:
   1. If you suspect violence, stand at a partial right angle out of arms reach.
   2. Don’t stand against a wall.
   3. Don’t fold your arms (judgment).
   4. Don’t put your hands in your pockets (appears unconcerned).

When in doubt be safe not sorry!