



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-20

Effective: 10/16/17 Review Due: 10/16/18 Replaces: 05/27/16

2-20 HOSTAGE, SUICIDAL/BARRICADED SUBJECT, AND TACTICAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

Related Policies:

[2-8 On-Body Recording Device](#)

[2-19 Response to Behavioral Health Issues](#)

6-8 Specialized Tactical Units

2-20-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the field service response to calls involving hostage, barricaded, and suicidal/barricaded subjects. This policy describes how to assess the situation for possible tactical deployment. If there is a tactical deployment, those procedures are described in the Specialized Tactical Units SOP 6-8.

2-20-2 Policy

Hostage rescue and barricaded or suicidal/barricaded subjects are among the most dangerous and volatile situations facing an officer. These crisis situations present the potential of violence, serious bodily injury, or death. Therefore, this standard operating policy is established to safely resolve these crisis incidents and to avoid the unreasonable risk of harm to hostages, suicidal/barricaded persons, citizens, and officers, while using the minimum amount of force necessary. The method by which these crisis situations are resolved is largely dependent on the subject's conduct. However, the use of de-escalation techniques may serve to lessen tension and safely diffuse the crisis situation. Accordingly, it is this policy's goal to explain how to de-escalate and safely resolve the situation and thereby protect the hostage, the suicidal/barricaded subject, citizens, and officers. However, if the assessment of the situation indicates that a tactical deployment is necessary, this SOP outlines the procedures that will be used to accomplish it. Field services officers will work closely with specially trained crisis intervention personnel and with tactical officers to ensure coordinated and appropriate responses to these situations.



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2-20-3 Definitions

A. Active Listening

A way of listening and responding to another person by using nonverbal cues, tone of voice, facial expressions, and body posture, all of which can improve mutual understanding. It is attentive listening without being distracted.

B. Barricaded Subject

A person or persons in a location that provides a barrier or spatial separation, assisting them to avoid apprehension by law enforcement officers.

C. Crisis Intervention Trained Officers (CITO)

Field Services Bureau officers who have successfully completed the basic crisis intervention team training.

D. Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT)

A team composed of supervisors and officers who serve in an additional or collateral duty capacity. When called upon to do so, these supervisors and officers respond with every tactical deployment to serve as specialists who utilize verbal de-escalation skills to assist in safely defusing dangerous, life-threatening situations or specific critical incidents.

E. Enhanced Crisis Intervention Trained Officer (ECIT Officer)

Field Services Bureau officers who function as specialists in handling calls involving individuals experiencing behavioral health disorders and in handling other crisis calls not related to behavioral health issues. ECIT officers receive the same training as CITOs, supplemented by additional advanced behavioral health training required to be certified as ECIT officers.

F. Hostage Situation

One person holding another person against his or her will through the use or threat of force.

G. Inner Perimeter

A perimeter established to keep the incident and suspect contained. The perimeter will vary depending on the location of the incident.



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H. Mobile Crisis Team (MCT)

A team composed of ECIT officers who respond to priority behavioral health crisis calls for service. They are partnered with a mental health professional who can provide immediate behavioral health services once the scene is made safe. MCT does not respond to tactical deployments because CNT will be present.

I. Media Staging Area

A designated area immediately outside the outer perimeter where news media may set up, film, and receive briefings from the public information officer.

J. Outer Perimeter

A perimeter established to keep the public safely away from the incident and to successfully divert traffic. The perimeter will vary depending on the location of the incident.

2-20-4 Procedures

A. On-Body Recording Devices

1. Officers should recognize that hostages, barricaded subjects, and suicidal/barricaded subjects pose situations likely to be considered mandatory recording incidents under the On-Body Recording Device SOP 2-8. Accordingly, officers should activate their on-body recording devices as soon as they arrive on scene.
2. If the incident lasts an extended period of time, officers may turn off their recording devices when not engaged with the subject in order to conserve battery life, but officers should reactivate their recording devices when appropriate or necessary.

B. Dispatch and Initial Assessment Protocol

1. If the initial call alerts Communications that a situation may involve a behavioral health crisis, such as hostage situation or a barricading subject who may be suicidal, Communications will dispatch a field services supervisor, the field services on-duty lieutenant, and an ECIT officer or MCT as available.
2. Using the protocols below in 2-20-4 C, specialized responders will assess the situation. They will determine the nature of the situation and decide whether field services can use their crisis intervention training to successfully resolve the situation or whether a tactical deployment will be necessary.



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3. If the call is not initially categorized for an ECIT or MCT response, the primary objective of the first responding officer will be to slow the situation, assess the nature of the call, and gather the appropriate personnel and resources, according to the protocols below.

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C. Hostage Situation

1. Field Services Officers Duties and Responsibilities

Field Services officers responding to a hostage situation will discharge these duties:

- a. Notify a field services supervisor and Emergency Communications as soon as possible that there is a probable hostage situation. To the extent possible, the officer will identify (1) the address, (2) the suspect's identity, (3) the number and identity of any hostages, and (4) any information indicating the suspect is armed or has made specific threats.
- b. Request immediate backup.
- c. Set up an inner perimeter, and, as needed, an outer perimeter to exclude non-law enforcement pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
- d. Maintain radio contact with dispatch and other responders.
- e. If the officer deems evacuation necessary and it can be done safely, evacuate civilians from within the perimeter(s). If members of the public are within the inner perimeter and cannot be evacuated safely, officers will direct them to shelter in place until evacuation can be safely accomplished.
- f. If needed to confirm the actual status of the situation, begin a dialogue with the suspect(s) to determine the nature of the situation and to confirm whether there are hostages involved. If the officer has a good rapport with the subject, the officer may continue the communication in an attempt to de-escalate the situation until the arrival of CNT.
- g. Officers shall not exchange themselves for hostages or surrender their weapons.
- h. Officers should not allow the offender(s) to leave the area with the hostages, except under the most extreme circumstances. If there is a possibility that the offender(s) can leave the area, make preparations to provide surveillance and control travel routes.

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2. Field Services Supervisor Response to Hostage Situation

When notified of a hostage situation, field services supervisors will take these actions:

- a. Respond to the scene immediately and will assume initial incident command.



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- b. Request sufficient manpower to handle the call, with an emphasis on enough officers to establish an inner and outer perimeter around the location.
 - c. Request Emergency Communications to dispatch the on-duty lieutenant, if the lieutenant is not already on scene.
 - d. Set up a command post in an appropriate area.
 - e. Notify the tactical lieutenant.
 - f. Retain command until the arrival of the tactical lieutenant.
 - g. Ensure that Field Services units maintain an outer perimeter.
 - h. If outside agencies are involved, designate the on-duty lieutenant to be the department point person, ensuring that proper communications are established and maintained among all responders.
 - i. Designate a media staging area and request a public information officer through Emergency Communications.
 - j. Turn over command of the scene to the tactical lieutenant upon the tactical unit's arrival. The tactical lieutenant will then be responsible for commanding the scene and managing the incident. The Field Services supervisor will then be responsible solely for maintaining the integrity of the outer perimeter.
 - k. Remain at the scene for the duration of the incident, reporting to the tactical lieutenant.
 - l. Secure a radio frequency for the operation.
 - m. Notify rescue, ambulance, and fire department as needed.
 - n. Upon the Incident Commander's determination that the suspected hostage situation does not involve hostages, follow the protocols for a barricaded subject in paragraph D below.
3. The field services on-duty lieutenant will monitor the incident and have oversight of the situation until relieved by the tactical lieutenant. Once relieved the field services on-duty lieutenant will assume responsibility for maintaining the perimeter.
 4. The field services supervisor will be the incident commander and will collaborate with the on-duty lieutenant regarding strategy and coordination of resources and participation of different agencies.
 5. In particularly complex or volatile situations, the on-duty lieutenant or higher-ranking officer may assume incident command.
 6. The field services supervisor will notify the tactical lieutenant as soon as possible.

The tactical lieutenant will take these actions:

- a. The tactical lieutenant will call out CNT immediately when responding to the scene.
- b. The top priority is to resolve the situation safely while using the minimum amount of force necessary to protect the lives of the hostages and other people at or near the scene.



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- c. The safety of the hostages, public, and officers and the successful resolution of the situation take precedence over the amount of time the officers have been deployed and the inconvenience to the community.
- d. If negotiations are moving in a positive direction and the hostages are not deemed to be in immediate danger, negotiations should continue.
- e. Force is authorized where necessary to ensure the safety of the hostages if negotiations are moving in a negative direction and the lives of the hostages are deemed to be in imminent danger.
- f. The tactical lieutenant will follow the Tactical and Crisis Negotiation Team SOP.

D. Field Services Response to Barricaded or Suicidal/Barricaded Subjects

1. When an officer is dispatched to a call of a barricaded or suicidal/barricaded subject, the officer should begin gathering information to assess whether there is a need for a tactical response.
2. The responding officer will ensure that backup officers are present before initiating contact. A Crisis Intervention Trained Officer (CITO) may make contact with the subject once backup officers are present. If an MCT or enhanced CITO is on scene, he or she will make the initial contact. When possible, the supervisor will ensure that a layered, less-lethal response is in place prior to making any contact with the subject.
3. Emergency Communications will ensure that the on-duty field services supervisor is dispatched to the call, together with the on-duty field services lieutenant.
 - a. If the supervisor is unavailable, another on-duty supervisor will be notified and dispatched.
 - b. If the nature of the call out did not alert Emergency Communications to dispatch a supervisor, the officer encountering a barricaded or suicidal/barricaded subject will notify a supervisor and Emergency Communications as soon as possible.
4. When the field services supervisor determines from consultation with the field services on-duty lieutenant and the tactical lieutenant that the incident is not appropriate for a tactical response, the supervisor will notify Emergency Communications.
 - a. Emergency Communications will dispatch a mobile crisis team or enhanced CITO to assist with the response.
 - b. The supervisor will retain command of the scene, but the MCT or enhanced CITO will take the lead on interactions with the subject and will provide input to the supervisor regarding strategies for resolving the incident.



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5. The field services on-duty lieutenant will monitor the incident and have oversight of the situation.
 - a. The field services supervisor will be the incident commander and will collaborate with the on-duty lieutenant and enhanced CITO or MCT regarding strategy and coordination of resources to resolve the situation. These officers will continually assess and communicate with one another regarding tactics.
 - b. In particularly complex or volatile situations, the on-duty lieutenant or higher-ranking officer may assume incident command.
6. Officers will make an attempt to obtain any information about the subject from family or friends. The Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) will be contacted to use the Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU) case management system and other available resources to obtain any available additional information on the location of the incident or subject(s). CIU will be available for on-call consultation.
7. The following actions will be taken when responding to the scene:
 - a. Officers responding to the scene should use invisible deployment as much as possible, including cover and concealment.
 - b. Containment of the immediate area should be established as soon as possible to ensure the subject's safety, the community's safety, and the officers' safety.
 - c. If the subject's family and/or friends are present at the location, every attempt should be made to separate them from the subject. Once the family and friends are separated from the subject, the family member or friends should be interviewed to gain additional information.
 - d. The supervisor and the CITO should consult and develop a plan of action prior to contacting the subject.
8. Communicating with the subject through de-escalation

When a CITO, an enhanced CITO, or MCT initiates communication with a subject, they should follow these guidelines:

- a. During a crisis situation, officer(s) should attempt to engage the individual by using de-escalation techniques.
- b. When contacting the subject, officers should evaluate all available information. Face-to-face contact shall not be attempted unless the officers are certain the subject is not armed or if there is sufficient cover and protection to ensure safety.
- c. Officers shall ensure that adequate distance from the subject is maintained, considering the threat the subject poses.
- b. When possible, officers shall attempt to contact the subject via telephone. If unable to make contact via telephone, alternate means such as public-address announcements, social media, or any other electronic



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communication should be attempted. If contact is made with the subject, officers will take the following actions:

- i. Provide reassurance that the police are there to help and that appropriate care will be provided.
- ii. Attempt to find out the nature of the crisis the individual is experiencing.
- iii. While listening to the individual's concerns, allow the subject to express his or her feelings.
- iv. Avoid threatening the individual with arrest or physical harm.
- v. Attempt to guide the conversation towards topics that seem to ease the situation.
- vi. Always be truthful. If the individual perceives deception, he or she may withdraw, which will further complicate the situation.
- vii. Ask the subject to disarm and follow the exit plan provided by the officers and supervisors on scene.
- viii. Engage in active listening and nonthreatening, nonjudgmental verbal exchanges.

9. Disengagement Procedures

- a. The on-scene supervisor will ensure that every reasonable attempt is made to contact the subject. If the subject refuses to make contact with officers on scene and remains barricaded, the supervisor will do the following:
 - i. Ensure that an on-duty lieutenant responds to the scene, if the lieutenant is not already on scene.
 - ii. Ensure all available resources are utilized in order to safely resolve the situation
 - iii. Avoid escalating or making a forced entry into the location, as well as closing distance on the subject.
 - iv. Ensure that the family members, friends, and subject are provided appropriate resources and services. Document this by using the on-body recording device. A list of these resources is available through the RTCC.
 - v. Document on the on-body recording device when advising the family, friends, or others involved in the situation concerning the dangers of contacting a barricaded or suicidal/barricaded subject.
- b. After reasonable attempts have been made to contact the barricaded or suicidal/barricaded subject and the situation remains unresolved and it does not meet the criteria outlined in 2-20-4-E below, the incident commander will have officers withdraw from the area.
- c. When officers clear the call, they cannot force the family, friends, or others who are present to leave the area. The supervisor will ensure that any person who lives at the location of the incident and cannot safely return is



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offered a safe location to stay for the night. Additional basic needs should also be considered.

- d. If the subject has pending misdemeanor charges or a misdemeanor warrant, officers will not make forced entry to make the arrest. This does not prevent the officer from filing the appropriate criminal charges under state statute or city ordinance.
- e. The on-scene supervisor will ensure that an original incident report includes (1) all supplemental reports, (2) video or digital recordings, (3) victim and witness statements, and (4) any other pertinent documents related to the incident. Copies of all reports and statements will be forwarded to the Crisis Intervention Unit by the end of their shift.
- f. The on-scene supervisor will ensure that a periodic watch at the location is entered for each shift over a 24-hour period. The watch is for area command information only and is not to be dispatched.

10. Pick-Up Orders and Certificates of Evaluation are civil orders. Mental health orders will not be used as a basis for forced entry in order to take the subject into custody.

E. Tactical Threat Assessment

1. The field services supervisor and his or her lieutenant will consult with the tactical lieutenant if the potential hostage situation or suicidal/barricaded or barricaded subject scene involves any of the following factors:
 - a. The subject has a confirmed felony warrant.
 - b. The subject is currently in the commission of a violent felony crime.
 - c. Subject has a confirmed nonviolent felony warrant, is currently in the commission of a nonviolent felony crime, and has a documented violent history.
 - d. Subject is armed with a firearm, and the on-scene officer can confirm that the subject is discharging the firearm.
 - e. Subject is armed in a public area displaying an immediate threat of violence in the public area.
 - f. There is positive confirmation of an unwilling subject who is unable to leave the location of the suicidal and/or barricaded subject.
2. Tactical and Crisis Negotiation Team will not respond to the scene of subjects threatening suicide from elevated positions or to the scene of someone shifting his or her location--such as walking on foot or driving a car--unless the situation requires a tactical response, which will be determined by the tactical lieutenant. The tactical lieutenant will have the final authority for initiating a full Tactical Unit deployment.
3. The tactical lieutenant will advise field services whether or not tactical should respond and whether further information is necessary to determine if tactical



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should respond. In all cases, the tactical lieutenant will make the final determination on the use of Tactical Units.

4. Any supervisor may contact the tactical lieutenant at any time for incident consultation.

F. Use of Tactical Units in Response to Suicidal and/or Barricaded Subjects

1. At the discretion of the tactical lieutenant, the tactical unit will respond under these circumstances:
 - a. A suspect barricades himself or herself and is wanted for a felony
 - b. All hostage situations
 - c. Any active shooter incident
 - d. All Suicidal/barricaded or barricaded subjects who have a felony warrant or who appear to be an immediate threat to others
 - e. Any other violent incidents beyond the capabilities of the Field Services Bureau
2. Throughout the call, the tactical lieutenant will continually monitor the threat assessment criteria to ensure that the incident meets policy and procedure for tactical deployment.