



Sheridan Police Department
Policies and Procedures
21.7 Replaces 409.2
Chapter 21 – Emergency Operations
Section 7 – Hostage and Barricade Situations

Date: January 1, 2013
Revised: 03/17/2022

Signature:

Hostage and barricade situations present extreme danger to officers and citizens. Each hostage/barricade situation is different, but a basic plan may provide officers with guidelines to help defuse the situation safely. Whatever happens, the department expects its officers to react logically and sensibly. Above all, officers shall strive to contain or limit the situation. The paramount objective in a hostage incident is its peaceful resolution and the safe release of hostages.

21.7.1 Initial Response

- A. A barricaded person may be a criminal suspect or a person who is not suspected of committing a crime, but is the focus of a legitimate police intervention effort (most often involving threats of suicide) who has taken a position that does not allow immediate police access and is refusing police orders to exit. A barricaded person may be known to be armed, thought to be armed, have access to weapons in the location, or be in an unknown weapons status.
- B. Communications technicians shall gather as much information as possible and transmit it to officers in the field clearly and quickly so that upon arrival at the scene the officers are aware of the dangers. Information gathered by communications technicians shall include answers to the following questions:
 - 1. Where is the event taking place?
 - 2. Where is the complainant calling from (number and location)?
 - 3. What are the complainant's name and telephone number?
 - 4. Can the complainant see the scene?
 - 5. Are the suspects armed? With what?
 - 6. How many suspects are there?
 - 7. What do the suspects look like?
 - 8. Are there any other persons involved? If so, how many?
- C. The initial response to a hostage/barricade situation is emotionally charged and presents a great danger. Stress is high both among the officers and suspects/subjects involved.
 - 1. Normally, there is no need to rush to a solution; time may reduce stress and allow communication to begin. Additionally, time is needed to assess the situation and to secure the surrounding area.
 - 2. Every effort must be made to reduce the tension level early in the situation and keep it down. Officers who confront hostage incidents should not undertake any tactics other than what is immediately necessary to protect lives.
- D. The first officer on the scene shall:
 - 1. Evaluate the situation and gather as much information as possible.

2. Take offensive action only if:
 - a. The officer is reasonably certain the action will quickly bring the incident to conclusion without increased danger to hostages or other innocent persons; or
 - b. The action is necessary to save a human life, including the officer's own life or in defense of any person who is in immediate danger of serious physical injury.
3. Inform dispatch and request the supervisor's presence and additional back-up as needed.
4. Attempt to contain the situation at its present location.
5. Safely remove all innocent persons from the danger area. Those persons who cannot be safely removed shall be instructed to seek protection where they are. If witnesses are identified, they should be briefly interviewed to obtain information about the incident and arrangements should be made for them to wait in a safe area for identification and debriefing by detectives.
6. Inform the on-duty supervisor of all pertinent facts upon his or her arrival.
7. Assist the on-duty supervisor in gathering as much information as possible about the situation, including the following:
 - a. Suspects
 - i. Location;
 - ii. Types of weapons they possess (i.e. - handguns, rifles, explosives, etc.);
 - iii. Criminal history;
 - iv. Complete physical description, mental and physical condition;
 - v. Purpose or motive; and
 - vi. Current crimes committed.
 - b. Hostages physical description, physical and mental condition.
 - c. Location of the incident including:
 - i. Interior and exterior descriptions;
 - ii. Possible escape routes;
 - iii. Locations of service (i.e. – water, electricity, etc.) connections;
 - iv. Telephone locations;
 - v. Any areas or streets which may be unsafe for additional units responding to the scene; and
 - vi. If a police scanner is being used or is available to the suspect.

21.7.2 Command Responsibilities

- A. The on duty supervisor shall respond to the scene and assume incident command. In cases of barricaded subjects, the incident commander shall develop an initial plan of action and notify the operations supervisor and other command staff if appropriate. In cases of hostage situations or when deemed appropriate for a barricaded subject, the incident commander's duties and responsibilities include the following:
 1. Notifying appropriate personnel within the department and support agencies.
 - a. Notifying the chief of police and command staff.
 - b. The designation of a tactical commander and assignments.
 - c. Obtaining sufficient personnel and equipment.
 - d. Asking emergency medical services to stage in the area.
 - e. Asking the fire department to stage in the area.
 2. Establishing an inner and outer perimeter to ensure a safe area in which to operate.

3. Establishing a command post, recording personnel assignments and developing a chronological log of events.
 4. Formulating and being prepared to place into operation a plan of tactical action against the barricaded position.
 5. Establishing a staging area.
 6. Assigning radio talk groups.
 7. Arranging for the evacuation of any injured persons.
 8. Arranging for the evacuation of any bystanders in the danger area.
 9. Establishing communications with the suspect(s) to determine their demands or intentions.
 10. Arranging for news media releases.
- B. The incident commander will use a tactical team to address incidents involving hostage takers and barricaded subjects (see section 21.3). The tactical team is responsible for any tactical resolution of the incident. The team leaders are responsible for directing, coordinating and deploying the tactical team at the direction of the tactical commander and incident commander.
- C. Investigative personnel shall:
1. Be responsible for debriefing and for obtaining written statements from those persons who are interviewed. All information gathered and statements taken will be forwarded to the incident commander.
 2. Assist the incident commander in gathering intelligence information on the suspect(s) and hostage(s) as follows:
 - a. Suspect(s):
 - i. General background;
 - ii. Likes and dislikes, habits;
 - iii. Relatives;
 - iv. Arrest and criminal history information;
 - v. Weapon(s) involved; and
 - vi. Current mental state and alcohol or drug influence.
 - b. Hostage(s):
 - i. General background;
 - ii. Relatives;
 - iii. General health; and
 - iv. Any weapon(s).
 3. Location of barricade:
 - a. Floor plan or layout of structure and outside curtilage if possible;
 - b. Location of utility shut offs; and
 - c. Any information useful to negotiators, tactical team, incident commander or others.
 4. Conduct a full investigation and case preparation for the prosecutor's office.

21.7.3 Negotiations

- A. The incident commander will determine the need for and role of a crisis negotiation team.. Generally, negotiations will be initiated as soon as possible and continued until it becomes clear that negotiations are not beneficial to resolving the situation, or an opportunity presents

itself that will enable a conclusion to the incident with little or no risk to the hostages or departmental personnel.

- B. The primary objective of a negotiator is to change the attitude of the hostage-taker(s) and/or barricaded suspect from hostility to trust. The suspect should be told of the futility of his or her actions and every effort should be made to persuade the suspect to surrender voluntarily.
 - 1. Time is on the side of the negotiator and is the principal tactic used in the negotiating process.
 - 2. During the negotiations, the negotiator should command the respect of all personnel involved, but should not portray himself or herself as the ultimate decision maker. The suspect should be made to understand that there is another authority over the negotiator. This technique will allow the negotiator to employ further delaying tactics.
 - 3. Demands by the suspect should be carefully considered and evaluated as to the impact upon the immediate and subsequent circumstances of the overall situation before agreement to or denial of such demands.
 - 4. In negotiating, practically all demands are negotiable except:
 - a. Supplying the suspect with weapons or ammunition;
 - b. Supplying the suspect with alcohol or other drugs;
 - c. Trading a police officer for a hostage or allowing a police officer to go inside to speak with the subject alone;
 - d. Taking additional hostages or exchanging hostages; and
 - e. Any other items that would tend to strengthen the bargaining position of the suspect(s) in the situation.
 - 5. Negotiable items can include, but are not necessarily limited to: food, cigarettes, non-alcoholic beverages, or any other items that would not tend to strengthen the bargaining position of the suspect(s).
 - 6. As a general rule, demands for transportation will be denied unless there is danger to a large group of persons that can be alleviated by moving the hostage taker and/or hostages or where movement presents a tactical advantage to the police.
 - 7. No demands will be made of the hostage taker, other than to agree to exchange the release of the hostages for the safety of the suspect.
 - 8. Participating personnel shall be kept informed of plans and developments.

21.7.4 Aftermath

- A. Once the hostage taker has been captured, the following actions shall be performed:
 - 1. The suspect shall be removed from the scene to a place of interrogation.
 - 2. Hostages shall be removed immediately upon capture of the suspect.
 - a. The on-scene supervisor shall alert all participants by radio that the hostages are exiting the scene.
 - b. Medical treatment shall be provided, if needed.
 - c. A controlled area should be established so that hostages may be united with their families.
 - d. Investigators shall interview each hostage to obtain statements.
 - 3. The crime scene shall be preserved until processed for evidence by officers assigned.
 - a. The area shall remain cordoned off until the incident commander declares it open.

- b. Officers who are no longer needed shall be cleared for normal assignments by the incident commander.
 - c. Investigations shall be made into any surrounding property damage (i.e. - bullet holes in neighboring building or destroyed lawns and gardens, etc.).
- B. A detailed after action report will be submitted to the chief of police by the incident commander or designee as required in section 21.2.2.A.10