



# TRAINING BULLETIN

Los Angeles Police Department

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## MOBILE FIELD FORCE CONCEPT – PART II MOBILE TACTICS

During any unusual occurrence or civil disturbance, the mission of the Department is to safeguard the lives and property of the people we serve while restoring conditions to normal as rapidly and efficiently as possible. The Mobile Field Force Concept was developed to supplement the Department's conventional resources for accomplishing these objectives. Mobile tactics are specialized techniques that give Mobile Field Force (MFF) personnel the ability to respond rapidly and complete high-risk missions beyond the capabilities of other personnel. This Training Bulletin will describe mobile tactics and specialized MFF configurations.

### Initial Responder Actions

A disturbance that has the potential for escalating into mass civil disobedience requires swift action to prevent widespread violence. The first unit on the scene must take charge, assess the situation and assemble the Department's resources in preparation for action to control the disturbance. It may be necessary to deploy a Mobile Field Force to the incident and implement a Tactical Alert. After an organized police presence has been established, the Incident Commander should apply conventional tactics to isolate the civil disturbance. There are several options available to accomplish this task:

- Utilize de-escalation tactics;
- A coordinated show of force in the form of disciplined columns of officers or mobile squads;
- Deploying a mounted unit in conjunction with squad formations;
- Using force (compliance control holds, less lethal, batons, etc.); and,
- Utilizing a mass booking operation and a field jail holding area.

When it becomes apparent that mass and mobility are required to control the situation, Mobile Field Forces should be assembled and deployed.

### Mobile Tactics

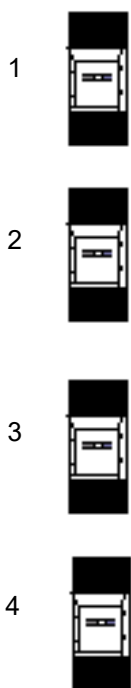
Mobile tactics combine the elements of flexibility, surprise, rapid deployment, and mobility to effectively control and disperse a disorderly group through offensive action. The

operating component is a squad of four vehicles, which consist of a squad leader (sergeant) and 15 officers. The vehicle drivers generally remain in the vehicles.

The basic formations, like conventional crowd control techniques, are flexible and can be adapted to a variety of situations. When using mobile tactics, consideration must be given to the size, demeanor, attitude and intent of the crowd; the surrounding terrain; available escape routes; and the overall objectives of the mission. The basic vehicle formations are In Trail (all personnel in vehicles), On Line (all personnel in vehicles), On Line Skirmish (vehicle drivers in vehicles, other personnel deployed on foot).

### Mobile Field Force Configuration

When assembling a Mobile Field Force, vehicles may be parked in platoon strength (Diagram 1). If parking space is limited, the vehicles can be arranged in Convoy formation (Diagram 3). Once assembled, and depending on the mission, the entire Mobile Field Force can be deployed as a platoon, or utilized as individual squads.



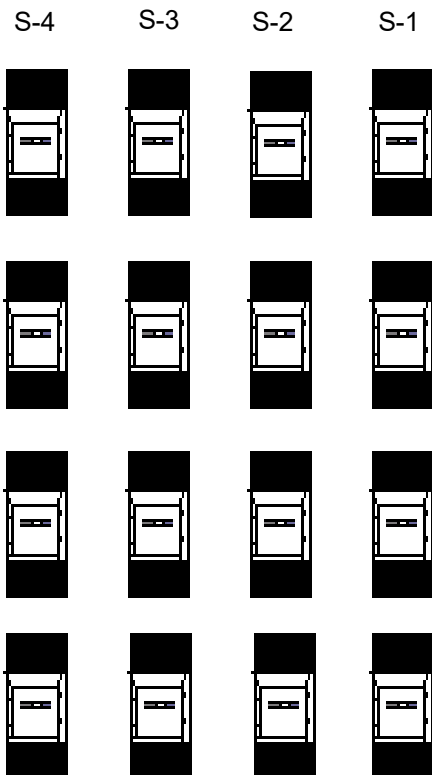
In Trail - Diagram 2

The Mobile Field Force uses the basic formation of In Trail when traveling from location to location (Diagram 2). This formation can be used in squad or platoon strength (if swift response is needed, use emergency lights and sirens). The preparatory command is "In Trail." The command of execution is "Initiate."

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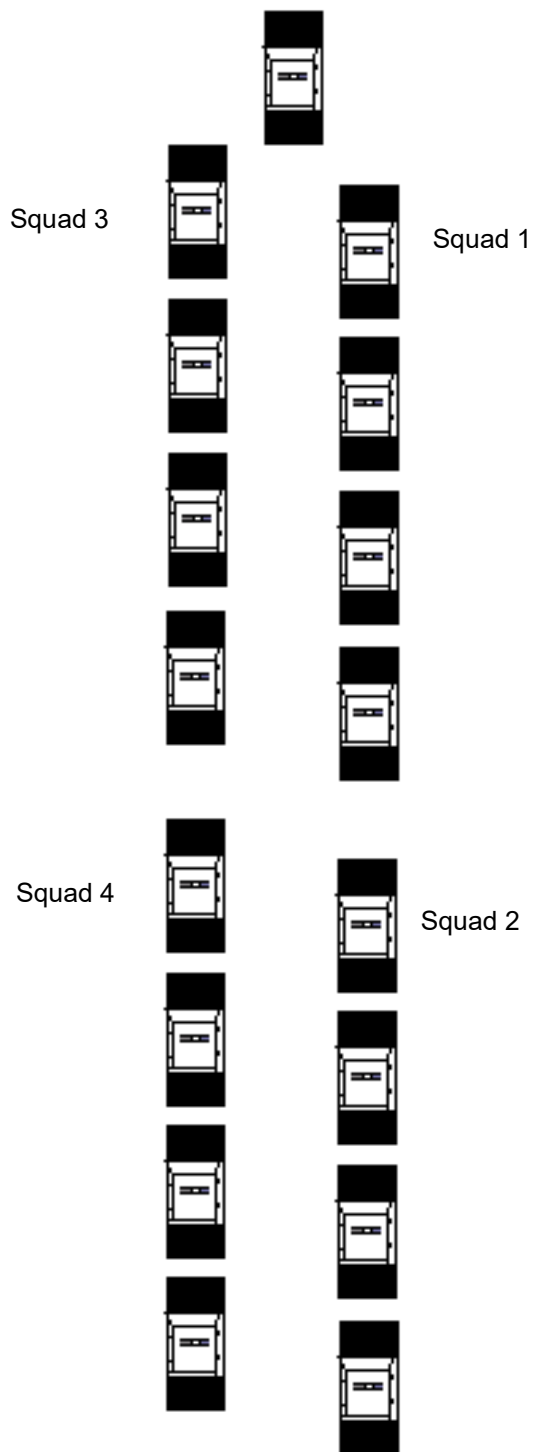


MFF  
Leader



Platoon Strength - Diagram 1

When the Mobile Field Force responds as a platoon, it travels in Convoy formation (Diagram 3).

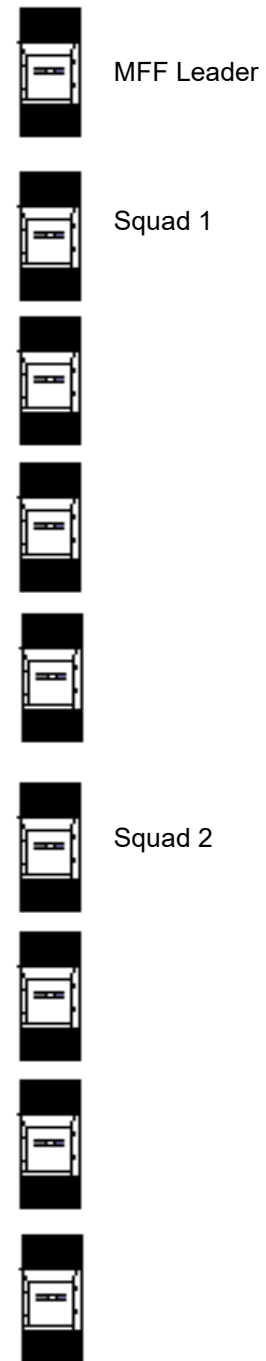


Double Stack - Diagram 4

The "Double Stack" formation may also be used when assembling a Mobile Field Force Platoon (Diagram 4). Squads 3 and 4 are deployed left of Squads 1 and 2 and fall in behind the Mobile Field Force Leader.

Additionally, the platoon can be staged on a street by parking diagonally, utilizing both sides of the street.

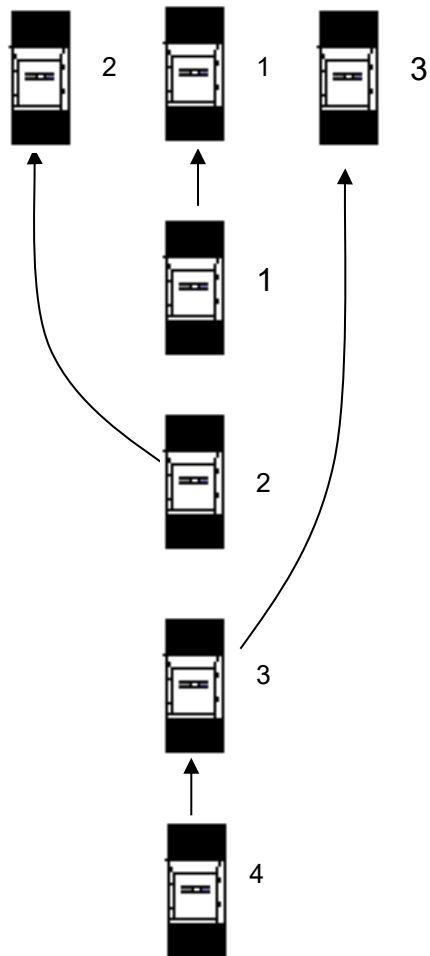
**NOTE:** It is important that vehicles remain with the platoon for rapid redeployment and protection of the vehicles.



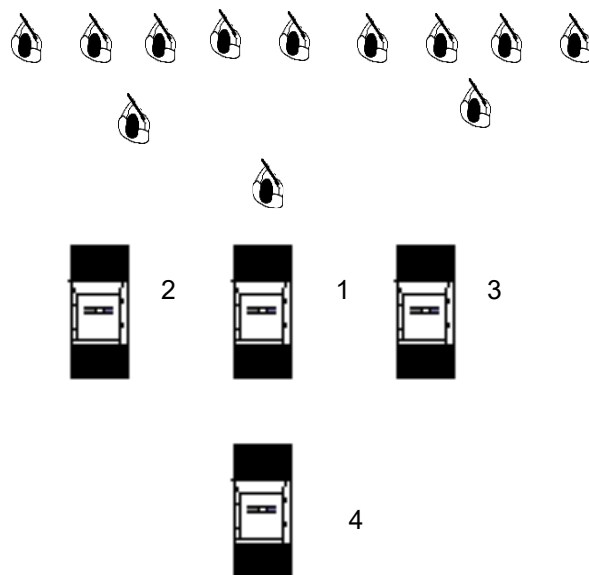
Convoy Driving & Parking - Diagram 3

The On Line formation (Diagram 5) begins from the In Trail formation. The preparatory command given by the squad leader is "On Line." This alerts the drivers of Vehicles 2 and 3 to move from a column to a position parallel to one another. While Vehicle 4 moves directly behind Vehicle 1. The vehicles in the squad will be able to move forward in a parallel formation.

The command of execution is "Initiate." This signals the driver of Vehicle 2 to move to the left and parallel to Vehicle 1. The driver of Vehicle 3 simultaneously moves to the right and parallel to Vehicle 1. And the driver of Vehicle 4 moves directly behind Vehicle 1. All units are driving Code 3 at 10 to 35 mph. At a distance of approximately four to six car lengths from the crowd, the command to stop is "Brake, Brake, Brake." This leaves adequate room for all vehicles to stop while leaving enough distance between the vehicles and the crowd to allow the squad to dismount and form a skirmish line or initiate other mobile tactics in front of the crowd.



**On Line - Diagram 5**



**On Line Skirmish - Diagram 6**

To form a skirmish line, the preparatory command of "On Line Skirmish" is given by the squad leader. This deploys the Mobile Field Force officers on foot, supported by a driver in each vehicle.

The command of execution is "Initiate!" The drivers of Vehicles 2, 3, and 4 drive their vehicles into position (Diagram 6) and stop. The passenger officers exit and form a skirmish line in front of the vehicles. The squad leader remains behind the officers on the skirmish line. Vehicles 2 and 3 may

activate the emergency lights and siren while Vehicle 1 uses the public-address system. As the skirmish line moves forward, the drivers follow.

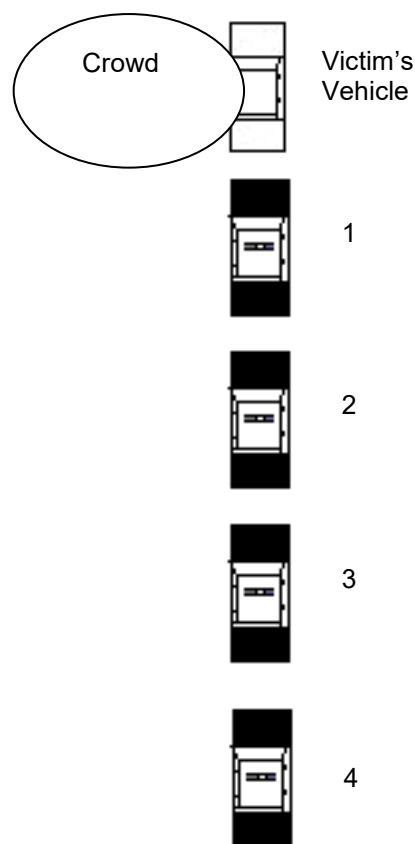
### Use of the Siren

The psychological effects of noise and lights on a hostile crowd cannot be overemphasized. The use of the siren and emergency lights during On Line and Tactical Rescue formations is highly recommended. It should be pointed out, however, that noise could interfere with control of the formations. Discretion should be exercised in determining the appropriate time and duration of sirens, if needed. Once a crowd begins to move, the sirens may be deactivated.

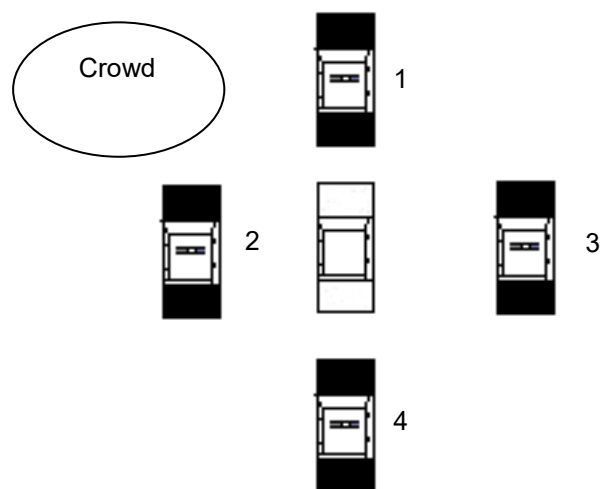
### Tactical Rescue

The Tactical Rescue tactic is a squad size deployment which begins with the police vehicles In Trail (Diagram 7).

The vehicle emergency lights are on and the sirens are set on “wail.” The squad leader in Vehicle 1 gives all of the commands, which will coordinate the rescue. This formation may also be used for rescues of downed officers or firefighters. The next two diagrams illustrate the procedure for rescuing a victim trapped inside a vehicle, which is surrounded by a hostile crowd.



**Tactical Rescue - Diagram 7**



**Victim Rescue - Diagram 8**

Vehicle 1 forces the crowd away and drives to a position in front of the victim's vehicle (Diagram 8). Vehicle 2 stops next to the victim's vehicle. Vehicle 3 stops on the opposite side from the victim's vehicle. Vehicle 4 takes a covering position at the rear of the victim's vehicle. The rear passenger officers in Vehicle 2 perform the actual rescue. Except for the drivers, all other officers provide cover while the rescue is in progress. After the victim is inside Vehicle 2, there are several options available to the squad leader:

- The officers and victim drive out of the area in Vehicle 2.
- If the victim's vehicle is operable, an officer from Vehicle 2 can drive it out by falling In Line between Vehicles 2 and 3.
- One officer from Vehicle 2 may fall back and move out with Vehicle 3 or 4 with five officers in the vehicle.

### **Tactical Response Forces**

Mobile tactics are designed to supplement conventional crowd control tactics. For extreme incidents such as violent crowds involving gunfire, barricaded suspects, snipers and hostage situations, the Department has developed the "Tactical Response Force Concept." Organized through Metropolitan Division, a Tactical Response Force should be requested when a high-risk situation is beyond the capabilities of conventional police resources.

### **CONCLUSION**

When the City is confronted with a situation that may escalate into a riot, the Department must establish control by reacting quickly and committing sufficient resources. The amount of force, and the methods used to secure compliance with the law is governed by the particular situation. Mobile tactics provide a swift, efficient means of controlling mass civil disobedience.

**This Bulletin cancels and supersedes Volume XXXVIII, Issue 5, Mobile Field Force Concept Part II, Mobile Tactics, August 2006**

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