



LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
TACTICAL CONCEPTS
Tactics Training Overview

Tactical Concept No. 4

April 2023

IMMEDIATE ACTION/RAPID DEPLOYMENT

PURPOSE

Nationwide, there have been several high-profile incidents where armed assailant(s), commonly called **active shooters**, commit acts of **“aggressive deadly behavior”** and have assaulted people in schools, workplaces, and other public venues. These situations require Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment (IARD) tactics for responding law enforcement personnel prior to the arrival of a Special Weapons and Tactics team. In these cases, delayed deployment could have catastrophic consequences.

PROTOCOL

This Tactical Concepts – Tactics Training Overview covers Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment tactics developed to prepare officers to handle these types of situations. These are effective methods for first responders to use, which will minimize the risk of injury to citizens and officers when responding to an active shooting in progress.

Active Shooter – Defined. An active shooter is *“an armed person who has used deadly physical force on other persons and aggressively continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional victims.”*

Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment – Defined. Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment is *“the swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to ongoing, life-threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or serious bodily injury to innocent persons.”*

Note: Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment tactics are not restricted to incidents involving suspects armed with firearms. Any incidents where an armed suspect(s) are committing acts of violence while having unrestricted access to additional victims, may require the deployment of IARD tactics. These occurrences are commonly referred to as **mass violence incidents**.

Characteristics of the Assailant

The following is a list of characteristics commonly associated with an assailant who is either currently or potentially engaging in aggressive deadly behavior. The list is compiled from descriptions of past assailants and is not meant to be all-inclusive.

Assailant(s) *may*:

- Focus on assaulting persons with whom they have had prior contact. Their intentions can be an expression of hatred or rage rather than the commission of a crime.
- Engage more than one target and may be intent on killing a number of people as quickly as possible.
- Go to locations where there are numerous potential victims, such as schools, theaters, concerts, shopping malls, places of work, and/or may even strike at their victims from a distance; much like a sniper. Assailants may have some degree of familiarity with the building they choose to attack.
- Continue their attack despite the arrival of emergency responders. Tactics such as containment and negotiation, normally associated with standoff incidents, may not be adequate in these types of events.
- Be better armed than the police and may make use of explosives, booby traps, body armor, and may even employ some type of diversion.
- Have planned an attack and be prepared for a sustained confrontation with the police. There have been occasions when these assailants have not attempted to hide their identity or conceal the commission of their attacks. Escape from the police is usually not a priority.
- Be suicidal, deciding to die in the course of their actions, either at the hands of others, including law enforcement, or by a self-inflicted wound.

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Each crisis is unique and dynamic – the incident may go in and out of "active" status. A suspect may go from an active shooter to a barricaded status with or without access to victims. The following are general response guidelines for ongoing deadly behavior incidents. Since these incidents contain many variables, effective handling of this type of situation cannot be totally reduced to specific procedures. These guidelines are not meant to limit conventional police tactics, which are appropriate to certain dynamic situations.

First Responders

The first priority is to locate the assailant(s) and STOP the aggressive deadly behavior. The "4 A's" is a concept designed to help an officer recall the necessary actions that should be taken to facilitate a coordinated response toward a given threat at an Active Shooter incident: **Assess, Announce, Assemble, and Act.**

The 4 A's:

- Assess – Quickly gather information
- Announce – What you have and what is needed
- Assemble – Form Contact Team
- Act – Stop deadly behavior / render aid

Assess. Upon arrival to an Active Shooter incident, initial responders must rapidly **assess** the situation to determine the nature of the threat and what measures should be taken in an attempt to stop or control the life-threatening actions related to the incident. The initial assessment can be gathered from victims, witnesses, physical evidence at scene and information provided by Communications Division.

Announce. After the initial assessment, initial responders should **announce** what they are seeing to Communications Division and responding personnel. The radio broadcast should include a “help call” and the nature of the incident, as well as what resources are needed, including the anticipated number of personnel and any other pertinent information.

Assemble. Once the situation has been initially assessed and properly announced, personnel must rapidly **assemble** in a safe location, configure themselves into contact teams and respond.

Act. The teams must respond and **act** in a coordinated effort using tactical concepts, such as bounding overwatch, travelling, and Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment as directed by their team leader:

- Form a Contact Team;
- Notify Communications of the Contact Team number (Contact Team 1, 2, etc.), a quick overview of the incident while deploying and the Team’s movement; and,
- Proceed to contact the active shooter.

After the initial Contact Team(s) have been deployed, an officer with sufficient **situational awareness**, or supervisor on scene, should then assume the role of Incident Commander (IC) to facilitate the coordination of arriving resources, gather and disseminate information, and establish Command and Control of the situation.

Command and Control

An active shooting incident is a complex situation requiring considerable assets for success. Large, unfamiliar locations such as schools, businesses, or other public venues pose serious problems from the command and control aspect.

Incident Commander’s Primary Objectives

1. Stop the assailant
2. Rescue victims
3. Isolate and contain the incident

A successful outcome can only be accomplished if command and control is established early on, otherwise it may never be obtained. The IC must demonstrate clear, expedited, and decisive leadership. Unlike other tactical situations, active shooter incidents challenge the ability of the IC to rapidly gain control of an incident.

The IC should:

- Assess situation
- Establish communication with the initial Contact Team(s)

- Coordinate and deploy responding resources
- Assemble additional Contact Teams, Rescue Teams, and Rescue Task Force Teams
- Broadcast any pertinent information
 - Location and number of suspects and type of weapons involved
 - Estimate size of the crowd and number of casualties and fatalities – if known
- Acquire tactical frequencies
 - Coordinate communications with outside agencies
- Establish an Incident Command Post to coordinate resources and gather/disseminate information
 - Location of staging area
 - Location of a Unified Command Post
 - Ingress/egress routes for emergency vehicles
- Request additional resources
 - Patrol rifle
 - Specialized resources (SWAT, K-9, Bomb Squad, Hazmat)
 - Fire Department and Paramedics

Deployment and Entry

The challenges of deploying into the affected area(s) and/or structure(s) are hindered by the fact that the suspect may not be readily identifiable. Additionally, there may be more than one suspect. The suspect has a distinct advantage when lying in wait while the Contact Team is at a disadvantage in searching for and apprehending this suspect.

Depending upon the size of the venue (school, workplace, etc.), officers may encounter large numbers of innocent victims who are potential targets and/or hostages, as well as multiple entrances and exits that need to be secured, watched, or breached. There will be numerous distractions during entry. These may include, but are not limited to carnage, explosive devices, activated fire sprinklers, noise from fire alarms, school bells, and people screaming. Victims might be confused and frightened and may become physically aggressive and/or cling to rescuers, and those hiding may not respond to police directions. If the incident is at a school, teachers may lock the classroom door and have students sit on the floor until they receive police or school official instructions.

Contact Teams

Ideally, a Contact Team should be comprised of four officers. However, exigent circumstances may make it necessary to proceed with fewer than the desired amount. Each circumstance is situationally driven and requires the first officer(s) on scene to rely upon their training, experience, and good judgment when forming a Contact Team. Responding personnel must keep in mind that their primary role is to stop the deadly behavior of the suspect(s). Contact Teams should comprise of the following, when resources allow:

- **Point Officer (P)** – The lead officer in the direction of travel, preferably deploys a shotgun or a patrol rifle, if only one is available.
- **Flank Officers (F)** – Generally two officers, providing cover from a flank position during movement and has the primary responsibility of room clearing.
- **Rear Guard Officer (RG)** – Generally maintains a rear-cover position during Contact Team movement and may be tasked with maintaining communications.

Note: A Team Leader (TL) must be established on every contact or rescue team for command and control purposes. Generally, the TL will assume one of the flank positions or the rear-guard position, depending on where they can best maintain control and provide direction. The TL should not, when avoidable, assume the point position on the team.

Contact Team positions may change throughout the course of the incident. Officers must remain flexible and understand the varied roles of each position.

Contact Team members should consider the following as priority tasks:

- Locate the assailant.
- Stop the assailant's deadly behavior.
- Limit the assailant's movement.
- Prevent the assailant's escape.
- Communicate team's progress to the IC and other officers.
- Notify the Incident Command Post where victims are located so they can be rescued.
- Direct ambulatory victims to a safe area, and communicate that help is coming.

The primary mission of the Contact Team is to stop the assailant's deadly behavior and prevent escape. Communication is maintained with the IC and other officers to keep them informed of the Contact Team's progress. The secondary mission is to direct victims out of the crisis site through secured areas to a predetermined location. The goal is to save lives by locating and stopping the deadly behavior of the assailant and allowing the safe and orderly evacuation of victims.

When **entering** the location, the Contact Team will move in a **Diamond** (Diagram 1) or **"T" Formation** (Diagram 2). These formations are fluid and can be changed to adapt to the crisis site environment. The Point Officer takes a position in front of the formation. During Team movement, Flank Officers will generally maintain positions on opposite sides of the Diamond Formation. The Rear Guard generally maintains position to the rear of the formation. This allows for 360-degree coverage to be maintained while moving. Travel is conducted in a fluid, controlled, and aggressive manner. Each officer must remain flexible as individual responsibilities and positions can frequently change in this tactic.

In addition, communication within the team, between multiple teams, and with the Incident Command Post is critical. Never assume everyone else sees what you see. When you see a threat, communicate the threat and verify all team members are aware of it.

The Team Leader will generally be responsible for broadcasting the information to the Incident Command Post. Depending on positioning, the Team Leader may task the Rear Guard to assist with communications.

Diagram 1 - Four-Officer Diamond Formation Team Movement

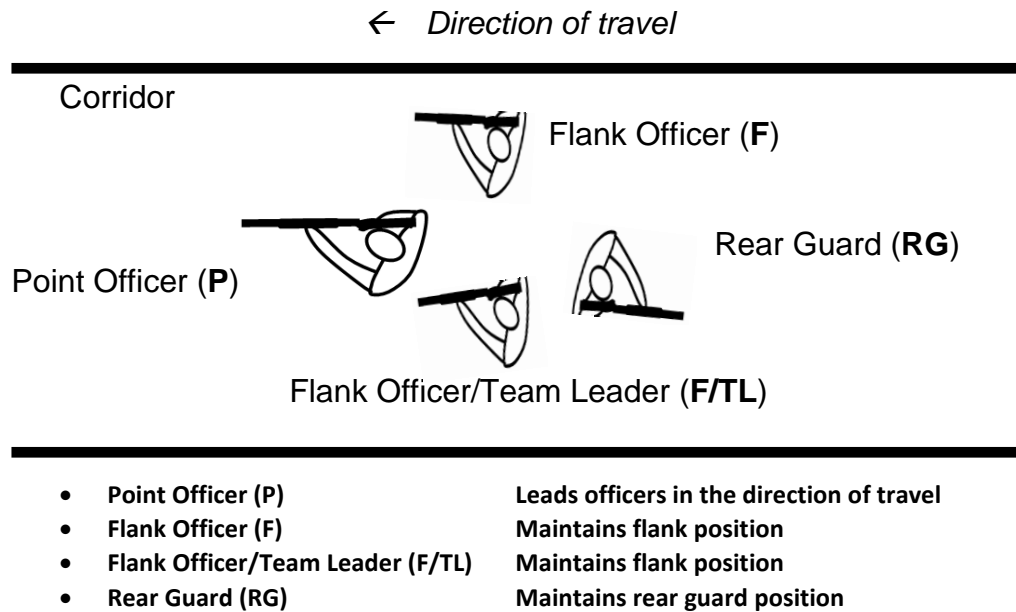
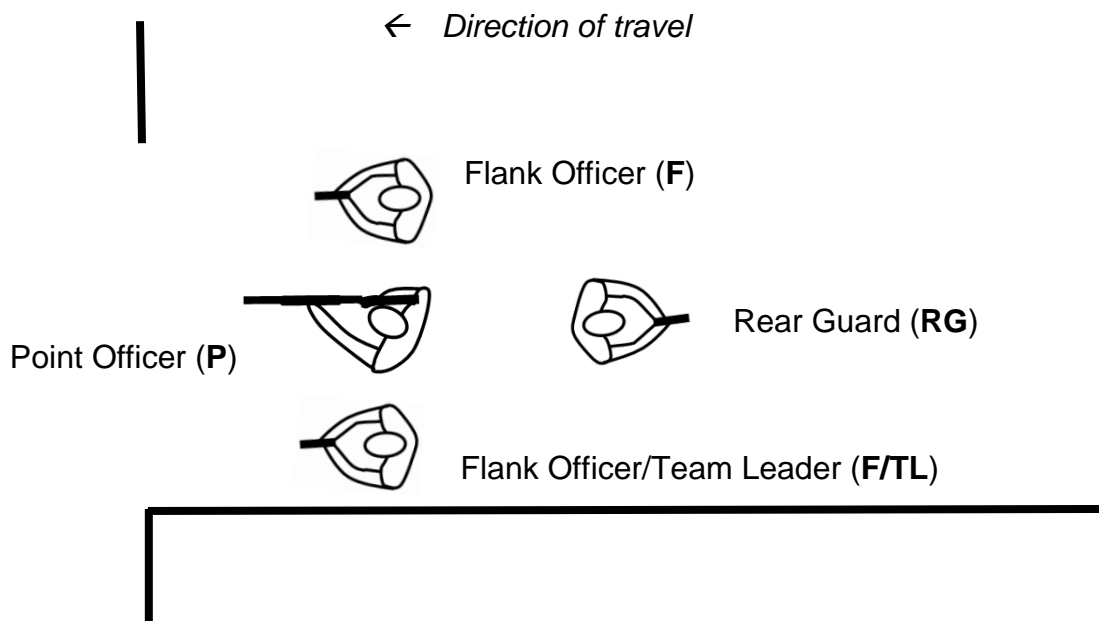


Diagram 2 - Four-Officer "T" Formation Team Movement



Note: The described “T” Formation’ is a modification of the Diamond Formation, where the Flank Officers move forward into a position parallel or nearly parallel with the Point Officer. This allows the Flank Officers to better cover threats on either side of the hallway or area being traversed.

Use of Deadly Force

Officers shall use deadly force upon another person only when the officer reasonably believes that such force is necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person.

Officers shall evaluate each situation with consideration for the particular circumstances of each case and shall use other available resources and techniques if reasonably safe and feasible to do so. Before discharging a firearm, officers shall consider their surroundings, background, and potential risk to bystanders to the extent reasonable under the circumstances.

Note: There are no exceptions to the Department’s Use of Force Policy during an active shooter or mass violence incident.

Cover Fire – Defined. Cover fire is controlled, and deliberate fire directed at a life-endangering threat, where an officer reasonably believes the threat to be located. Cover Fire can be utilized to protect themselves or others and to stop the threat. The decision to utilize cover fire should be consistent with the threat and should be considered deadly force.

A supporting Contact Team can utilize controlled cover fire to distract the assailant from shooting officers moving to gain a tactical advantage or to conduct an officer/victim rescue operation. Officers are accountable for every round they discharge.

Prior to using cover fire, the following should be considered:

- Communicate cover fire is being deployed, when feasible
- A safe background
- Cover fire should not be used when it places innocent persons at a greater risk than the actions of the assailant

Rescue Teams

Rescue Teams are similar to Contact Teams, but with a different primary mission. Rescue Teams are comprised of officers only. The priorities for a Rescue Team are to locate victims, render aid when practicable, and facilitate the evacuation process of victims to safe areas or to medical personnel for treatment. Rescue Teams should consider the tactical situation and the condition of the victims when determining whether to render aid at scene or to extricate the victims. Victims who are able to walk should be directed to a triage or safe area. The Rescue Team members generally move in the same formation(s) as a Contact Team, providing 360-degree coverage during ingress and egress movement. If a Rescue Team encounters the suspect, it should immediately transition to a Contact Team and proceed with the priority of stopping the suspect’s deadly behavior.

Explosive Devices

Incidents may occur that involve unexploded improvised explosive devices (IEDs). If IEDs are encountered, the Contact Team should not approach the device unless it is reasonably safe to do so, and only for the purposes of a visual inspection. If the team can safely approach, they should visually inspect the devices for potential detonation mechanisms (timing device, trip wires, lit fuse, etc.).

Do not move or touch the device.

Consider an alternate route based on the condition of the device. The officer who sees the bomb needs to verbalize its location and attempt to move past or around it, if possible. Do not assume that other team members have seen the device. Mark the area and verbally report the location of the bomb to the Incident Command Post. Always be aware of possible booby traps, even on a rapid deployment.

What to do when a Contact or Rescue Team locates a possible explosive device:

- Visually inspect the device if safe to do so.
- Consider alternate route based on condition of device.
- Move quickly away from device.
- Do not move or touch the device.
- Verbalize the location of the device to team.
- Report location to the Incident Command Post.
- Limit use of radios, cell phones, or MDCs.
- Move past device quickly and continue search.
- Mark location of device.
- Be aware of possible booby traps.

Victim Recovery

The list below details the preferred technique for lifting and recovering a victim:

1. The first officer will place the victim into a supine position and stand next to the victim's head. (Figure 1)
2. The second officer will take a position next to the victim's feet. (Figure 1)
3. The first officer will reach under the victim's shoulders and lift the victim into a seated position. (Figure 1)
4. The second officer may assist by placing the victim's hands on waistline.



Figure 1



Figure 2

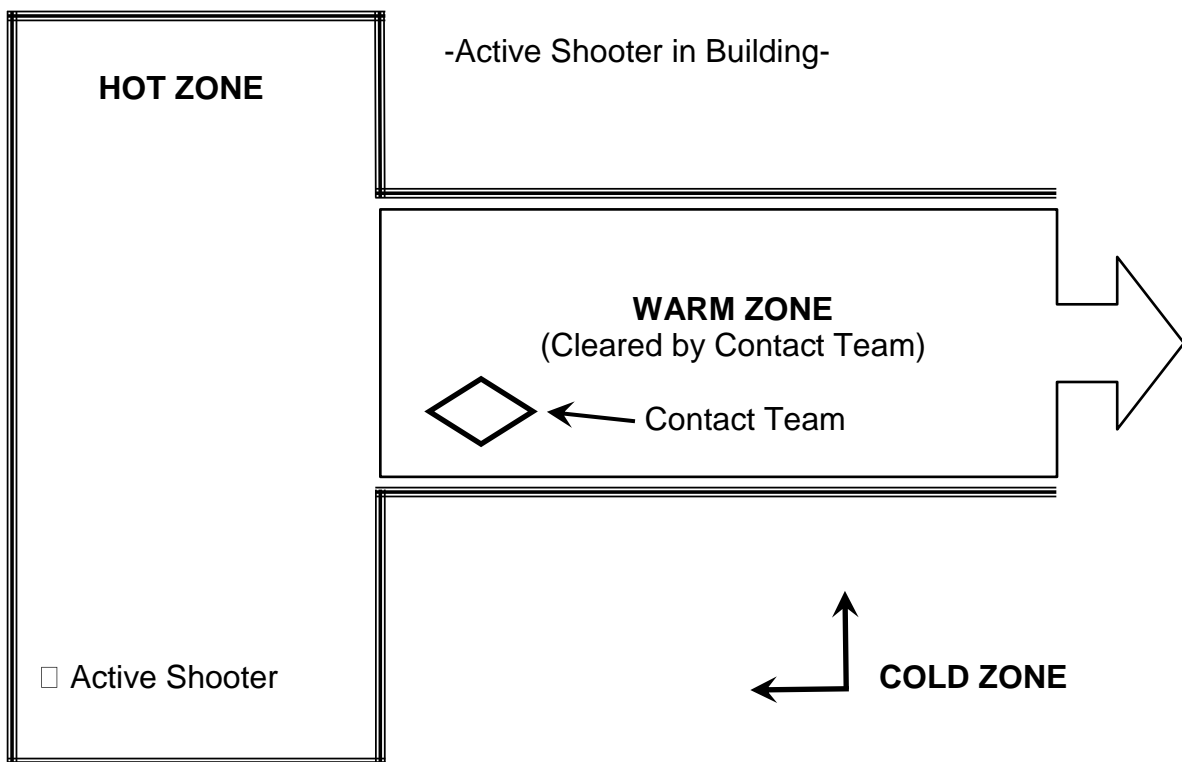
5. The first officer will reach under the victim's arms, grasp the victim's wrists, cross them, then pull the wrists toward the victim's chest and prepare to lift. (Figure 1)
6. The second officer (facing away from the first officer) grasps the victim's ankles, or legs. (Figure 1)
7. Using the legs to lift, the officers stand while holding the victim. (Figure 2)
8. Both officers will communicate that they are ready and, under the direction of the Team Leader, exit the location.
9. Responsibility to provide cover will vary and necessitates officer flexibility.

The victim will be carried out as safely and expeditiously as possible. After evacuating the location, the victim is taken to the medical triage staging area for treatment. Remember to **remain alert** during the recovery for the possibility of contacting an armed assailant.

Zones of Diminishing Threat

Like a hazardous materials incident, the scene of an active shooter or mass violence event will be broken up into three zones with diminishing levels of threat to the responding personnel. At the scene of a mass violence situation, the Department will be working closely with members of the Los Angeles Fire Department Emergency Medical Services (EMS), who will treat the victims. This necessitates the need to define clear areas where there is a reduced threat to rescue personnel. These zones are identified as the Hot Zone, Warm Zone, and Cold Zone (Diagram 3).

Diagram 3 - Zones of Diminishing Threat



Rescue Task Force

A Rescue Task Force is a team comprised of a mixture of police officers and fire department personnel. The officers maintain their Diamond Formation with the fire personnel staged inside of the formation. The role of the officers is to provide force protection for the fire personnel as they engage in rescue missions. Firefighters and paramedics assigned to a Rescue Task Force (RTF) will enter a Warm Zone with the approval of the IC and with concurrence of a Fire Department supervisor.

Law enforcement personnel assigned to an RTF shall remain with the Fire Department personnel in the Warm Zone until the situation is resolved. Fire Department personnel will follow the tactical direction of law enforcement officers and will determine the medical severity of the victims and request the RTF members escort the prioritized victims for immediate evacuation.

Zones	Personnel in Areas	Description
Hot Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Teams• Rescue Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An unsecured area, where the active shooter may be present.• Contact Teams will be searching for the suspect.
Warm Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Teams• Rescue Teams• Rescue Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An unsecured area that has been cleared by a Contact Team.• Rescue Teams are sent for victim evacuation.• Rescue Task Forces are sent to triage/treat victims.
Cold Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needed Rescue Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area where there is little or no threat from the suspect.• Location of the Incident Command Post, and where personnel are staged.

RAPID DEPLOYMENT

The core of Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment is fluid momentum while searching hallways, rooms, and other areas. Officers should not move faster than they can make reasonable decisions or shoot accurately. When the assailant's activity is detectable, the Contact Team's pace will be aggressive and driven toward that activity. If the assailant's activity is no longer detectable, the pace should decelerate and include systematic and deliberate room clearing techniques. This pace will continue until the assailant's activity is detectable or officers contact the assailant. Officers must be

cognizant of their muzzle direction during close quarters searching to avoid covering anyone unintentionally. This Tactical Concepts – Tactics Training Overview provides guidance for making entry and room clearing procedures during deployment of this field tactic.

Communications

Communication amongst the team members as well as with the Command Post is a critical element of officer safety. The Team Leader should determine the method used to communicate based on the conditions present. If audible alarms, gunshots, or other noises are hindering communication, then the team members may use loud and clear voice commands. If the activity has ceased and the assailant's whereabouts is unknown, voice commands or tactical hand signals may be used.

It is vital to notify rescue teams of the location of victims to ensure a timely rescue. If a tactical frequency is being used, a Radio Telephone Operator (RTO) may be requested to staff the frequency to record any information that is transmitted. This may be especially helpful at the onset of the incident, when the Command Post is not fully staffed, and the incident is not fully under control.

Basic Room Clearing Techniques

When the assailant's whereabouts is **unknown**, generally **two** officers make initial entry into the room and begin to clear it. When the suspect's whereabouts is known or detectable, generally **three** officers will enter the room, including the point officer. The Team Leader can adjust the number of officers that make entry into a room and where to position themselves according to the tactical situation.

When the officers make entry into a room, they will enter at a low-ready in opposing directions, with limited penetration into the room. The officers will visually clear their area of responsibility. The officers making entry must avoid over penetration when entering a room, since this can lead to exposure to hiding areas, additional doorways, and deep corners of the room. Ultimately, it is up to the Team Leader to determine how detailed the search will be based on the information known at the time of the search. The initial clear is given if there is no immediate contact with the suspect, both officers exit the room and continue to the next area to be searched. If contact is made, the officer will take appropriate action to control the occupants of the room.

Key points to follow when making entry into a room:

- Minimum of two officers make entry
- Enter aggressively but under control
- Move at a low-ready
- Enter to opposite sides of the doorway
- Limited penetration
- Assess your AOR prior to detailing the room
- Communicate with your teammate(s)

No Activity

If activity is no longer detectable within the crisis site and the whereabouts of the assailant(s) are unknown, the team will slow its momentum and conduct a systematic and deliberate search, clearing room by room. Officers should not become complacent while conducting a systematic search since the assailant(s) may present themselves without warning.

Aggressive Deadly Behavior

When an assailant's location is known or detectable and the aggressive deadly behavior is ongoing, the Contact Team must move with determination and aggressiveness to stop the assailant's behavior.

Officers must be mentally prepared to engage the assailant with innocent persons in close proximity. When entry into a room is necessary to contact the assailant, movement should be fluid and aggressive. Under these conditions, three officers from the Contact Team will enter the room. Generally, the three officers that enter the room will be the Point Officer, Team Leader, and Flank Officer. The third officer to enter the room will enter with limited penetration up the middle of the entry point.

Officers are reminded that the positions of the Contact Team can change at any time in this tactic. For example, if during systematic and deliberate movement, the left Flank makes contact with the Suspect, the left Flank Officer must now transition to become the Point Officer and lead the Contact Team towards the threat. In this situation, it is necessary to establish a new Point Officer because they are the one with the most situational awareness of the suspect's location; therefore, they can best direct the rest of the team towards the threat.

If contact is made, officers will take appropriate action to stop the deadly threat posed by the suspect and take the assailant into custody. After an assailant has been taken into custody, the Incident Commander will ensure that the crisis site is thoroughly searched for additional assailants and victims before the area is considered "CLEAR." If an Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) occurs, those officers involved will stay with the assailant and notify the Incident Commander, unless other exigent circumstances occur.

Bounding Overwatch

In certain situations, officers may need to conduct open air movement towards the concerned threat area. In these circumstances, officers may choose to use the Bounding Overwatch tactic if contact with the assailant is on-going or likely. It is recommended that officers predesignate 'Buddy Teams' within the Contact Teams. These Buddy Teams are typically comprised of 2 or 3 officers, designated to move together when using this tactic. Bounding Overwatch requires one of the Buddy Teams to provide cover (Overwatch) as the other Buddy Team maneuvers (Bounding) to another position of cover.

Standard communication for this tactic is “moving” when advising that the bounding team is about to move, and “set” when the bounding team has reached their destination and is ready to cover the other team. The Overwatch Team provides cover by visually scanning all the doors and windows or any other threats as the bounding team is moving, addressing the threats as needed. The roles then switch, allowing the other team to move as well. This process is repeated until the Buddy Teams can safely form back into a Diamond Formation.

Key points for Bounding Overwatch:

- Bounding Overwatch should only be utilized when contact with the assailant is on-going or imminent
- Bounding movement should be short/quick, just 2-5 seconds
- Bounding teams should avoid crossing in front of the Overwatch Team
- Use loud commands to ensure proper communication amongst the teams
- Bounding Overwatch can also be used in the interior of a large structure

SWAT Arrival

When tactical team personnel arrive on scene, they are generally better equipped and trained to resolve tactical situations; however, continued assistance by initial responders is critical. Under the direction of SWAT, officers may aid with containment responsibilities and assist with Rescue Teams. Contact Teams are to advise SWAT of the last known location of the assailant, report location of explosives, and provide any pertinent information (assailant description, weaponry, etc.).

CONCLUSION

When officers encounter an incident where immediate action and rapid deployment tactics are needed, time is of the essence. The immediate and swift implementation of Contact and Rescue Teams will increase the likelihood of saving the lives of the people exposed to the active shooter or suspect. Through the use of expedited and decisive leadership in implementing these tactics, officers will bring order to chaos, and increase the safety of all those involved.

Important Reminder

Deviation from these basic concepts sometimes occurs due to the fluid and rapidly evolving nature of law enforcement encounters and the environment in which they occur. Deviations may range from minor, typically procedural or technical, to substantial deviations from Department tactical training. Any deviations are to be explained by the involved officer(s), and justification for substantial deviation from Department tactical training shall be articulated and must meet the objectively reasonable standard of the Department's Use of Force Policy.

AMENDMENTS

This Tactical Concepts – Tactics Training Overview cancels and supersedes both Volume XXXV, Issue 11, Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment Tactics, Part I – Immediate Action, July 2003 and Volume XXXV, Issue 12, Immediate Action/Rapid Deployment Tactics, Part II – Rapid Deployment, July 2003.

Field Training Services Unit
Police Training and Education

DISTRIBUTION "A"