
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS POLICE

GENERAL ORDER

ORDER NUMBER: **40.23**
ISSUED DATE: 02/18/2015
EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/25/2015
RESCINDS:

SUBJECT: Response to Active Threats

REFERENCE: CALEA [Ch. 46](#)

CROSS REFERENCE: ICS Manual; GO 40.20

CONTENTS:

- I. PURPOSE**
- II. DEFINITIONS**
- III. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE GUIDELINES**
- IV. SECONDARY PUBLIC SAFETY NOTIFICATIONS**
- V. PUBLIC SHELTERING**
- VI. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATIONS**
- VII. ANNUAL REVIEW**

I. PURPOSE

- A. Situations involving active threats can occur in any environment. This includes settings such as educational institutions, malls, businesses, special events, or a workplace. Threats may be physical or virtual in nature. The purpose of this policy is to define general protocols for the Kansas City, Kansas Police Department's response to an active threat situation.
- B. This general order addresses a relatively narrow area, active threats, which is one example of an unusual occurrence as defined by the Department. The Department's response to active threats will conform to General Order 40.20, Unusual Occurrences; the UG All Hazards Plan; and other references, school plans, or regional agreements that may be entered into by the Police Department. Specific assignments commensurate with Incident Command System activation are addressed elsewhere and are beyond the scope of this general order.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Active Threat. An active threat may take many forms. It is an event wherein the suspect attacks a location with the goal of killing as many persons as possible. The actions of the suspect place human life in immediate or imminent danger.
 - 1. These events may be planned or spontaneous.
 - 2. These events usually involve the use of firearms. They may involve the use of other weapons. In some instances they involve the use of explosives or other unconventional weapons.

- 3. These events may be committed by a single suspect. They may also be complex, coordinated attack carried out by a group of suspects.
- 4. An active threat may develop from what initially appears to be a stable incident, such as a school or business takeover with multiple hostages. In the early stages it may have the appearance of a tactical unit callout, however the nature of the incident may change so that rescue entry is required in order to prevent loss of human life.
- B. Contact Team. A contact team is an officer or group of officers who enter the threat area to locate and confront or isolate an active threat suspect.
- C. Follow-on Team. A follow-on team is an officer or group of officers who enter the threat area to coordinate activity with the contact team to enhance the department's ability to save lives. Follow-on teams are active after the contact team(s) has confronted or isolated the active threat suspect, or active killing has stopped and it is believed that there is no longer an active threat. Follow-on Team operations are generally "warm zone" operations.
- D. Initial Response Phase. This is most likely going to be a response by on-duty KCKPD officers who are in the field and near the crisis location when the call is received. Initial response centers around developing contact teams to locate, engage, and handle the threat. It also includes tasks such as isolating the space and denying entry due to the nature of the threat. The initial response develops suddenly and rapidly. Communication and establishing command are key elements to accomplishing a controlled, coordinated response as quickly as possible.
- E. Secondary Response Phase. This phase begins immediately once the immediate threat posed by the suspect(s) is handled. Protection of human life remains the top priority. Examples of secondary response phase activities include securing the crisis site from potential additional attacks; identifying hazards present such as chemicals or bombs; deliberate searches of the site; locating injured persons and rendering immediate life-saving aid where necessary and possible; establishing hot, warm, and cold zones; facilitating EMS access to wounded persons; establishing casualty collection points. These activities begin immediately and develop into more complex and long term operations under the supervision of the IC.
- F. Post Event/Investigation Phase. Once the scene has been completely secured, contained, and any threats of injury or death have been neutralized, the incident enters the post event/investigation phase. Steps will be taken to maintain security and process a significant crime scene. Additionally, the IC should consider taking initial steps to address critical incident stress management for first responders.
- G. Hot Zone. The hot zone is the non-secure operational area. It is the areas accessible to a suspect and the

immediate surrounding area, while the active threat exists. Only law enforcement will enter the hot zone. EMS and other secondary, non-law enforcement responders will not enter this zone with or without an escort. Evacuees will not be directed towards a hot zone. As the site is secured and information is developed, law enforcement will reduce the size of the hot zone. Consider these examples.

- H. Warm Zone. The warm zone is the secure operational area. Emergency life-saving measures can be taken in the warm zone. The warm zone can be accessed by EMS responders with law enforcement escort in order to facilitate rapid aid and removal of wounded victims. Deliberate searches for the purpose of ensuring security and locating victims will be conducted. Plans for the orderly evacuation of uninjured persons should be considered. The warm zone may include a casualty collection point. The warm zone surrounds the hot zone.
- I. Cold Zone. This is the secure operational area where responders are able to operate freely without threat to personal safety. This surrounds the warm zone. This zone is still isolated from the public by an outer perimeter. Command posts, staging areas, reunification areas, and triage/treatment areas for non-critically injured persons should be established in the cold zone.

III. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE GUIDELINES

- A. It is critical that department members understand the difference between an active threat event and a barricade, hostage, or other event that does not call for immediate entry and movement to contact.
 - 1. The active threat event involves a suspect who is actively using lethal force against people. These often involve the use of a firearm and occur in a public location (mall, government building, office building, school, etc.) where there are many potential victims.
 - 2. Barricades and hostage situations are situations where the suspect is not in the act of trying to kill anyone and immediate intervention in the form of entry and movement to contact are not necessary to save lives. When encountering this type of situation officers will communicate the problem and begin the process of mobilizing additional resources, in accordance with General Order 40.20. Remember during these incidents officers must still develop an action plan for handling exits, handling surrenders, or for making an emergency entry if it becomes necessary.
- B. Vehicle placement is not the highest priority as units converge on the active threat scene, however bad vehicle placement can become a serious problem as the situation develops and may inadvertently cause unnecessary risk to life. Responding units must place their vehicles so as not to block access/egress whenever possible. Blocking access/egress will delay treatment and transport of victims.
- C. Contact team considerations.
 - 1. Be careful on approaching the crisis site. Officers have been attacked prior to reaching the front of the building during active threat incidents.
 - 2. Forced entry may be required.

- 3. It is preferable that two or more officers form the first contact team when arrival at the crisis site occurs within a very short time period. If one officer is at the crisis site and there is no timely backup available, the officer may proceed as the first contact team in order to save lives. This is only done when there is active killing within the crisis site and any delay will result in additional casualties.
- 4. Depending on the nature of the location, the structure, and the incident, multiple contact teams may make entry. Unless there is a known location, multiple teams may coordinate their efforts, or use multiple independent teams to search the crisis site with little to no communication to increase the likelihood of contact with the active threat suspect.
- 5. If there is a known location or strong indications of an area where the suspect is located, contact teams will pass hallways, rooms, etc. without searching them and proceed directly to the suspect at a quick pace.
- 6. If there is an active threat but it is not possible to determine a likely suspect location, officers will search for the suspect, checking rooms and areas in a deliberate manner. Officers will conduct searches and movement at a quick but manageable pace.
- 7. Officers will bypass wounded persons.
- 8. Officers may seek information from people they encounter while attempting to locate the suspect. Any inquiries must be very brief and focused. Useful information includes suspect description, direction or last known location, and weapon information.
- 9. Persons contacted while searching for the suspect may be instructed to evacuate or cover in place at the officer's discretion. Non-law enforcement personnel will not be permitted to attach themselves to a contact team. This includes building or office staff and any other potential victims.
- 10. Consider appropriate equipment before arrival. Potential equipment needs include a patrol rifle, helmet, "go" bag, medical kits, breaching equipment, and shields.
- 11. Possible resolutions include arrest, suicide of the suspect, containment (barricade), and police use of force up to and including lethal force.
- 12. Note that just as a hostage situation may turn into an active killing situation that requires swift, immediate intervention, the opposite is also true. An active shooter or active killer situation may transform into a barricade or hostage situation.

- D. Follow-on team operations. Some "follow-on" tasks are addressed very early in the incident, but only after it appears that the active threat has been stopped. Depending on size, scope, and other factors, tasks may be handled by secondary responders such as specialized units or relief from outside law enforcement agencies. Some may require several hours and develop into operations requiring personnel rotation. Tasks should be prioritized in accordance with the priority of lives, followed by other public safety and investigational interests. The top priority is always to prevent additional casualties and save lives. Follow-on tasks may include:

1. Locate and report injured parties, render basic life-saving aid;
 2. Escort medics in warm zone;
 3. Complete deliberate search of the area;
 4. Containment/protect scene and evidence;
 5. Supervise evacuations;
 6. Assist the Incident Commander in defining areas as hot, warm and cold.
- E. Command and control. Command and control will follow the ICS/NIMS model.
1. The first responding supervisor will become the incident commander and will remain in that role until relieved. Note that circumstances may require the first supervisor to participate in the operation as a contact team member, preferably as a contact team leader. However if there are sufficient department members available to make effective contact team(s) a supervisor should establish a command post at the scene and concentrate on monitoring and directing actions at the scene, manage communications, and guide additional responding resources.
 2. The Incident Commander will make notifications throughout the police department and follow the guidelines indicated in General Order 40.20. There are several notifications and functions that need to be considered. High priority notifications and considerations for active threat incidents include:
 - a. Accounting for police personnel at the scene.
 - b. Coordinating detail search and other follow-on team responsibilities.
 - c. Contacting non-KCKPD on-duty law enforcement for assistance if needed.
 - d. Contact and call in additional KCKPD personnel that are off-duty if needed.
 - e. Notification and coordination with EMS for a potential mass-casualty situation.
 - f. Identifying hot, warm, and cold zones as needed. Setting appropriate staging locations for responding support and identifying safe locations for casualty collection, shelter, reunification, etc.
 - g. Emergency public information management: determine whether any emergency messages need to be relayed through public information channels without delay to prevent injury or loss of life.
 - h. Unified command. There is a high likelihood that officers from multiple agencies will be present early in the operation. Precautions must be taken so that responding personnel do not endanger one another. Unified command improves operational coordination and efficiency. A lack of unified command may create hazardous situations and result in operational redundancies.

- F. Priorities and operational objectives will shift as the incident develops. The top priority is always to stop the attack: prevent loss of life or great bodily harm. The next priority is to preserve lives by facilitating EMS personnel activities and rendering basic life-saving first aid when necessary.

IV. SECONDARY PUBLIC SAFETY NOTIFICATIONS

- A. The first responders to an active threat incident will probably be Operations Bureau personnel. In the event of a credible report of an active shooter or active threat, the supervisor or commander in the affected area will direct the dispatcher to broadcast the information on all KCKPD channels. Available uniformed personnel will respond to the scene. Depending on the location and other circumstances, detectives should also respond to an active threat call. Units will only cancel their response when directed to cancel by units at the scene or by a supervisor or commander.
- B. When the dispatcher broadcasts the information on all KCKPD channels, personnel from other law enforcement agencies will probably respond. Past experience has shown that the initial response can be confusing and that officers in different uniforms or clothing arrive on the scene without notifying our department. Officers must be alert to the possibility that they may encounter a police officer who they have never met and whose uniform or insignia are unfamiliar. Conversely, officers must also be aware that in some cases the active threat suspect has mimicked the sort of clothing and insignia worn by law enforcement.
- C. A commander at the scene may call out the SCORE Unit to respond to the scene.
- D. If circumstances warrant it, off-duty officers may be called to work in accordance with General Order 40.20. Depending on the nature and scope of the active threat, off-duty officers may not be called to the scene to assist with this incident, but rather to backfill the duties normally handled by officers committed at the active threat scene, such as handling priority calls. Under these circumstances, response to low priority calls, traffic enforcement, and similar activity may be suspended until normal operations can be restored.
- E. If circumstances warrant it, assistance may be requested from area law enforcement agencies. The request should specify the assistance needed, and a liaison should be assigned if at all possible. This request will normally be made by the Chief of Police or Acting Chief of Police. If the Chief or Acting Chief is unavailable, the highest ranking commander available will make the request.
- F. If the incident involves a location in which another law enforcement agency has an interest, the Communications Unit will automatically notify the agency. Examples of this are Kansas University Hospital, USD 500, Kansas City Kansas Community College, the Federal Courthouse, the Social Security Office, or a Post Office facility. The Wyandotte County Sheriff's Office will also be advised.
- G. In the event of a confirmed incident the Communications Unit will ensure that EMS is notified and advised of the possible scope of the incident, to the extent that it is known, and we will request that they stage in the area until notified that it is safe to approach the crisis site.

V. PUBLIC SHELTERING

- A. At some point during an active threat incident, some degree of evacuation will probably be necessary. Some potential victims will probably self-evacuate. Some people in the affected area will be directed out of the hot zone into a safe area by early first responders. Some will choose or be directed to shelter in place in a lockdown condition. When the scene is secured people who are in a lockdown condition will ultimately be directed out of the affected area, preferable supervised by law enforcement follow-on teams.
- B. Once people have been evacuated from the scene, the incident commander should address these considerations as soon as practical:
 - 1. The Incident Commander will find some kind of shelter for evacuees. The Incident Commander will assign personnel to supervise the shelter for security purposes. A fixed structure is the easiest solution if it is available. Other options include the use of large vehicles such as city or ATA buses. An open area may be acceptable if weather permits and it can be effectively secured.
 - 2. The Incident Commander will set about identifying and debriefing evacuees. Detectives are well suited to this task if available. Valuable intelligence gathered during these debriefs should be shared with the command post so that it can be relayed to other responders as needed.
 - 3. Reunification is a concern, as family and loved ones will begin showing up near the scene. A location should be selected for responding people so their concerns are addressed but also so that the people and their vehicles are out of the way and do not interfere with emergency responders.
- 3. Advising the public to stay clear of certain areas or roadways.
- D. Non-emergency public information and information that does not further the efforts of first responders will be handled by a Public Information Officer in consultation with the Incident Commander, in accordance with ICS protocols.

VII. ANNUAL REVIEW

- A. The Training Academy Commander will submit an annual report to the Chief's Office with a review of this general order and a review of the Police Department's response to active threat training. The Training Academy Commander may consult with staff and adjunct instructors who conduct training in law enforcement response to active threats, firearm proficiency, and other relevant topics. Operations Bureau personnel may also be consulted. The Training Academy Commander should consider recent incidents and training information for this review. The annual report will be in memorandum format and include any training and policy recommendations to be considered by senior staff.

VI. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND NOTIFICATIONS

- A. Area public schools participate in the "I love you guys" foundation's standard response protocol: Lockout; Lockdown; Evacuate; and Shelter. When an active threat report is received, Communications Unit personnel will notify the appropriate school authority and share the specific information reported so that they can determine what their response will be. This information will be relayed to responding officers.
- B. All Unified Government employees undergo a basic training block related to active shooters and armed intruders. In the event of a reported active shooter at a Unified Government site or facility, the Communications Unit will notify Human Resources and the Commission Office and request notification of Unified Government personnel through their department heads.
- C. Under certain circumstances it may be helpful to contact the Public Information Officer very early in a developing incident so that specific information can be relayed through the media. Information of this type may not be confirmed. It is released on an emergency basis to try to save lives and prevent additional casualties. These are not ordinary informational interactions for the purpose of informing the public in general. Information should be specific. Examples include:
 - 1. Directing people in a specific area to shelter in place and be on the lookout for a suspicious person;
 - 2. Directing people who are learning about the incident to a specific location so they do not interfere with emergency responders; or