

REGIONAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Rescue Task Force

#: 104.06

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SCOPE: This policy applies to all suppression personnel.

PURPOSE: To identify procedures for safely providing medical care at an incident in which personnel will be assigned to Rescue Task Force (RTF), Extraction Task Force (ETF), or associated duties and operating with Force Protection Teams.

DEFINITIONS:

Active Shooter - A suspect who's activity is immediately causing death and serious bodily injury. The activity is not contained and there is immediate risk of death and serious injury to potential victims.

Acts of Violence - Includes but is not limited to large scale complex incidents such as school shootings, workplace violence, active shooter and terrorist activities, as well as smaller scale and/or less complex incidents such as suicide attempts, single patient shootings and stabbings, domestic violence injuries, and assaults.

Barricaded Suspect - A suspect who is in a position of advantage, usually barricaded in a room or building, and is armed and has displayed violence. May or may not be holding hostages and there is no indication that the subject's activity is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury.

Casualty Collection Point - The Casualty Collection Point (CCP) is a forward location where victims can be assembled for movement from areas of high risk to the triage/treatment areas. It is a temporary location to stage patients while awaiting further treatment. Based on incident dynamics, multiple CCPs may be required. Law enforcement may evacuate patients out of the Hot Zone to the Warm Zone border for RTF management or, RTFs and ETFs may evacuate patients to the Warm/Cold zone border for transport to treatment area(s).

Cold Zone - Areas where there is no threat either by geography to threat, or has been cleared and secured by Law. These areas are where support functions will be established such as: ICP, treatment areas, and staging. May also be classified as the outer perimeter by law enforcement.

Concealment - Anything that prevents you from being seen but will not stop a bullet.

Contact Team - Contact teams are used by law enforcement to rapidly deploy to the active shooter incident. It is usually comprised of the first few officers on scene. The primary objective is to stop the shooter from inflicting further death or injury. Contact Teams will bypass dead, wounded and panicked citizens to neutralize the active threat.

Cover - Anything that will stop a bullet.

Extraordinary / Rapid Deployment - The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to on-going, life threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or great bodily injury to innocent persons. classified as the inner perimeter by law enforcement.

Extraction Task Force – Extraction Task Forces (ETF) deploy in the warm zone. ETF's rapidly extract victims from the warm zone to treatment areas and / or Casualty Collection Points following treatment by RTF personnel. An ETF is comprised of law enforcement personnel providing force protection and fire personnel performing patient evacuation. Fire personnel assigned ETF duties will typically not wear body armor. Comprised of a minimum of one law enforcement officer (LEO) and two firefighters. The Task Force Leader (TFLD) will be a LEO. The firefighter ETF members report to the Rescue Group Supervisor but are assigned to the ETF TFLD. ETF will retain their Engine designator (i.e. Engine 365 will become ETF 365, Truck 363 will become ETF 363).

Force Protection - Actions taken by law enforcement to prevent or mitigate hostile actions against personnel, resources, facilities and critical infrastructure.

Force Protection Group - A law enforcement group with the responsibility to prevent or mitigate hostile actions against personnel, resources, facilities and critical infrastructure. Coordinates with Rescue Group in establishing Rescue Task Forces (RTF).

Hot Zone - Areas wherein a direct and immediate threat exists. A direct and immediate threat is very dynamic and is determined by complexity and circumstances of the incident. Examples of direct and immediate threat are active shooters and unexploded ordinances. These areas are where Law Enforcement has deployed contact teams to isolate or neutralize the threat. Fire personnel will not operate in a Hot Zone.

Rescue Group - At violent incidents Rescue Group is responsible for the medical care and evacuation of patients located in the Warm Zone. This is accomplished by assigning firefighters to a Rescue Task Force (RTF) or Extraction Task Force (ETF). The firefighter members of the RTF and ETF report to the Rescue Group Supervisor, but work for and at the direction of the lead law enforcement officer of the RTF or ETF to which they are assigned.

Rescue Task Force - Rescue Task Forces (RTF) deploy in the Warm Zone. RTFs rapidly stabilize life threatening injuries where victims are found. An RTF is comprised of law enforcement personnel providing force protection and fire personnel providing medical care. Comprised of a minimum of one law enforcement officer (LEO) and two firefighters. The Task Force Leader (TFLD) will be a LEO. The firefighter RTF members report to the Rescue Group Supervisor but are assigned to the RTF TFLD. RTF will retain their Engine designator (i.e. Engine 361 will become RTF 361, Truck 363 will become RTF 363). Once treatment is complete, RTF units may assist with patient extraction. Medic units should be assigned to treatment / transport duties in the Cold Zone.

Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) - Forward deployment of stabilizing medical interventions in civilian disaster scenarios. Based on the military Tactical Casualty Combat Care (TCCC) principles. These principles focus on the rapid identification and treatment of the three most common cause of preventable death in active shooting situations; 1) extremity hemorrhage, 2) tension pneumothorax, and 3) airway obstructions. All of these are treatable in the field with minimal equipment.

Violent Incident Personnel Protective Equipment (VIPPE) - The required PPE for violent incidents for RTF personnel will be body armor and helmet if available, however, RTF duties should not be delayed if VIPPE is not available. Perform a risk assessment and take action. PPE not only protects on scene personnel it is used as an identification method while working on a very dynamic multi-discipline response.

Warm Zone - Areas that have been cleared by Law Enforcement where the threat is minimal or can be mitigated. These areas can be considered clear but not secure. These areas are where RTFs and ETFs deploy. RTFs rapidly stabilize life threatening injuries where victims are found. ETFs evacuate victims to treatment or transport areas. Only Fire personnel being provided Force Protection by law enforcement as part of an RTF or ETF will enter the Warm Zone. Law Enforcement has the sole authority to determine warm zones.

PROCEDURE:

We will provide emergency medical care at reported or potential violent incidents where and when a risk assessment has been conducted and either the potential for savable lives is high, and / or the risk of injury to firefighters can be minimized or eliminated with integrated Force Protection teams. When patients are located in a hazardous area or warm zone the objective is to provide rapid lifesaving care and evacuation utilizing force protection from Law Enforcement. Force protection may also be used when fire suppression, rescue or other actions are required in a hazardous area of a violent incident.

Personnel shall not approach a scene where the following events or similar activities are on-going until requested by Law Enforcement. This request should include safe access route, reporting location, and who to report to.

- Fights, scuffles, brawls or clashes
- Property destruction by individuals or a crowd of individuals.
- Display of or use of weapons of any kind including, but not limited to, knives, swords, batons, explosives and/or firearms
- Commission of any crime against another person that is likely to result in bodily injury or death, with or without confirmation of the presence of weapons.
- Hostage situations.
- Lack of crowd control in areas of hostile or potentially hostile crowds.

Violent incident management may consist of the following elements:

- Command
- Staging
- Rescue (Branch and/or Group-dependent on scope)
- Medical (Branch and/or Group-dependent on scope)
- Hazard Control or Fire Suppression (depend on incident needs)
- Victim Welfare
- Responder Welfare

Command:

These incidents are under the command of Law Enforcement and will require close coordination with Fire, either under Unified Command or as a Fire Branch.

Staging:

First due units should request a staging location from dispatch when taking the call. Law may not have established a staging location or Command Post.

If a staging location has not been identified by Law Enforcement the first arriving unit shall identify one. The staging location will be remote to the incident and out of the range of any threats or hazards. Consider an area that provides cover, is not in line of sight of the incident and will not become the hot or warm zone if the incident escalates. The location should be broadcast to dispatch and shared with Law Enforcement. If special entry instructions are needed this will be included as well. The goal is to close the communications loop between on scene Law Enforcement and the first arriving fire resource. This procedure will only be used for the first arriving resource.

Resources will stage until requested to enter by Law Enforcement. Dispatch will provide safe entry route instructions, reporting location and ID of reporting point. If the request comes directly to staged units via radio, the same will be obtained prior to entry.

On complex incidents it is recommended that when requested by Law to enter the scene only one Command Officer, one Engine / Truck Company, and one Ambulance enter initially. This will limit those in the potential hazard area while a risk assessment is conducted and command established.

First Command Officer (or Company Officer on single resource incidents) to enter scene

- Establish Unified Command or Fire Branch with Law
- Maintain physical contact with Law IC
- Identify Hot, Warm & Cold zones as identified by Law. Zones are determined by Law, not Fire.
- Identify ICP location and Radio Frequencies
- Develop Fire incident objectives

First Company Officer to enter scene

- Assume supervision of priority functional group. As example at an Active Shooter incident this may be Rescue Group. At a violent incident involving fire this may be Fire Suppression Group.

Law and Fire will remain on their assigned frequencies. On small incidents it may be appropriate to communicate on Law frequencies. On more dynamic and/or large scale incidents, communicating on each other's frequencies should be avoided, especially during the initial phases of the incident. A strong Unified Command will ensure good communications between both Law and Fire.

Good communications is critical when operating under force protection, especially when utilizing Rescue Task Forces and Extraction Task Forces. A separate tactical channel will be assigned to groups working under force protection.

Rescue:

Rescue is responsible for medical care and evacuation of patients located in the Warm Zone.

- Coordinate with Law Enforcement in establishing Rescue Task Forces (RTF) and Extraction Task Forces (ETF).
- Provide fire personnel for RTF's and ETF's.
- Assist with law enforcement personnel with forcible entry tools and equipment if required.
- Establish Warm Zone medical caches as needed.
- Coordinate the establishment of Casualty Collections Points with Law Enforcement, or Force Protection Group if established.
- Provide patient transportation from Warm Zone to Cold Zone.
- Provide patient information to Medical Group
- Coordinate patient transfer to Medical Group.

Rescue Task Force:

Rescue Task Forces (RTF) work for Rescue Group but are assigned to Law Enforcement Force Protection Group. RTF's consist of a minimum of one law enforcement officer and two firefighters. An RTF can be deployed to provide patient care in the warm zone and other duties deemed necessary to accomplish the mission. The initial RTF will enter the warm zone and provide lifesaving medical care to patients as they are accessed. The RTF will continue providing care until either all patients are treated within the warm zone or they run out of supplies. They will then either resupply and continue care or begin assisting ETF's with the evacuation process. Additional RTF's may be formed for patient care depending on needs.

RTF role responsibilities

- Provide stabilizing care to patients in warm zone
- Relay to Rescue Group Supervisors number of patients, injury types and location as appropriate.
- Fire RTF members will follow direction of their law force protection at all times.

Extraction Task Force:

Extraction Task Forces (ETF) work for Rescue Group but are assigned to Law Enforcement Force Protection Group. ETF's consist of a minimum of one law enforcement officer and two firefighters. An ETF can be deployed for patient removal from warm to cold zone, movement of supplies from cold to warm zone and other duties deemed necessary to accomplish the mission. The initial ETF will enter the warm zone and evacuate patients as they are accessed. Additional ETF's may be formed for patient evacuations depending on needs.

ETF role responsibilities

- Provide evacuation of patients in warm zone
- Relay to Rescue Group Supervisors number of patients, injury types and location as appropriate.
- Fire ETF members will follow direction of their law force protection at all times.

Force Protection Group:

Force Protection Group will provide dedicated tactical security for RTF / ETF members.
FPG role responsibilities:

- Lead movement of RTF / ETF in warm zone
- Provide force protection for fire personnel RTF / ETF members
- Determine warm zone areas safe for RTF / ETF to operate in
- Maintain directed line of sight / voice contact with fire personnel of RTF / ETF
- Will generally NOT assist with patient care or evacuation / lifting

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

If law enforcement determines the zone in which the RTF / ETF is operating changes from Warm to Hot, immediate evacuation of the RTF / ETF to appropriate cover will occur. This may be complete evacuation from the hazard area or evacuation to a place of shelter within the hazard area.

Medical:

Medical has the following responsibilities:

- Triage of patients in cold zone
- Continued treatment and victim stabilization of patients in cold zone
- Coordinate patient treatment and transportation from warm to cold zone with Rescue Group
- Coordinate patient treatment and transportation from cold zone to receiving facilities
- Patient care documentation

Hazard Control/Fire Suppression:

Hazard Control/Fire Suppression is responsible for the mitigation of any hazardous condition that could threaten the overall operation.

- If these operations will take place in the warm zone, law enforcement force protection must be provided.
- A Task Force(s) made up of law enforcement officers and firefighters will be established.
- A minimum of one law enforcement officer will be assigned to each Task Force.
- The number of firefighters assigned to each task force will depend on the needs of the operation. In order to lessen the risk to firefighters, as well as allow for better Task Force Management, the number of firefighters assigned to each task force should be limited to that which is necessary for safe operations.

Task Force members' roles and responsibilities:

Law enforcement officers

- Lead of TF
- Provide force protection for fire personnel
- Determine warm zone and areas safe to operate
- Will maintain directed line of sight/voice contact with Fire personnel
- Will generally not enter IDLH environments or assist with hazard control or fire suppression activities.

Fire personnel

- Provide hazard control and/or fire suppression
- Fire task force members will follow direction of their law force protection at all times.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

If the zone in which the task force is operating changes from Warm to Hot immediate evacuation of the task force to appropriate cover will occur. This may be complete evacuation from the hazard area or evacuation to a place of shelter within the hazard area.

Victim Welfare:

The victim welfare tactical element is responsible to care for uninjured parties' needs, including:

- Provide for comfort measures including shelter
- Assist in coordinating relative notifications
- Establishing concerned relatives meeting locations
- Critical incident stress management for involved parties.

*This tactical element should be assigned to a leader competent in ICS. (Like a fire officer). It will most likely be staffed with non-fire support personnel such as Red Cross, chaplains, law enforcement, etc.

Responder Welfare:

The responder welfare tactical element is responsible to care for responders' needs, including:

- Provide for rest and rehabilitation during the event
- Monitor exposures and provide medical care for responders
- Assist responders with a smooth return to regular duty
- Critical incident stress management for responders