



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: *Active Attack Response*

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines during an Active Attacker event to assess the threat, immediately respond to limit serious injury or loss of life and utilize the Rescue Task Force (RTF) concept to rapidly treat, triage, and transport casualties. While the term "active attacker" is used throughout, this document applies to all situations where there is an active, ongoing deadly threat, to include, but not limited to, those from firearms, explosives, knives, vehicles, and fire.

II. POLICY

Officers of the Myrtle Beach Police Department are permitted to use lethal force in self-defense or the defense of others. Lethal force is authorized when it is evident the officers, or those they are protecting, will suffer death or extreme bodily injury because of a suspect's hostile actions. Officers responding to an active attack incident shall deploy any legal means necessary to accomplish the goal of immediately finding the active attacker(s) and terminating their hostile actions. Legal means may include arrest, containment, and/or the use of lethal force. This policy recognizes that active attacker(s) must be stopped immediately to prevent loss of life.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Active Attack: An incident in which one or more armed persons have used, or are reasonably likely to use, or are using deadly force in an ongoing manner, and where persons have been injured, killed, or are under imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm by such persons. The

incident's duration starts upon confirmation of an active attacker and continues until the threat has been stopped.

- B. Active Attacker: An individual(s) who is actively using or is reasonably likely to use deadly force and where persons within their presence have been injured, killed, or are under imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm by the individual(s). (May also be referred to as Active Assailant, Active Threat, Active Shooter, and Active Killer.)
- C. Casualty Collection Point (CCP): A location for gathering victims that provides protection in moving from the warm zone to cold zone for triage/treatment/ transport. Based upon incident dynamics, such as the number and location of victims, multiple CCPs may be required.
- D. Cold Zone: A geographic area where first responders can operate with minimal threat to personal safety or health.
- E. Contact Officer or Team: The first officer(s) at the scene of an active shooting tasked with locating the suspect(s) and stopping the threat.
- F. Delivery Team: MBFD personnel tasked with moving victims from a CCP to a Triage / Treatment / Transport area. If a CCP is located in a warm zone the Delivery Team shall enter only at the direction of unified command.
- G. Emergency Operations Officer (EOO): The Special Operations Lieutenant is appointed as the EOO and serves as a liaison to the City of Myrtle Beach Emergency Management Coordinator. The EOO coordinates the MBPD's participation in any joint training exercises, including tabletop and actual exercises. The EOO, or designee, will serve as the principal advisor to the Incident Commander during critical incidents, such as active attacker events.
- H. Extraction Team: MBFD personnel operating in the warm zone with a Protection Team at the direction of Unified Command. Tasked to remove sorted victims from the identified location to the CCP.
- I. Hot Zone: A geographic area, consisting of the immediate incident location, with a direct and immediate threat to personal safety or health. Only law enforcement should operate in the hot zone.
- J. Immediate Action: Rapid response by one or more officers to an active shooting based on a reasonable belief that failure to swiftly seek out and address the threat would result in death or serious bodily injury.

- K. Incident Commander (IC): The individual responsible for all incident activities, including the development of strategies and tactics and the ordering and release of resources. The IC has overall authority and responsibility for conducting incident operations and is responsible for the management of all operations at the incident site. Responsibilities of the IC can be assumed by a range of officers from the officer handling the original call to the chief executive of the agency and any additional qualified officers, depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the incident or event.
- L. Protection Team: Officers who shall maintain the warm zone and provide protection to the RTF. The Protection Team is in charge of the RTF assigned to them.
- M. Rescue Task Force (RTF): Comprised of MBPD and MBFD personnel deployed together as Sort Teams, Extraction Teams, and Delivery Teams. MBFD personnel are tasked with initial treatment and triage of victims in the warm zone. MBPD Officers are tasked with protection for these teams and should not separate from them.
- N. Sort Team: Two (2) or three (3) MBFD personnel tasked with operating in the warm zone to locate and sort victims until they run out of equipment, or all accessible victims have been treated. This team will operate at the direction of Unified Command with a Protection Team. The Sort Team is the first and most important team to quickly enter the warm zone.
- O. Staging Area: An area or location near the incident where outside resources respond and are quickly inventoried for utilization and assignment at the incident. There may be more than one staging area per incident.
- P. Unified Command (UC): An incident command system used when there is a coordinated response by multiple agencies to incident. At minimum the on-scene MBPD commander and MBFD commander shall be co-located, possibly in the cold zone, to coordinate response. Other law enforcement, fire, EMS, or facility personnel may be present to provide for an efficient response. The IC responsibility is shared within the UC, with the function most important at the time taking the lead role.
- Q. Warm Zone: A geographic area where law enforcement has either cleared or isolated the threat to a level of minimal or mitigated risk; can be considered clear, but not secure. This is where the RTF shall deploy, with protection, to treat victims. All zones are established by MBPD.

IV. PROCEDURE

Active attacker events are complex and unique in that a standardized and generic response approach is likely to be insufficient. The following procedures are designed to be used as tools in a rapidly evolving and fluid environment to allow adaptation by responders.

A. PRIORITIES.

1. Responding officers should apply the priorities of life to guide their decision-making process.
 - i. Hostages, Innocent Civilians, Injured Victims;
 - ii. Fire/EMS and other responders;
 - iii. Law Enforcement;
 - iv. Suspect;
 - v. Property.
2. The prioritization of activities, in their order of importance are:
 - i. Stop, Delay, or Hinder the Active Attacker from Further Hostile Actions;
 1. Note: While it is important to provide aid to the wounded and dying, it is our public safety duty to first protect lives by stopping the homicidal actions of the active attacker(s).
 - ii. Initiate Command and Control of The Situation;
 - iii. Contain and Isolate the Situation;
 - iv. Rescue the Victims;
 - v. Protect the crime scene.

B. SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The situation shall be immediately assessed as follows:

1. When dispatched to an attack, officers responding to or at the scene shall verify that an active attack exists based on available information. This may include information provided by communications personnel; from persons confined within or exiting the target location; from

witnesses; by reports of, or sounds of, gunfire or violence; or through related means;

2. As soon as practical, officer(s) shall verify and notify communications that an active attack exists. The officer(s) should provide the following information and updates as available:
 - i. The identity, location, manner of dress, and proposed actions of the officer(s) at the scene;
 - ii. Information about the attacker to include a physical description, weapons, equipment such as body armor, and current location and actions; and
 - iii. Available information on persons injured or under threat, their locations, emergency resources required, and recommended points of entry.
3. After an initial assessment, the first responding officer(s) shall:
 - i. Advise communications of location, condition, action, needs, and request resources as deemed necessary;
 - ii. Determine how to take immediate action;
 - iii. Ensure that fire/EMS resources are immediately dispatched to the scene; and
 - iv. Establish incident command in accordance with agency policy.
4. When available and as time permits, witnesses or others should be asked about the location and number of attackers, the active attackers' weapons, persons injured, the number and location of persons in possible danger, and secondary threats such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

C. CONTACT OFFICER OR TEAM RESPONSE

The primary mission of the Contact Officer or Team response is to locate and stop the threat(s).

1. Officers shall verbally identify themselves as police officers and conspicuously display their badges and/or other police identification to alert security personnel, arriving officers, or community members who may be armed.

2. The Contact Officer or Team shall be provided a clear communications channel to supply the following types of information:
 - a. The officer or team's progress and location;
 - b. The location, number of victims, and their medical needs;
 - c. The estimated number of attacker(s) involved;
 - d. The attacker's description and weapons, if known;
 - e. The attacker's known or suspected location(s), which may need to be frequently updated; and
 - f. The location of any secondary threats.
 - i. If such a threat is discovered, the contact officer or team leader shall determine whether to post an officer near it, report it, or mark it for later action.
 - ii. The contact officer or team should use appropriate tactical techniques to mitigate any secondary threats.
3. Once the location of the attacker(s) is known and any immediate threat has been eliminated, the contact officer or team should secure the attacker as directed by agency policy, to include remaining with the attacker, whether deceased or alive. The Contact Officer or Team should then proceed to clear the location and render the area safe.
 - a. If other sounds (such as gunfire or verbal threats) indicate an elevated threat may still be present, officers shall reassess the situation and prioritize response to the most imminent threat.
 - b. Officers should be called upon to help clear the location of potential suspects, locate and evacuate persons in hiding, and render safe any dangerous munitions or armament.
4. Even if the threat seemingly has been terminated, Contact Officers or Teams must:
 - a. Render the location safe,

- b. Assist in screening and the orderly evacuation of persons to a designated area,
- c. Locate any other persons still in hiding, and
- d. Render aid to victims as soon as it is safe and reasonable.

D. RESCUE TASK FORCE (RTF)

RTFs shall be deployed according to agency policy and at the discretion of the IC. An RTF shall perform the following actions:

1. Once the Contact Officer or Team has been deployed, and as officers and resources arrive at the incident scene, the IC should ensure that RTFs are formed to provide trauma care and to help evacuate victims.
2. RTFs shall be organized under a Team Leader, deployed in tactical formations consistent with agency training, and be prepared to respond to hostile action as rapidly changing circumstances may place them in contact with the attacker(s). In such instances, the RTF shall be prepared and equipped to serve as the Contact Team.
3. Wounded and injured persons shall be quickly searched, if reasonable, for weapons, quickly treated for obvious life-threatening injuries, and removed to a casualty collection point (CCP) with cover and movement of such persons provided by RTF members. If emergency medical personnel are not yet in place, basic trauma care shall be the responsibility of RTF members until they are relieved by medical personnel.
4. Rescue operations shall continue until the IC has declared the scene clear and safe.

E. INCIDENT COMMAND (IC)

An initial responding officer, regardless of rank, shall assume IC and announce to all involved personnel, preferably over the radio. The IC shall ensure information is relayed to all responding officers or teams and that responses are effectively coordinated. The IC or their designee shall ensure that the following actions are accomplished:

1. Organize and establish unified interagency communication(s).
2. Establish an inner perimeter to control access to and egress from the area of risk.

3. Establish an outer perimeter.
4. Request mutual aid and/or emergency medical assistance, if necessary.
5. Establish traffic control and management for the ingress and egress of public safety vehicles. Special consideration should be given to maintaining open routes for rapid transport of injured people.
6. Establish staging areas for the following purposes and notify communications of their locations:
 - i. For responding officers and other emergency personnel. An officer should be assigned to this staging area to brief arriving personnel, maintain communication with the contact officer or team, and assign duties as directed by the IC;
 - ii. A CCP for treatment of the injured and evacuation by EMS or medevac;
 - iii. An Evacuation Area where individuals without injuries should be directed for identification and debriefing;
 - iv. A Reunification Site to accommodate arriving family members of persons at the incident scene; and
 - v. For the media. This area should be staffed with appropriate personnel, such as public information officers (PIOs).
7. Ensure that officers assigned to the reunification site maintain custody and control of all persons and document their identities until they can be reunited with family or others. Victims and witnesses suffering from emotional and/or physical trauma or shock should be kept under the observation of medical personnel until they can be safely transported to a hospital or home in the care of family or friends.
8. Summon chaplains, victim advocates, agency counselors, and peer support officers to provide information to family and friends of victims.
9. Contact appropriate aviation resources to control air space for possible medical evacuation resources and to establish restricted air space for police use only.
10. Initiate intelligence gathering on the possible attacker(s).

11. Coordinate with owners or officials of the target location for floor plans; site layout; and a roster, including emergency contact information as available, of employees, students, residents, visitors, or others believed to be on-site.
12. Assign a recorder to document actions at the command post.
13. Unified command (UC) shall be established as soon as possible.
14. When available on the scene, a tactical team(s) may be assigned as appropriate to:
 - i. Contain the location;
 - ii. Assist RTFs;
 - iii. Help locate the attacker(s) or relieve the contact officer or team;
 - iv. Help locate and safeguard explosives pending removal; and
 - v. Provide special weapons and equipment as needed.
15. Additional officers shall be deployed by IC as needed.

F. COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

The PIO or other designated individual(s) shall ensure appropriate and approved information from the IC is distributed in a timely manner to the community.

1. The PIO or other designated individual(s) shall distribute information relevant to the community. Information shall be distributed through means such as:
 - i. Press conference(s);
 - ii. Social media; and
 - iii. Mass notification systems.
2. Information should include details of the incident and ways to increase public safety and reduce harm while the incident is ongoing. Such information may include:
 - i. Who is sending the alert;

- ii. Why the alert is being sent;
- iii. Date and time of alert sent;
- iv. Shelter in place warnings for nearby locations during active attack incidents;
- v. Alerts to avoid the area due to heavy police activity and potential road closures;
- vi. Specific directions for individuals who must respond to the scene; and
- vii. Communications regarding the reunification site.

G. IMMEDIATE RECOVERY

Once the active threat has been neutralized, immediate recovery strategies should include but are not limited to:

1. Scene security;
2. Information collection. Responding agencies shall conduct continuous joint meetings to discuss procedures, protocols, and lines of communication. All decisions and actions shall be at the discretion of the IC.
3. Assessment of the damage from the incident. This may include:
 - i. Property damage to infrastructure and geographical area closures;
 - ii. Business impacts and effects on bystanders and witnesses of the incident;
 - iii. Impacts to victims, civilians, or responders; and
 - iv. Casualties from the incident.
4. Victim assistance, notification, and reunification;
 - i. An off-site reunification center shall be established, if applicable.

- ii. A check-in system for victim services and volunteers shall be established, if applicable.
- 5. Initial evidence collection and evidence preservation is initiated; and
- 6. Assessment of officer wellness needs and referral to appropriate agency resources.

H. AFTER ACTION EXAMINATION

As soon as reasonably possible after the incident, the Department's Emergency Operations Officer (EOO) shall conduct an after-action examination including essential personnel involved in the incident. The examination should identify response operations that worked well in addition to areas of potential improvement.

Agencies shall remind officers of the available physical and psychological well-being resources.

I. ANNUAL REVIEW

The EOO shall conduct and document an annual review of the Active Attacker Plan. The review should include discussions on whether changes in operational protocols, policy, or training are warranted.

J. TRAINING

The EOO shall work with the Training Unit to coordinate training for active attacks on a regular basis.

- 1. Initial and Refresher Training shall be provided to all sworn and relevant civilian employees.
- 2. Training shall include simulation exercises conducted in schools and other facilities, and with partnering first response agencies, where appropriate.
- 3. Training should incorporate realistic scenarios and shall include the following elements at a minimum:
 - i. Initial response
 - ii. Operation of both incident and unified command
- 4. All training shall be documented.

5. Exercises and coordinated response training shall be debriefed.