

# BALTIMORE CITY

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# PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## GENERAL ORDER 10-18 SECTION E

### RESPONSE TO AN ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENT Revisions Approved: June 12, 2018

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This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. Directive
- II. Purpose
- III. Policy
- IV. Definitions
- V. Procedures and Operational Guidelines
- VI. Training
- VII. Effective Date

#### **I. DIRECTIVE**

It is the goal of the Baltimore City School Police Force (BCSPF) to have a rapid, effective, and efficient response to an active shooter incident in order to protect and save lives.

#### **II. PURPOSE**

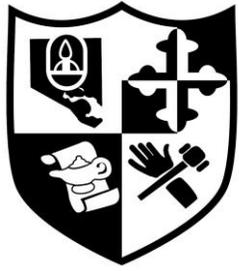
The purpose of this General Order is to establish procedures and guidelines for the response to an active school shooter incident. An active shooter incident requires an immediate and rapid response to a critical and high-risk situation to mitigate any further risk of death or injury to innocent persons.

#### **III. POLICY**

It is the policy of the BCPSF to empower initial responding officers with the authority and responsibility to intervene in active shooter incidents by taking immediate action, consistent with their training and experience, to contain, arrest, and to neutralize the active shooter(s), and if necessary employ the use of deadly force. The prioritization of activities, in their order of importance is to capture or neutralize the active shooter, rescue the victims, provide medical assistance, and preserve the crime scene. While the provision of medical assistance to the wounded is an important task, it is vital that school police officers first capture and/or neutralize the threat to protect all innocent lives.

It may be necessary based on the extent of the active shooter incident for the first responding officer(s) after assessing the situation to enter the building to capture, engage, and/or neutralize the active shooter to prevent loss of life. Officers may not unreasonably endanger themselves or another person while conforming to the procedures in this General Order.

Due to the life-threatening nature and exigency of an active shooter incident, school police officers assigned to schools are authorized to obtain and utilize their service weapon to



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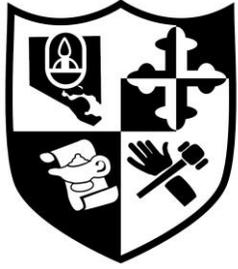
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capture, engage and/or neutralize the active shooter to prevent loss of life.

#### **IV. DEFINITIONS:**

- a. *Active shooter:* A situation where one or more subjects who are believed to be armed, have used, or have threatened to use a weapon to inflict deadly physical force on other person(s) and/or continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional persons. The primary objective of an active shooter appears to be that of mass murder, rather than other criminal conduct, such as robbery, hostage taking, etc. For the purpose of this General Order, the term “active shooter” shall also include anyone who uses any other deadly weapon to include, but not limited to, firearms, knives, clubs, bows and arrows, and explosives, in order to systematically or randomly inflict death or serious bodily injury to persons over a continuous or extended period of time.
- b. *Active threat:* Any incident that by its deliberate nature puts lives in imminent danger. An active threat may be similar to an active shooter while not involving the use of firearms by a suspect(s).
- c. *Contact team:* The contact teams’ primary function is to initiate immediate pursuit and engagement with the active shooter(s). Their mission is to make contact as soon as possible and to stop the active shooter by arrest, containment, or use of deadly force. The contact team will continue on past victims or harmless distractions in search of the active shooter(s). They will, if possible, relay the location of victims to the Incident Commander.
  1. A contact team shall be made up by officers who first arrive on the scene of an active shooter incident. The contact team’s formation must be decided by the leader of the team.
  2. The contact team using tactical response strategies shall proceed into the building to locate, capture or engage, neutralize the active shooter(s) to prevent loss of life.
    - i. Contact team members need to be cognizant of the possibility of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and additional perpetrators.
    - ii. A member of the contact team, when safe and practicable to do so, must inform communication dispatch of the entry, description, location, status of the active shooter, number and type of weapons, location of victims, nature of injuries, and need for additional law



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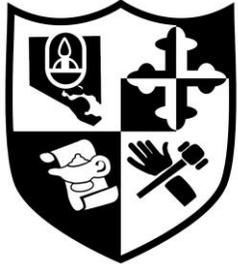
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- enforcement/fire and rescue assistance.
- iii. The primary mission of the contact team is to locate, capture, engage, and neutralize the active shooter(s).
- 3. It may be necessary based on the extent of the active shooter incident for the first responding officer after assessing the situation to enter the building to capture or engage/neutralize the active shooter to prevent loss of life.
- d. *Immediate Action Deployment Plan*: The response plan developed by first responding law enforcement personnel and the immediate deployment of law enforcement personnel and resources to on-going life threatening situations where delayed deployment of personnel could otherwise result in death or serious bodily injury to innocent persons. Immediate Action Deployment Plans are fluid and based on the threat and are not a substitute for conventional response tactics to a barricaded gunman or other high risk incidents.
- e. *Incident Commander*: The person responsible for all aspects of an emergency response; including quickly developing incident objectives, managing all incident operations, application of resources as well as responsibility for all personnel involved.
- f. *Incident Command Post (ICP)*: A secure location where the Incident Commander directs the operation.
- g. *Incident Command System (ICS)*: Standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective. ICS allows for effective management of the incident by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications.
- h. *Improvised explosive device (IED)*: An explosive device fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy or incapacitate people or vehicles.
- i. *Rescue team*: The rescue teams' primary function is to locate and remove victims from within the facility to a safe location or directing victims to a safe passage



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from the facility. The rescue team will be comprised of the second set of four (4) officers to arrive on scene. The rescue team must always be aware that, although their primary mission is the rescue of victims, the team may come into contact with a suspect at any time.

#### V. PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

##### A. **Assume tactical responsibility:**

If one officer arrives on the scene alone as the first responding officer, that officer must take charge of the active shooter incident and attempt to neutralize the threat. If multiple officers arrive together, a contact team shall be formed pursuant to this Order. Also, upon receipt of an active shooter call, a supervisor must be immediately dispatched to take command of the scene. The Communications Center must be advised of who is in command of the scene and ensure the Chief of School Police is notified on the active shooter incident.

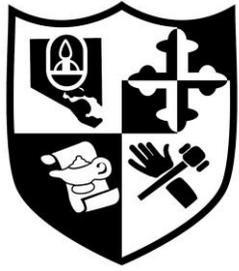
##### B. **Situational Analysis:**

The on-scene Commander must, based on all available information, make a situational analysis. The analysis shall be continuous, taking into account new information from the communications center and observations from officers, victims, and citizens. This analysis must lead to a decision as to whether the situation is an active shooter incident, whether an opportunity exists for immediate intervention leading to accomplishment of one of the goals listed in Section D1 and how responding resources should be deployed at the scene.

##### C. **Incident Command:**

Immediately upon receipt of a possible active shooter call, a supervisor shall be dispatched to the scene to take command.

1. Incident Command shall be implemented in accordance with applicable training.
2. No action may be taken that is unplanned or without controls.
3. Upon arrival, the Incident Command must begin a situational analysis to determine the best deployment tactics of responding resources and establish a command post.
4. The Communications Center must be notified of the command post location.



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5. The supervisor assuming command shall remain as the Incident Commander until this responsibility is delegated or the officer is relieved by a higher ranking officer. At least one person possessing all available information on tactical plans and actions taken will remain at the command post to brief arriving personnel.

#### **D. Incident Commander:**

The on-scene Incident Commander plays a vital role as to the response to an active shooter and shall:

1. Choose a safe staging area for arriving personnel.
2. Direct communications personnel to make appropriate notifications in accordance with this General Order:
  - a. Fire Rescue/EMS
  - b. Baltimore Police Department
  - c. Emergency Management
  - d. Local hospitals
3. Form additional contact/rescue as needed
4. Call for mutual aid as needed
5. Direct City Schools Office of Communications to secure media staging area for the press to assemble for briefings
6. Designate a secure staging/reunification area for victim families that are arriving on scene
7. Designate a secure staging area for medical units and treatment of the injured
8. Post additional responding personnel to protect the crime scene
9. Notify appropriate follow-up investigative services and bring the incident to a conclusion
10. Ensure that the scene integrity is protected for crime scene processing
11. Ensure an incident debriefing/hot wash is conducted

#### **E. First Responder Tactical Intervention**

It is critical that all officers, supervisors, and command personnel are familiar with the definition of an active shooter as well as the tactics deemed appropriate for active shooter response. The traditional uniform response of “contain, isolate, evacuate, and wait for a tactical response team, and crisis negotiators” may not be adequate or appropriate in an active shooter incident. The Incident Commander must consider the



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following:

1. *Contact/Rescue Team*

First responder intervention will be based on opportunity. These teams will be in the form of law enforcement with an identified element leader. Team movement will be in a controlled and disciplined tactical manner under control and direction of the team leader consistent with active shooter training.

2. *Containment*

Dedicated security elements should always be a component of first responder intervention teams. Individual action is discouraged, as it is usually counter-productive to the overall coordinated, focused responses needed in an active shooter incident. Site containment must be left to the discretion of the Incident Commander. Containment of an active shooter incident may take the form of officers serving in an “observe and report” capacity.

#### **F. Active Shooter Site Security**

No location associated with an active shooter will be considered secure until the tactical response team has completed a thorough search of the facility. Based on information received from the tactical response team commander, the Incident Commander shall make the decision to declare the scene secure. Officers assigned to security functions will maintain positions until properly relieved.

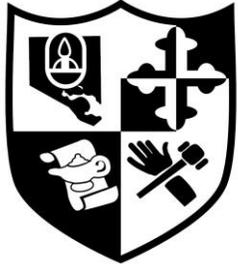
#### **G. Tactical Response Teams**

When the tactical response team is prepared to deploy, the initial responding officers may be relieved by the team or they may be redeployed. The Baltimore Police SWAT/tactical response team should be contacted to provide immediate assistance to school police when responding to an active shooter incident.

#### **H. Contact Team Operations**

If a sole first responding officer has already attempted to neutralize the scene, the next responding officers should form a contact team and act pursuant to their training. A clearly identified leader must be in charge of the team and will determine the deployment of the team members and all subsequent responding officers.

1. Contact team members must utilize body armor and ballistic helmets,



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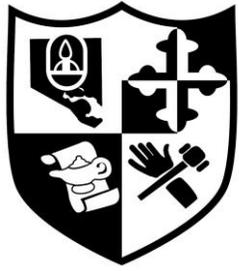
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if available. However, the lack of availability of this equipment shall not cause for delay in initiating contact operations.

2. The contact team must bypass everything and everyone (alive, wounded or dead) to make contact with the active shooter(s). Neutralizing the threat shall be their primary mission.
3. Once an active shooter has been neutralized, the team must remain vigilant for the presence of additional active shooter(s). If available information leads the team to believe that additional threats are present, the contact team will continue its mission until all active shooter(s) have been neutralized.
4. The contact team must maintain radio communications with an on-scene commander and the communications center providing them with pertinent intelligence.
5. Later arriving officers shall form a perimeter to stop the escape of an active shooter. Active shooter(s) emerging from cover on concealment are to be neutralized by perimeter officers using all lawful and necessary means.
  - a. Such perimeter assignments should be made by the on-scene commander.
  - b. It should be anticipated that innocent civilians may be fleeing from the active shooter(s). Such victims are to be searched and directed to a place of safety designated by the on-scene commander.
6. Team movement must be in a controlled and disciplined tactical manner under the control and direction of the team leader consistent with active shooter training.

#### **I. Rescue Team Operations**

Prior to commencement of rescue team operations a clearly identified team leader shall be in charge of the team and the following should be accomplished.



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1. Once all active shooter(s) have been secured or neutralized, operational focus should shift to the evacuation of all living persons from the hostile environment. The area should continue to be considered hostile until a complete and thorough search is conducted to verify that all threats have been mitigated and/or neutralized.
2. Wounded persons shall be removed from the hostile environment to a safe triage area where medical attention will be provided.
3. The on-scene Incident Commander may grant permission to enter the hostile area if a wounded person(s) cannot be safely evacuated. The medical personnel must be accompanied by police personnel.
4. Uninjured civilians in the hostile environment shall be searched for weapons prior to being evacuated to a safe area designated by the on-scene Incident Commander.
5. Team movement will be in a controlled and disciplined tactical manner under the control and direction of the team leader consistent with active shooter training.

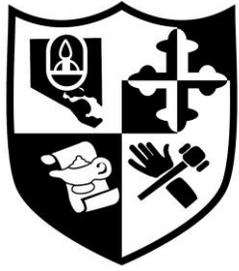
#### **J. Securing An Active Shooter Scene**

1. Searches should continue until all threats have been mitigated and/or neutralized and all living person(s) have been evacuated.
2. Only the on-scene Incident Commander may declare that the scene is secure.
3. Once a scene has been declared secure, it must be turned over to the investigators and crime scene technicians for processing.

#### **K. Miscellaneous Considerations**

The below considerations should be implemented if deemed appropriate:

1. If the contact team contains the suspect and the suspect is no longer



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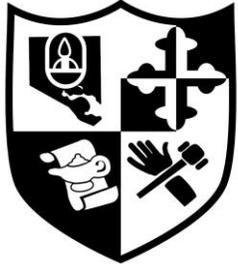
considered an active shooter, the Incident Commander shall request the response of the Baltimore Police Department SWAT/tactical response team. The Crisis Negotiations Team shall also be deployed to contact the suspect(s) and negotiate to effect surrender.

2. If either the contact or rescue team encounters a suspected improvised and/or explosive device, they should report the discovery to the Incident Commander and bypass the device. The discovery of the explosive device must be handled in accordance with standard operating procedures.
3. Officers should attempt to enter the building at a location other than the main entrance, if reasonably possible.
4. During the course of the event, all personnel are to restrict their use of the radio for emergency traffic only. The Incident Commander shall determine if alternate radio channels will be used. If a suspected explosive device is detected the use of the police radio should not be used and alternative means of communication should be used to communicate.
5. The Incident Commander shall determine if TV/cable lines to the building should be disabled to prevent suspects from potentially viewing law enforcement operations.

#### **L. Lockdown vs. Evacuation**

In response to an active shooter, the school or a City School facility may be under lockdown or the administration may have ordered evacuation. Once school police officers arrive on scene, they have authority to reassess the situation and have the authority to order a lockdown or evacuation. The Incident Commander shall immediately determine if the school or facility has undergone any degree of evacuation or if it is under lockdown. Such information is important for the following reasons:

1. If evacuation has taken place (to any degree), vital intelligence information can be obtained via law enforcement interviews of those who have been evacuated. The intelligence includes, but is not limited



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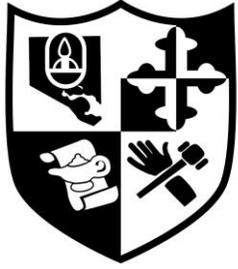
to: suspect descriptions (physical and clothing), suspect identities, type of weaponry the suspect(s) have, location last seen, comments made by the suspect(s), locations of victims (injured and non-injured), type/description/location weapons and possible planted explosive devices, etc.

2. Those evacuated need to be compared to the school or facility manifest to make sure all occupants are accounted for.
3. Contact and Rescue Teams must determine if lockdown has taken place as this means that they are likely to encounter a larger number of victims as they transverse the facility and it may impact upon the tactics employed by the Teams.
4. If a lockdown has occurred prior to their arrival, the Incident Commander shall determine whether to order a law enforcement supervised evacuation or maintain a lockdown mode. If the Incident Commander determines that an evacuation is appropriate, several techniques are available. Once the contact team has completed their search in a specific area, the rescue team can fall in behind them and evacuate these areas. Or, if the whereabouts of the active shooter(s) is known and other sections of the school or facility can be evacuated by law enforcement with a reasonable degree of safety, this action may be taken. All evacuees shall be removed from the scene to an area that it takes them out of harm's way and debriefed.

#### **M. After-Action Activities**

It is important that key after-action activities occur contemporaneously to an active shooter incident.

1. Counseling to departmental personnel.
  - a. The department requires that all School Police personnel who respond to, or participate in any manner with, an active shooter incident shall attend a debriefing with qualified mental health professional(s) or certified critical incident stress counselors. This shall include, but not limited to, personnel who participate in contact/rescue teams, supervisors/commanders involved in decision making associated with the event as well as law



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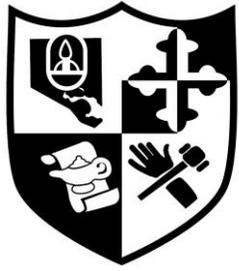
enforcement communications personnel who were on duty at the time of the incident. The debriefing will occur contemporaneously to the resolution of the active shooter incident.

Additional counseling may be recommended based upon recommendations of the mental health professional(s)/counselor(s), at the request of the employee, or at the direction of the Chief of School Police.

2. The Incident Commander must hold an initial active shooter debriefing/hot wash to discuss the effectiveness of the response and address any critical issues.
3. School Police personnel involved in the incident shall be required to submit applicable written after-action reports and/or statements delineating their assignments as well as detailed descriptions of their actions during the incident.
4. Immediately thereafter as practical, but under no circumstances to exceed two weeks, all after-action reports and/or statements will be forwarded to the Office of the Assistant State's Attorney of Baltimore City, as applicable and if requested, who will then oversee/coordinate a multi-agency critique of the event to review the responses/actions taken by the involved agencies. The results of this critique may be utilized for plan revision and future trainings.

## **VI. TRAINING**

- A. The Maryland Police Training and Correctional Commission shall develop and/or certify standardized training guidelines and lesson plans for "Rapid Response to Active Shooter" training. Adherence/compliance with these guidelines is mandated. Standardization of training will help ensure that all law enforcement agencies/personnel receive a foundation of active shooter training will react in a similar manner, and will enhance the ability of agencies to work as a team during mutual aid incidents.
- B. The Department shall have a minimum of one officer certified as a "train the trainer" in



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this subject matter. A pre-requisite for an officer to become a “train the trainer” is certification in Methods of Instruction (MOI).

- C. An annual review of this policy is mandated. A school police officer who is certified as a trainer in “Rapid Response to Active Shooter” shall be given the task of this annual review and make revision, as necessary.
- D. All departmental personnel are required to participate in initial training for “Rapid Response to Active Shooter”. This initial training shall encompass both classroom instruction as well as practical exercises.
- E. All departmental personnel are required to participate in annual training in the Department’s “Rapid Response to Active Shooter” policy.
- F. All sworn departmental personnel are required to participate in a practical drill involving “Rapid Response to an Active Shooter” every other year, at a minimum. When planning an actual drill, efforts will be made to have school officials and Baltimore Police Department representatives participate in a joint drill. Mutual drilling will assist both departments and school administrators in seeing their respective policies actually applied, how the joint implementation of these policies work and may serve to satisfy any training requirements mandated by their respective oversight bodies. Ideally, when conducting joint drills with schools, different school facilities should be utilized each time to better acquaint officers with the physical layout of the school or facility as well as expose the staff of the various schools to this training.
- G. All school and City School facility administrators should be made aware of and familiar with the Department’s “Rapid Response to an Active Shooter” and response actions.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Order shall be effective on the date of publication.

I certify that I have read and fully understand this Order.



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Signature\_\_\_\_\_

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