
415 - Active Shooter Policy

415.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth procedures to be used by the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department in the handling of active shooter situations and to develop techniques and tactics which are swift, decisive and organized so that these incidents may be resolved with maximum safety and as rapidly as possible, neutralizing the active threat to life.

415.2 DEFINITIONS

(a) Active Shooter

1. An "Active Shooter" is defined as one or more subjects who participate in a random or systematic shooting spree demonstrating an intent to continuously harm others. Their overriding objective appears to be mass murder rather than some other criminal conduct (i.e., robbery, hostage taking, etc.). Incidents such as Littleton, Colorado; Springfield, Oregon; or Jonesboro, Arkansas are examples of an "active shooter."
2. Consider the suspect(s) an "active shooter" if, after law enforcement arrives, the suspect is still actively shooting, has access to additional potential victims, injured victims require life saving medical attention or an immediate, active response would be required to save lives.
3. "Active Shooters" may be heavily armed (i.e., explosives, booby traps and body armor).
4. "Active Shooters" may have a planned attack and be prepared for a sustained confrontation with law enforcement.

(b) Immediate, Active Response

1. An immediate, active response is defined as, "The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to ongoing, life threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or great bodily injury to innocent persons." This is not to be confused with, or substituted for, conventional response tactics to a barricaded or hostage situation.

415.3 AGENCY RESPONSE TO AN ACTIVE SHOOTER

415.31 INITIAL OFFICER

- (a) The "initial officer" is the first law enforcement officer on scene. He should establish an Incident Command Post. Incident Command responsibility can be delegated to another officer if desired.

- (b) He should request all appropriate resources (additional patrol units, SWAT, EOD, etc.) while broadcasting all pertinent information.
- (c) Determine if an immediate, active response is necessary.
- (d) The following information should be determined/broadcasted by the Initial Officer.
 - 1. Location and number of suspects.
 - 2. Type(s) of weapons involved.
 - 3. Type of location involved.
 - 4. Safe approach routes.
 - 5. Command Post location.
- (e) Assemble a Contact Team to respond immediately to the "active shooter." Someone should be assigned as the Team Leader of the Contact Team, preferable a SWAT Team member or a senior officer. It may be necessary to assemble several Contact Teams.
- (f) Form some type of perimeter to contain suspects.
- (g) Assemble a Rescue Team when enough personnel become available.
- (h) Assign an officer to secure a safe, secure location for those civilians who are evacuated (NOTE: Suspects may attempt to pose as evacuated civilians).

415.32 CONTACT TEAM

- (a) The priority of the Contact Team is to locate and stop the deadly behavior of the "active shooter."
- (b) The Contact Team(s) should attempt to limit the suspect(s)'s movement and prevent escape.
- (c) Move directly toward the threat.
- (d) The Contact Team(s) must continue past victims.
- (e) Maintain communications with the Command Post to indicate direction of travel, victim locations, and suspect(s) location.
- (f) The Contact Team should be made up of the following members:
 - 1. Team Leader—Officer assigned to delegate team member responsibilities, formulates and implements plans.
 - 2. Assistant Team Leader—Officer who communicates with Command Post. May be assigned the responsibility covering the team "six," that direction through which the team has already moved.
 - 3. Contact Officer—Officer who conducts searches or engages suspect if necessary.
 - 4. Cover Officer—Officer who is responsible for covering the Contact Officer. Provides cover during entry and egress if necessary.

5. Consider selecting officers for the Contact Team that have experience, special training, offensive weapons, etc.
- (g) Movement is made in a direction, in conjunction with other Contact Teams to "shrink the perimeter" and locate the suspect(s).

415.33 RESCUE TEAM

- (a) The objective of the Rescue Team is to recover victims. If multiple victims are present, the Rescue Team should ask the Command Post to increase the number of Rescue Teams.
- (b) The Rescue Team may be made up with the same number of personnel as the Contact Team – dependant on the situation. Ideally it should also have a Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader.
- (c) The Rescue Team should enter and/or approach the location to locate victims.
- (d) The Rescue Team should extract victims to a safe area, and notify the Command Post of that location.

415.34 WATCH COMMANDERS/SERGEANTS

- (a) When you arrive, assume control of the Command Post. Since Contact Teams may have already been inserted, use additional law enforcement personnel to establish a perimeter.
- (b) Set up an emergency response zone for fire and EMS, as well as establishing a corridor for their responses.
- (c) Activate an Incident Command System (Incident Commander, Logistic officer, intelligence officer, public information officer, etc...)

415.35 DISPATCH

- (a) Once advised of an "active shooter" incident by personnel on scene or based upon information received from the public, clear a channel and advise all units of such. Notify other agencies immediately by radio or phone.
- (b) Advise all units of the location, specific threats, shots fired, suspect description, location of the reporting party, injuries and any other pertinent information.
- (c) Confirm that the Watch Commander/Field Supervisor is aware/enroute to the scene.
- (d) Advise all available units to respond.
- (e) Notify fire and EMS. Determine if Sonoma County Sheriff Department's helicopter (Henry-1) and/or CHP Air Support Services are available.
- (f) Notify those within your agency that need to be notified (administration, management, etc.).
- (g) Maintain limited traffic on the main channel.

415.36 SWAT TEAM COMMANDERS

- (a) Have members respond directly to the incident.
- (b) Assemble your team as fast as possible, if necessary use smaller teams.
- (c) Once on scene, and in coordination with the Command Post, move your team directly towards the threat.
- (d) Shrink the inner perimeter with those established Contact Teams.
- (e) Move to the threat as quickly as possible, without stopping to render first aid or assistance to anyone unless an unusual circumstance present itself and necessitates departure from the usual pre-agreed upon standard operation procedure.

415.37 SUBSEQUENT LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL RESPONSE

- (a) Respond to the Command Post so that staging, assignment, and/or deployment can be made.
- (b) Radio traffic should be kept to a minimum so that dispatch and the initial Deputies can give out vital information.
- (c) Additional Deputies can be used to form a perimeter, deal with the public, gather intelligence, etc...

415.38 ALLIED AGENCY RESPONSE

- (a) Other responding agencies should coordinate with the primary agency prior to deployment by responding to the Command Post for assignment.
- (b) Incident Command will be the responsibility of the agency that has jurisdiction.
- (c) Separate Command Post may be established as needed (i.e., for SWAT, fire, EMS), but representatives from those Command Posts need to be in the Incident Command so that communication can be maintained.