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OPERATIONS MANUAL

STANDARD INSTRUCTION 02 SPECIAL OPERATIONS

SECTION 01 ACTIVE SHOOTER/HOSTILE EVENT RESPONSE (ASHER)

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I. PURPOSE

To provide direction for active shooter and hostile event incidents (active shooter, bombing, civil unrest, etc.)

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel, except lifeguards

III. AUTHORITY

The fire chief authorizes the information within this policy.

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. ASHER

Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response identifies those incident types where an individual or group is actively engaged in attempting to kill and/or hurt people in a confined and populated area or cause destruction of property during civil unrest regardless of weapon type.

B. Ballistic Protective Equipment (BPE)

Protective clothing to include body armor and helmets intended to protect personnel from firearm projectiles and shrapnel. BPE is classified into five types (IIA, II, IIIA, III, IV) by level of ballistic performance according to National Institute of Justice standards.

C. BPE Cache

Multiple sets of BPE strategically staged at select fire stations throughout the city allowing for optimal delivery to ASHER incidents when dispatched and/or requested.

D. Casualty Collection Point (CCP)

An area designated in the Cold, Warm or Hot Zone, used to stabilize multiple casualties. It is established when it is not feasible to immediately evacuate casualties due to limited resource capability, long evacuation distances and adverse tactical circumstances.

E. Concealment

Anything that hides you from perpetrator observation and can be natural or man-made. Concealment does not provide an adequate barrier to protect personnel from gunfire.

F. Contact Team

A group of law enforcement (average size of two to five) deployed using immediate action rapid deployment (IARD) techniques to address the active shooter(s).

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G. Cover

Cover gives protection from bullets, fragments from exploding rounds, flame, nuclear effects, and biological and chemical effects. Natural cover includes such objects as logs, trees, stumps, ravines, and hollows. Manmade cover includes such things as vehicles, trenches, walls, rubble and craters. Build or locate cover such as shielding behind vehicles, walls and /or natural barriers.

H. Force Protection

Actions taken by law enforcement to prevent or mitigate hostile actions against personnel, resources, facilities, and critical infrastructure. These actions allow the operational ability of fire and EMS resources to be deployed into the Warm Zone as needed.

I. Immediate Action and Rapid Deployment (IARD)

This is the swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement personnel in a crisis where delays could result in additional death or injury to innocent persons. Rapid deployment is intended to control, contain, and neutralize threats.

J. Improvised Explosive Device (IED)

A device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, incendiary or chemicals designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass or distract.

K. Rescue Task Force (RTF)

A team of fire and law enforcement personnel, incident specific in size and number, formed to move into hostile or potentially hostile environments to potentially triage, treat, and move victims to safe areas. The RTF shall operate primarily in the Warm Zone. The Rescue Task Force shall be given radio designations in numerical order (i.e. RTF-1, RTF-2 etc.). The RTF is ideally comprised of (but not limited to) one fire captain, two (any combination of) firefighters or engineers and one law enforcement officer per rescuer. Contracted EMS/ambulance personnel shall not operate in an RTF or in the Warm Zone

L. Rescue Task Force Staging Officer

This is comprised of one fire company officer and one law enforcement officer. They are to work together to get the resources needed and to form up the personnel that make up the RTF. The RTF staging officers shall assemble the RTF at the perceived edge of the Warm Zone.

M. Special Tactics and Rescue (STAR) Medic

The STAR Medic is assigned to a SWAT team (SDPD) who has received specific tactical training. The primary role of the STAR Medic is to provide field care and support of the SWAT team members who are engaged in missions and/or assignments in the Hot Zone.

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N. Zones

1. Hot Zone: The area where a direct and immediate threat exists. Fire and EMS personnel shall not operate in this zone unless assigned to the SWAT team as a tactical medic.
2. Warm Zone: The area where a potential threat exists, but the threat is not direct or immediate. SDFD resources may be requested to enter into Warm Zones for treatment and transport, but this should be done with force protection.
3. Cold Zone: The area where no significant danger or threat can be reasonably anticipated. This could be achieved by distance, geographic location or inaccessible areas from the incident. The cold zone is the location for staging areas, Incident Command Post (ICP), and the treatment and transportation of patients. The cold zone is the area where Rescue Task Forces are assembled between fire personnel and law enforcement.

V. **POLICY**

A. BPE Deployment

1. BPE caches will be dispatched to the incident based on the initial ASHER response matrix.
2. If additional BPE is needed, the IC shall request for another BPE cache to be added to the response.
3. Upon arrival, BPE will be distributed to fire department personnel assigned to the incident.
4. It is highly recommended for personnel to wear the body armor under the brush coat to insure agency identification and function during the incident.
5. Where immediate action could prevent the loss of life and personnel are deployed without BPE into an area where required, a post incident analysis and justification will be completed by the Incident Commander.

B. Active Shooter/Bombing Events

1. Critical Actions
 - “THREAT” for the care of casualties:
 - (1) Threat suppression
 - (2) Hemorrhage control
 - (3) Rapid Extrication
 - (4) Assessment by medical providers
 - (5) Transport to definitive care
2. Initial Communications and Considerations
 - a) The first arriving company officer or chief shall assume incident command and establish unified command (UC) at a single incident command post with law enforcement.
 - b) Identify and communicate hazards, threats and/or intelligence.
 - (1) Ensure responding crew’s safety identify and communicate

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- control points and perimeter
 - (2) Consider assessment for the presence of IEDs
 - c) Identify and communicate hot, warm and cold zones
 - d) Request and assign additional resources and overhead
 - e) Determine and communicate access and response routes
 - f) Establish casualty collection areas outside the warm zone
 - g) Establish needs and assignments for mass casualty incident (MCI)
- 3. RTF Operations
 - a) The Rescue Task Force should consist of a fire captain and two (any combination of) firefighters or engineers, accompanied by a minimum of one law enforcement officer per rescuer to provide force protection.
 - b) Fire personnel shall wear structure helmets, brush coats, eye protection and medical gloves. Once BPE arrives at scene for personnel, fire helmets will be replaced with ballistic helmets.
 - c) The equipment carried should allow for optimal rescuer mobility and treatment of preventable causes of death.
 - (1) Equipment may consist of a trauma bag, MCI rapid response bag, additional medical gloves and equipment to provide for rapid extrication.
 - (2) Equipment assembled may be at the discretion of the company officer.
 - d) Once an RTF is made the company officer shall maintain communications and crew continuity while operating in the Warm Zone. The RTF will move through the Warm Zone assessing and treating the preventable causes of death.
 - e) Ideally the first RTF(s) will continue to move deeper into the Warm Zone while subsequent RTF(s) (i.e. RTF-2, RTF-3) will begin the removal of patients out of the Warm Zone and into casualty collection points. Once removed, the patients become part of an MCI and operations in the cold zone shall reflect that of an MCI.
 - f) The RTF may establish a Casualty Collection Point (CCP) in the warm zone when deemed necessary.

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- (1) The CCP shall be secured by force protection at all time and should provide safe cover.
- (2) A fire officer in the CCP will maintain communications with the IC and coordinate casualty evacuation.
- g) The warm zone may expand, and contract as needed during RTF operations.
- h) The RTF company officer should expect to give timely updates on numbers of patients and needs inside the Warm Zone. This will assist the IC with the ordering of replacement RTFs and triage, treatment and transportation resources.
- i) Once an RTF runs out of supplies to treat the preventable causes of death, they are to remove themselves from the Warm Zone in conjunction with evacuating previously treated patients to the casualty collection points. The RTF may then be reassigned or may be resupplied and continue to operate as a RTF at the incident commander's discretion.
- j) Consideration should be given to establishing a resupply area close to the RTF staging area to meet the needs of the RTF working in the Warm Zone.

C. Civil Unrest

- 1. Command
 - a) SDFD will be in unified command with law enforcement
 - b) Battalions may go into 'battalion level' dispatch to ensure the safety of all responding units using LE intel to ensure the safety of responders.
 - c) The creation of a 'geo-fence' by the Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC) may be used to control responses to incidents within the civil unrest area.
- 2. Task Forces
 - a) Task forces may be used due to their multi-functionality.
 - b) Increase safety and ensure a coordinated, quick fire attack or rescue.
 - c) Task Force Leaders (TFL) should maintain the integrity of their task force.
 - (1) Breaking up the task force decreases its strength and diminishes the response capacity.
 - d) TFLs will assemble their personnel, pass on all relevant information, including scene tactics, and share all LE intel as it is gathered.
 - e) The task force configuration may vary but the typical task force components are:
 - (1) Task Force Leader

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- (2) Three Engines
- (3) ALS Ambulance
- f) The ALS ambulance is for members of the task force.
 - (1) If deployed for civilian injury or illness, the ambulance must be immediately back filled.
- 3. Staging Area
 - a) The staging area should be in the cold zone for safety, rapid ingress and egress, and ease of access to and from the incident.
 - b) Location should provide amenities for the task force when possible such as bathrooms, access to food preparation areas, etc.
- 4. Law Enforcement Protection
 - a) Force protection provided by LE is critical to all resources responding safely.
 - b) SDFD resources will respond into a warm zone only with LE protection
 - c) LE officers assigned to a task force will remain with the task force to provide security and are considered part of a complete task force unit.
- 5. Fireground Guidelines
 - a) Life safety is the priority during fire ground operations including the safety of firefighters.
 - b) The primary objectives are rapid extinguishment while minimizing exposure time.
 - c) With numerous fires, the most effective tactics include:
 - (1) An exterior attack using master streams for a quick knock-down
 - (2) No interior firefighting or laddering of buildings unless necessary for rescue of known occupants in imminent threat of injury or death.
 - (3) No overhaul operations should occur after fire knock-down
 - (a) While no overhaul presents the possibility of a re-ignite, the strategy is to protect exposures, knock down the fire, and move on.
 - (4) Depending on the number of fires in an area:
 - (a) Fires that present no exposure hazard should be left to burn
 - (b) Vehicle and rubbish fires, unless creating an imminent exposure threat, should be ignored
 - d) Task forces will not commit to any attack until the TFL has assessed the situation, determined the safety of the location, the strategy and tactics to be deployed, and the apparatus positioning.
 - e) Fire apparatus should be positioned to provide physical cover to personnel operating hose lines and allow for rapid egress.

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- f) The perimeter will be secured by LE prior to initiating firefighting operations
- g) All personnel should work in groups of two or more.
- h) Only connect to hydrants in the secured area.
- i) Limit SCBA use as there may be little opportunity for bottle refill
- j) If ordered to exit, personnel should attempt to get nozzles and equipment back on the apparatus and shut down the hydrant.

6. EMS Operations

- a) EMS calls in the warm zone may or may not be from injuries due to civil unrest
- b) As with fire incidents, minimizing exposure time is an objective
- c) EMS intervention prior to transport should be limited to treatment necessary to save life
- d) Any treatment beyond life saving measure should be performed while enroute to the hospital or 'cold zone'.

7. Additional Considerations

a) Stations and Facilities

- (1) If disturbance is in the area of a fire station or facility, close and lock all doors and windows
 - (a) All personnel will remain inside
 - (b) Dim interior lights and pull all window coverings
- (2) When leaving, stop long enough to ensure the station is secured, including the apparatus doors.
- (3) Remove any loose objects from around the outside of the station

b) Responding

- (1) Consider 'standing back' in the station
 - (a) Keep all windows on the vehicle/apparatus closed and doors locked
 - (b) Remove any equipment typically carried on the outside of the apparatus (axes, pike poles, extinguishers, personal protective equipment, etc.) and lock all cabinets
 - (c) Side windows may be duct taped to keep glass from shattering

c) Incident Actions

- (1) Apparatus should never be left unattended and engineers should never be left alone with the apparatus
- (2) Warning lights, sirens and airhorns should not be used in the affected area when under LE protection
- (3) Position apparatus at intersections whenever possible to affect a rapid exit

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- (4) TFLs will determine when a task force withdraws due to deteriorating conditions
 - (5) Tools are to be kept in locked compartments or inside the cab when not in use
 - (6) Consider utilizing helicopter or drone for an aerial survey of incident
 - (7) Order additional resources, as needed, including task forces/strike teams. Additional resources require LE protection
 - (8) Consider fatigue of personnel operating within the perimeter of the warm zone
- d) Additional
- (1) Keep ECDC informed of any changes in conditions related to the disturbance
 - (2) Wear PPE that signifies crews as firefighters including the wearing of brush jackets on medical aids
 - (3) Use caution and avoid increasing tensions by avoiding hostile verbal exchanges, gestures, or physical contact
 - (4) If conditions present an unreasonable risk, leave the area immediately by the most expedient route and notify ECDC
 - (5) Due to safety concerns and operational security, personnel are not to share any information relevant to the incident with non-SDFD employees via social media, or directly via any personal device such as a cell phone, tablet or laptop.
 - (6) Firefighters and fire department equipment will not be used for crowd control or disbursement.
 - (7) Fire personnel are strictly prohibited from carrying firearms or other weapons on the apparatus or in the station. Refer to City of San Diego [Administrative Regulation 97.20](#) Weapon Free Workplace Policy.
 - (8) Company officers are encouraged to print and retain a copy of the incident action plan, when available
 - (9) All crews should determine a fall back location should stations become unsafe