



Recommendations to Decrease Risks Associated With Coordinated Attacks Targeting First Responders

Establish an Early Warning System for High Risk Calls
Respond Vigilantly and Maintain Situational Awareness
Take Appropriate Protective Action if the Scene Becomes Unsafe
Be Prepared to Make Lifesaving Interventions
Consider Additional Training and Evaluate the Practicality of Equipment

New York State Intelligence Center

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Establish an Early Warning System for High Risk Calls

Identify at-risk individuals and locations ahead of time

- Become knowledgeable of certain roads, neighborhoods, complexes, establishments and areas within your jurisdiction and areas routinely served with mutual-aid response where criminal activity has been known to exist and at-risk individuals may be located.
- Work with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, crime analysis centers, and state and regional fusion centers to identify at-risk individuals and locations by way of¹:
 - Repeated or Frequent 9-1-1 Calls;
 - History of Domestic Disturbances, Violence, or Criminal Activity;
 - Criminal History (such as murder and violent crimes);
 - Officer Awareness and Officer Safety Bulletins.
- Learn if your PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point/ 9-1-1 Dispatch Center) has the ability to “flag” or put a “watch” on specific individuals, addresses, roadways, complexes and neighborhoods. Enter at-risk locations and individuals into the system².
- Work with the respective law enforcement agencies, PSAP’s, and other appropriate entities to establish policies and procedures for the dispatch and response to high-risk locations, individuals, and incidents (will law enforcement be dispatched simultaneously or ahead of Fire/EMS agencies, and what will the stand-back policy be). Policy should also include if law enforcement is dispatched to a high-risk call, when, where, and how should Fire and EMS resources be put on standby or placed in a staging area.
- Dispatchers should be wary of the following types of calls, and consider dispatching law enforcement and initiating stand-back policies for Fire/EMS in situations where:
 - The phone line becomes disconnected;
 - Tone of caller or background noise does not match the alleged situation;
 - The caller remains calm in a high-stress situation which would normally create a sense of panic;
 - Only one caller is reporting a high-profile incident – dispatch has received one call for a situation which normally results in multiple calls (such as a working structure fire or motor vehicle accident);
 - Multiple incidents are being reported in an unusually close timeframe (such as multiple fires);
 - Unusual or alarming background noises (such as screaming, explosions, gunshots, etc.);
 - The caller changes the story or information is unclear;
 - The caller inquires if law enforcement will be dispatched to a Fire and/or EMS call, or the caller requests law enforcement to not be dispatched;
 - Weapons or hazardous materials may be at the scene;
 - Claims of hostages, rifles, or automatic weapons present at the alleged location;
 - The caller specifically threatens or indicates hatred towards first responders;
 - Individual claims to be armed and suicidal or intends to shoot first responders upon arrival;
 - The location or an individual at the scene has been identified as “at-risk” based on the information above.

¹ Once identified, key information (known addresses, and name and age of individuals) should be shared with PSAPs (9-1-1 centers) which dispatch the respective Fire and EMS agencies, and appropriate personnel with a need-to-know (such as County Fire and EMS Coordinators, and Chief Officers of the respective Fire/EMS agencies). This information should be treated as sensitive, and sharing of additional Law Enforcement Sensitive (LES) information related to the case and active investigations generally is not necessary.

² Be cognizant of the potential for human or technological error when the 9-1-1 call is received. This may include a call from an address other than the one flagged in the system, a cellular call where the incorrect address or a different address is given, or the name of the individual is misspelled.

Respond Vigilantly and Maintain Situational Awareness³

Remain alert during Dispatch, Response, Arrival, and While on Scene

- Maintain situational awareness and be aware of your surroundings when both on and off duty. Always remain alert in public places to help spot someone or something unusual. In public places, such as restaurants or coffee shops, position yourself in a location where you can monitor activity.
- When dispatched, if unclear, clarify information with the dispatcher and request additional information as needed. Be aware the information the dispatcher receives may also be unclear, inconsistent, and sporadic.
- Do not be predictable, particularly when you respond to “unusual” calls. Consider driving past the scene and viewing it from a few different angles before arriving, this will give you a better opportunity to notice anything unusual to the main side, and left and right sides of the building/scene.
- Be observant for fences, landscaping, vehicles, structures, and other objects individuals could hide behind. These things can also aid responders if the scene becomes unsafe and they are unable to escape safely.
- Be aware of safety hazards that may impact your ability to access the scene and conduct operations, or items that could change while you are on scene and create a safety hazard.
- Consider using scene lights to illuminate the area.
- ***Approach and enter every scene, of every call, with an exit in mind.*** Whether an EMS or fire call, you will eventually need to leave the scene with a patient or after the fire is out; be prepared to leave the scene expeditiously if it becomes unsafe.
- As you approach/enter a building/residence:
 - Be cognizant that Fire/EMS uniforms may resemble that of law enforcement;
 - Identify yourself and announce your presence and intent (“Emergency Medical Services”, “Ambulance”, “Fire Department”, etc.);
 - Avoid walking in front of windows and doors;
 - Stand to the side of doors when knocking, not directly in front;
 - Consider holding the door handle, to close the door if necessary;
 - Ask a few questions from the doorway before entering;
 - Maintain a defensive body position;
 - Make an excuse to go back to your vehicle if you feel it may not be safe;
 - When entering a building/residence, take note of means of egress;
 - If possible, assign an extra responder to serve as a team spotter, to observe, identify and avoid threats while the remainder of the team executes their assignment.
- Ask the individual if they have any weapons on their person or in their vicinity, or feel like they may become violent or have intentions of harming someone.
- If you believe you may be responding to an at-risk call request law enforcement to be dispatched as well. If you feel the scene may be unsafe, consider staging away from the scene and waiting for law enforcement arrival. Be ready to explain to dispatch why you feel the scene may be unsafe.
- While on scene, continuously remain alert for the number of individuals/occupants/vehicles on scene and their location. Be aware of any changes and especially be cognizant of suspicious persons:
 - **Suspicious Persons are individuals who:**
 - Change their behavior or are behaving unusually;
 - Whose actions do not match those of everyone else on scene;
 - May be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or appear to have an altered mental status;
 - Appear to have the potential to become violent;

³ This especially includes major incidents, such as active shooter and post-blast scenarios, and potential acts of terrorism, which pose a high threat/risk to responders and remaining alert on these scenes and reacting promptly to immanent threats is critical. The April 15, 2013 Boston Bombing serves as an example, where the potential for secondary explosive devices was present.

- May be in possession of a weapon;
- Are in the unauthorized possession of first responder uniforms or credentials;
- Are dressed unusually for the climate;
- Are not panicked by a sudden gunshot, explosion, or other startling noise;
- Enter or exit the scene for unknown reason/purpose;
- Threaten or express hate towards first responders.
- **Unusual Objects:**
 - Take note of any weapons, such as firearms, knives, or other objects which could be used as a weapon, including your own equipment (such as flashlight, radio, gear/equipment bag, oxygen tank, etc.);
 - Unattended or abandon packages, backpacks, luggage, mail, or containers, especially those items which appear to be hidden, have wires, unusual odors, stains, or unusual weight distribution;
 - Vehicles which are possibly cloned, stolen, or repurposed;
 - Vehicles abandoned with parking tickets, unattended, or appear to be out of place;
 - Vehicles which appear to be damaged, are leaking fluids, or contain other hazardous materials.
- **Odors, Sights and Sounds:**
 - Unusual and strong chemical odors, such as fuel, accelerants, black powder, heat and burning materials, and other scents associated with combustibles and hazardous materials;
 - Look for smoke, fire, and the image of the scene in general. Take note of the color and scent associated with the smoke;
 - Look for the presence of combustibles and other hazardous materials;
 - Listen for unusual sounds, such as “popping”, “cracking”, gun shots and other sounds associated with firearms, explosives, hissing, screaming, etc.
- When operating at a larger incident, such as a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI), active shooter/shooting, suspected arson, explosion, or other event where there may be increased potential for responders to be targeted, additional precautions should be considered, such as:
 - Ensure all disciplines have representation at the Incident Command Post through the Unified Command structure, as well as interoperability with all agencies operating on scene;
 - Position large fire apparatus to restrict access to unofficial persons or vehicles, and limit access to incident facilities and locations to essential personnel;
 - Establish an appropriate security perimeter around the incident site and create controlled access routes to enhance safety for first responders and the public;
 - Identify treatment and staging locations free of obstructions – trash cans, dumpsters, planters, or vegetation – that might conceal explosives or attackers;
 - Screen vehicles at or near staging areas for secondary IED’s or other hazardous materials;
 - Conduct a security sweep for secondary devices that may appear to be innocuous items at any location where first responders are operating;
 - Do not approach or treat a casualty if you see post-mortem sutures, objects protruding from inside remains, or if the victim appears to have been deceased for an unusually long time;
 - Evaluate the risk (threats + vulnerabilities + consequences) associated with operating at such an incident: “Risk a lot to save a lot, risk a little to save a little, risk nothing for that which is already lost”.
 - Anticipate vehicles, residences, and other property/locations associated with suspects may contain tripwires, secondary devices, and other hazards.
- If there is no imminent threat, but suspicious activity is observed, responders should report it to their supervisor, local law enforcement, and the NYS Terrorism Tips Line at 1-866-SAFE-NYS (1-866-723-3697). Additional information regarding suspicious activity can be found at www.dhses.ny.gov/oct/safeguardNY/.

Take Appropriate Protective Action if the Scene Becomes Unsafe

The ultimate goal is to escape safely, but you may need to take cover or in extreme cases, take action

- While all disciplines have a public safety duty, when violent individual(s) are present, law enforcement's goal is to obtain control and custody of the opponent, whereas Fire and EMS's goal is to maintain their own safety.
- When a threat is encountered, Fire and EMS should:
 - Retreat to a safe distance so you are isolated or removed from the threat:
 - Avoid any hazards (chemicals, fire, gunshots, violent individuals, etc.);
 - Remove others from the threat if you can do so quickly and safely;
 - Encourage anyone within the danger zone to self-evacuate if possible;
 - Keep anyone from entering the danger area;
 - Notify dispatch and other responders.
 - If evacuation is not possible, or appropriate (greater risk to moving):
 - Shelter in place – Seek cover, or concealment if cover is not available:
 - Concealment – A location where you are out of sight, but will NOT protect you from most hazards.
 - Cover – A location where you are out of sight and provides protection from most threats (such as gunfire). Examples include wheel wells, engine block, cement or steel wall/barrier, etc.
 - Be observant for items which could provide cover or concealment to help you escape to safety, such as fences, walls, barriers, landscaping, vehicles, structures, and other objects.
 - Try to distract the individual so crew members can exit.
 - If you are directly confronted with a threat and unable to retreat or find cover, be prepared to take action:
 - Use anything you can to create a buffer between yourself and the threat, including equipment such as stretcher, gear/equipment bag, etc;
 - Try to de-escalate the situation by calming the individual(s);
 - Do not make any threats;
 - If they have a weapon, be firm and direct them to safely discard it;
 - Maintain a defensive posture/body position (such as placing your side towards the threat);
 - Only if necessary, fight back⁴ using any objects and equipment you have available, such as flashlights, radios, gear/equipment bag, scissors, oxygen tank, etc.
 - In all cases, call for help and notify dispatch and other responders of the danger, encourage others to evacuate to a safe distance, keep anyone from entering the danger zone, and use lights/siren and PA on vehicles to alert others of the danger.

⁴ The use of force should only equal that which is needed to escape safely.

Be Prepared to Make Lifesaving Interventions

As learned from previous events, you may need to provide care to your partner or even yourself

- As seen in a significant amount of incidents highlighted in this report, shootings appear to be the most common weapon/method used to target responders. If encountering an incident where they are targeted, first responders should be prepared to take lifesaving interventions to deal with gunshot wounds and associated injuries, which may include their partner or themselves getting shot.
- The concept of Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) has been introduced to public safety personnel over the past few years, which includes responding to active shooter incidents and implementing lifesaving measures to treat associated injuries and save lives.
- In September 2013 the U.S. Fire Administration released a publication entitled “Fire/Emergency Medical Services Department Operational Considerations and Guide for Active Shooter and Mass Casualty Incidents” which addressed several topics, including the importance of more aggressive Emergency Medical Services operations at scenes. This report can be viewed at:
http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/active_shooter_guide.pdf.
- Two specific incidents in which first responders (in this case, law enforcement personnel) have implemented lifesaving measures to save their life or their partners include:
 - In New York State, on April 24, 2007, during a traffic stop, 23 year-old Travis Trim shot Trooper Matthew Gombosi, and then fled. The following day, during a shootout with Trim, Trooper David Brinkerhoff was fatally shot, and Trooper Richard Mattson was shot in the left arm.
 - *Trooper Mattson experienced severe arterial bleeding from the left arm and applied a tourniquet to his own arm. This intervention stopped the bleeding and subsequently saved his life.*
 - In Massachusetts, during the April 19, 2013 shootout with the Boston Marathon bombing suspects, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Officer Richard Donohue Jr. was shot. Officer Donohue experienced severe bleeding when his femoral vein and artery in his right thigh were severed. He began to bleed out and lost consciousness.
 - *Officer Donohue’s fellow officers and Watertown first responders applied direct pressure and a tourniquet to stop the severe bleeding from his femoral vein and artery in his right thigh, and initiated CPR, subsequently saving his life.*

Consider Additional Training and Evaluate the Practicality of Equipment

Training will help you be more prepared; review what additional equipment may be practical

- Educate all responders of the potential to be targeted, and how they can better protect themselves.
- Incorporate coordinated attack scenarios into planning and training.
- Review medical gear to ensure all vehicles and kits include equipment and supplies related to Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC), such as airway management and hemorrhage control (tourniquets and hemostatic agents). This equipment and training will also prepare responders for active shooter incidents.
- Ensure all responders have been properly trained how to use medical equipment and supplies related to Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC), such as those related to airway management and hemorrhage control. Training should include how to use tourniquets and other medical supplies and equipment on your partner and yourself, and in a variety of situations (low light, confined area, etc.).
- Consider the need for self-defense training. Self-defense training should include use of force continuum (addressing if/when use of force is justified and escalation).
- Many training opportunities related to these topics are offered at New York State Preparedness Training Center (SPTC). Additional information can be found at: <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/sptc/>.
- Consider the need for body armor, such as bullet proof vests. Take into account:
 - Is it practical, and does the benefit outweigh the cost?
 - Crime rate and history of shootings and violent incidents within your jurisdiction, and areas you serve with mutual aid response;
 - Protocols for use; would it be worn on all calls, known high-threat calls, or at the discretion of the crew? Keep in mind in many of the incidents referenced in this report the crew unknowingly responded into a high-risk call, and many involved working fires;
 - Any required training and proper sizing/fitting;
 - Equipment life expectancy and replacement plan.

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Requirements: NY-SIN-8.3; NY-SIN-8.5; NY-SIN-8.8; NY-SIN-8.9;
DHS-HSEC-8.3; DHS-HSEC-8.5; DHS-HSEC-8.8; DHS-HSEC-8.9