

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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I. Policy

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department to provide a rapid response to active threats / **active** shooters in order to minimize the loss of life and contain these types of situations as quickly as possible. These types of situations require rapid deployment of initial responding law enforcement personnel prior to the arrival of tactical teams or special units; delayed response increases the likelihood and number of casualties.

II. Definitions

- A. *Active Threat* – A suspect(s) who is actively engaged in causing death or great bodily injury to others. The incident location will normally contain a large number of victims and potential victims, and the incident is active / on-going when law enforcement arrives.
- B. *Contact Team* – An Officer or group of Officers whose primary mission is to stop the assailant’s deadly behavior and prevent escape.
- C. *Rapid Deployment* – The swift and immediate deployment of law enforcement resources to on-going, life-threatening situations where delayed deployment could otherwise result in death or serious bodily injury to innocent people.
- D. *Rescue Team* – A group of Officers assigned to locate, recover, and facilitate the evacuation process of victims to safe areas or to medical personnel for treatment.

III. Characteristics of an Active Threat Assailant

The following is a list of characteristics commonly associated with assailants who present an active threat. This list is compiled from descriptions of past incidents and is not meant to be all inclusive.

- A. May be focused on assaulting persons with whom they have had prior contact. Their intention can be an expression of hatred or rage rather than the commission of a crime.

- B. Engages more than one target and may be intent on killing a number of people as quickly as possible. May engage victims from a distance, similar to a sniper.
- C. Goes to locations where there are numerous potential victims (“target-rich environment”), such as schools, theaters, or shopping malls. Assailants may have some degree of familiarity with the building they choose to occupy.
- D. Continues their attack despite the arrival of emergency responders. Tactics, such as containment and negotiation, normally associated with standoff incidents, may not be adequate in these types of events.
- E. May be better armed than law enforcement and may utilize explosives, booby traps, body armor, and / or diversionary tactics.
- F. Have planned the attack and are prepared for a sustained confrontation with law enforcement. Escape may not be a priority for the assailants.
- G. Are suicidal, deciding to die in the course of their actions, either at the hands of others or by self-inflicted injury.

IV. Procedures

- A. Each active threat situation will be unique and dynamic. The incident may go in and out of an “active” status. A suspect may go from an active shooter to a barricaded person with / without hostages. Since these incidents contain many variables, the response cannot be completely reduced to specific procedures.
- B. The following are general guidelines and basic principles for use during a response to an active threat. Should the situation de-escalate to a point where there is no longer an immediate danger, Officers should transition to conventional police tactics and Department procedures, as appropriate.
- C. First Responders
 - 1. The first priority for Officers as they arrive is to locate the assailant(s) and **STOP** the aggressive deadly behavior. First responders must:
 - a. Enter the area as part of a Contact Team
 - b. Move quickly to the sound / source of violence
 - c. Search only when the source of violence is unknown
 - d. Move past victims, distractions, or lesser threats (explosive devices, etc.)
 - e. Locate and stop the active threat
 - 2. Initial information regarding the active threat may be unclear. This information may be obtained from the dispatcher, “on the run” from fleeing

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witnesses, from observations of spent casings on the ground, from damage from fired rounds, etc. As soon as practical, Officers should attempt to obtain the following information and disseminate it over the radio:

- a. Who is the assailant?
 - b. What does the assailant look like?
 - c. Where is the assailant?
 - d. What weapon(s) does the assailant possess?
 - e. What is known about the assailant's tactical abilities / specialized knowledge?
 - f. What is the assailant's motive / agenda?
3. Officers that are wearing plain-clothes or civilian attire and enter the location of an active threat shall wear an article of clothing or item of equipment, such as a ballistic plate carrier with "POLICE" patches attached, which readily identifies them as law enforcement to other Officers that are already on scene and other Officers that arrive afterwards.
 4. Officers arriving to the scene of an active threat in which Incident Command has already been established shall proceed to the Command Post or Staging Area to await instructions.
 5. Officers should be mindful that members of other ~~law enforcement~~ public safety agencies will most likely self-dispatch to the location of an active threat. Members of other ~~law enforcement~~ public safety agencies may be utilized for Contact Teams, Rescue Teams, or other tasks, as assigned by the Incident Commander.

D. Contact Teams

1. The primary mission of the Contact Team is to stop the assailant's deadly behavior and prevent escape. The secondary mission is to direct victims out of the crisis site through secured areas to the staging location or to shelter in place.
2. The following shall be considered primary tasks for the Contact Team:
 - a. Locate the assailant.
 - b. Stop the assailant's deadly behavior.
 - c. Limit the assailant's movement.
 - d. Prevent the assailant's escape.

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- e. Communicate the team's progress to the Incident Commander and other Officers.
 - f. Notify the Command Post where victims are located so they can be rescued.
 - g. Direct any able victims to a safe area and communicate that help is coming.
3. Ideally, the initial Contact Team would be composed of two (2) to three (3) Officers. This allows the team to adhere to standard tactical doctrine and provides an optimum combination of speed of movement, protection, and firepower.
 4. During the time needed to assemble a Contact Team, the assailant(s) may be actively engaged in killing innocent people. Therefore, it falls on the initial responding Officer to make the decision as to whether he / she should make immediate entry to stop the threat. If the Officer hears gunfire or has other information indicating that the threat is active / ongoing, the Officer may choose to proceed individually towards the threat.
 5. If the initial responding Officer does not immediately observe an indication that the threat is active / ongoing, the Officer may find it prudent to wait for back-up assistance before making entry. This critical decision is one that must be made by the individual Officer.
 6. Members of a Contact Team (or individual Officer) must remember that they are subject to 360-degree vulnerability upon entry into the facility, and they are not responsible for a thorough "clearing" of the facility at this point in time.
 7. The Contact Team shall proceed past victims and distractions in search of the active threat, but may relay the location of any victims it encounters to a Rescue Team or the Incident Commander.

E. Rescue Teams

1. After a Contact Team(s) has made entry and has begun to pursue the assailant(s), another group of two (2) or three (3) Officers arriving on the scene may form a Rescue Team.
2. Members of Dalton Fire Department, ~~or~~ Hamilton EMS, or other public safety agencies, as authorized by the Incident Commander, may join a Rescue Team to enter areas that are believed to have been cleared of immediate threats.
3. The priorities for a Rescue Team are to locate, recover, and facilitate the evacuation process of victims to safe areas or to medical personnel for treatment. If a Rescue Team encounters a non-ambulatory victim who

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needs medical attention, it should extricate the individual. Victims who are able to walk should be directed to a triage or safe area.

4. Rescue Team members shall proceed by providing 360-degree coverage during ingress and egress movement. Rescue Teams should broadcast the location of the assailant, if known.
5. If a Rescue Team encounters the assailant, it should then assume the role of a Contact Team and attempt to stop the assailant's deadly behavior.
6. Depending upon the situation, a Rescue Team can follow directly behind the Contact Team. ~~Members of DFD and EMS~~ Non-law enforcement personnel shall not join Rescue Teams during these types of operations.
7. During that movement, the Rescue Team may encounter multiple victims within the crisis site who are in close proximity. If so, the Rescue Team can establish fields of cover and provide a "safe zone" for the victims.
8. This safe zone may be used to establish triage and / or a subsequent rallying point for additional Rescue Teams. If the victims are scattered, individual rescues may be necessary.
9. After the Rescue Team has reached a victim, one Officer shall maintain forward security, and another Officer shall provide rearward cover. Additional ~~Officers~~ members shall carry the victim to safety, if not ambulatory.

F. Explosive Devices

Explosive devices and / or booby traps may be encountered during an active threat situation. When a suspected device is encountered:

1. Visually inspect the device.
2. Consider an alternate route based on the condition of the device (timer, fuse, etc.)
3. Move quickly away from the device.
4. Do not move or touch the device.
5. Alert other Officers of the device's location.
6. Limit the use of radios, cell phones, etc.
7. Move past the device quickly, and continue the search.
8. Mark the location of the device to warn other responders.
9. Be aware of other possible devices / booby traps.

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V. **Command and Control**

- A. The first **Patrol** Supervisor on scene that is not a part of the initial Contact Team shall assume the role of Incident Commander, **until relieved**, to facilitate the information-gathering and information-dissemination processes.
- B. Given the complexity and chaos of active threat situations, it is essential that command and control be established early. If not, it may never be obtained.
- C. The Incident Commander shall:
 - 1. Assess the situation
 - 2. Establish communication with the initial Contact Team(s)
 - 3. Coordinate and deploy additional resources as they arrive
 - a. Assemble additional Contact and / or Rescue Teams
 - b. Establish a perimeter to contain the incident and provide shelter to the public
 - 4. Broadcast a situation estimate describing:
 - a. Location, number of suspects, and types of weapons involved
 - b. Estimated size of the crowd and number of casualties and fatalities
 - 5. Activate the Incident Command System (ICS) to coordinate resources and gather / disseminate information
 - a. Establish a Command Post and staging area
 - b. Determine ingress / egress routes for emergency vehicles
 - 6. Request additional resources through the Whitfield County 911 Center and the Whitfield County Emergency Management Agency, such as:
 - a. Personnel from the Whitfield County Sherriff's Office, Georgia State Patrol, Dalton Fire Department, and Hamilton EMS
 - b. Specialized resources, such as the GBI Bomb Squad and GSP SWAT
 - 7. Additional considerations for establishing and operating Incident Command are established in directive GO12-6.3, All Hazards Plan.

VI. **Post-Incident Considerations**

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Once the danger of the active threat is no longer present, the following issues shall be considered and addressed by the Incident Commander:

- A. Preservation of the crime scene
- B. Possibility of a secondary crime scene (assailant's residence, vehicle, etc.)
- C. Media relations / public Information
- D. Victim / witness statements obtained prior to release from the scene
- E. ~~Critical incident stress~~ Peer counseling debriefing for involved personnel
- F. After-action review

VII. **Public Notification**

- A. When an active threat is identified, the Incident Commander may contact the Whitfield County 911 Center to discuss the use of the automated emergency notification system.
- B. The CodeRED system may be used to alert ~~citizens and~~ members of the public of an area of an active threat, closed roads, reunification points, etc., and shall be used in compliance with policy GO06-6.7, Automated Emergency Notification System.
- C. Additionally, the Department may wish to utilize the City of Dalton's Communications Director or other designated personnel to disseminate timely information through local and / or social media.
- D. Any information released shall ~~be~~ have prior ~~approved~~ approval from ~~by~~ the Incident Commander.

VIII. **Annual Review of Policy and Training**

On an annual basis, the Support Services Division Commander or his / her designee shall conduct a documented review of this policy, all related procedures and training, and any active threat incidents that may have occurred in order to identify any necessary ~~revisions~~ changes or needs. This review shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police.

This policy supersedes any previous policies issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

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