

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: CIVIL DISTURBANCE

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I. Purpose

To establish procedures to be followed by police personnel during a civil disturbance.

II. Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to respond to civil disturbances within the corporate limits of the City of Covington, and to endeavor to bring such events to a safe conclusion with minimal violence.

III. Civil Disturbance Plan

Whenever any situation arises that constitutes an outbreak of insurrection, riot, breach of the peace or a combination to oppose the enforcement of the law by force or violence within the City of Covington, the following procedures will be followed:

A. Personnel Notification

Whenever a civil disturbance arises, all off duty personnel and the Chief of Police shall be notified and ordered to duty. The primary assembly area shall be police headquarters, with a secondary assembly area being the Newton County Sheriff Office. The Chief of Police or his designee shall coordinate activities of all law enforcement personnel involved. The Emergency Services Unit shall also be notified and shall serve as the primary special task force for riot control. The Chief of Police shall notify the City Manager and the Mayor.

B. Communications

Communication shall be on the primary operating frequency of the police department. The Covington–Newton County 911 Communication Center is designated as the primary communication center during a civil disturbance. The Covington Fire Department shall serve as the secondary resource. The Communications Center shall maintain maps to serve as situation maps in the event of disturbances.

IV. Emergency Service Unit (ESU) Mobilization

Whenever the potential for a civil disturbance or riot exists the Emergency Services Unit shall be notified. The ESU will use the following alert stages as a situation escalates.

Phase I – Standby

ESU members are notified and are immediately available by either telephone or radio contact. The situation is potentially dangerous, but is under control by regular police personnel.

Phase II – Operational

ESU members are notified to report to the primary assembly area (Covington Police Department) or alternate area, for equipment distribution and initial briefing. The following equipment will be issued during a civil disturbance for each ESU member.

1. Helmet with face shield.
2. Riot baton.
3. Heavy body armor.
4. Weapons.

Additional equipment such as pepper fogger and tear gas equipment may be issued if the situation has escalated or the situation dictates its use.

Personnel designation shall conform to those established in the ESU manual.

Phase III – Committed

ESU and equipment are transported either in ESU vehicle or police vehicles to an operational area near the incident location and field command post. The supervisor in charge of the command post will turn the situation over to ESU.

The ESU Team leader shall have complete authority in all ESU operations. He may direct any patrol or investigative personnel to do any task or duties that he deems necessary to bring the situation to a complete and favorable end.

V. Departmental Mobilization

Whenever the potential for a civil disturbance or riot exists, and additional personnel is required, the entire department may be mobilized.

Phase I – Standby

Departmental personnel are notified and are immediately available by either telephone or radio contact and are ordered to report to the police station or other location as determined by the Chief of Police or his designee.

Phase II – Committed

Departmental personnel will respond to an operational area near the incident location and will be under the authority of the ESU Commander. The ESU Commander or his designee will delegate specific responsibilities for those officers.

VI. Rumor Control

In effort to combat rumors, news media will be notified according to SOP A225 and shall be provided with up-to-date, factual information by the Public Information Officer.

VII. Field Command Post

A field command post will be established near the scene of the disturbance. The command post will be staffed as follows:

1. Chief of Police/patrol supervisor.
2. Assistant Chief of Police/PIO.
3. Fire Department Chief or his designee.
4. Other law enforcement liaison.
5. Military liaison, as necessary.
6. Emergency medical staff.

VIII. Liaison

The Chief of Police shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining liaison with the district attorney's office during a civil disturbance. Legal advice on police procedures will be obtained through consultation with the District Attorney. The Chief of Police shall also be responsible for establishing and maintaining liaison with any other agencies that are notified during a civil disturbance.

IX. Law Enforcement/Military Support

A. Mutual aid from nearby law enforcement agencies will be requested as the need arises. Support agencies will include:

1. Newton County Sheriff's Office.
2. Georgia State Patrol.
3. Georgia Bureau of Investigation.
4. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Military support will be obtained according to SOP E025.

B. Personnel responding to an emergency situation, pursuant to mutual aid should report immediately to the field command post and the watch commander/supervisor.

- C. Portable radios will be provided by the Covington Police Department to personnel from responding agencies, if necessary, in order to establish communications on a primary frequency.
- D. In instances where federal agencies have some jurisdiction over an emergency, the Chief of Police shall notify such agencies and request assistance.

X. Public Facility Security

All public facilities in the City of Covington shall be afforded security as reasonable during periods of civil unrest, as directed by the Chief of Police.

XI. Traffic Control

Traffic/security checks points shall be established at each entrance to or exits from the affected area. All persons desiring entry into the affected area will be denied access except persons on official business.

XII. Equipment Requirements

Police personnel who respond to a civil disturbance shall report wearing full uniform, vest and issued weapons.

XIII. De-escalation Procedures

- A. The following actions will be taken by police department personnel as designated by the watch commander or Chief of Police, to de-escalate adverse conditions as they arise during a civil disturbance:
 - 1. Seal off affected area.
 - 2. Notify Georgia State Patrol Riot Squad/National Guard (SOP A245).
 - 3. Coordinate activities of all law enforcement agencies/support agencies involved.
 - 4. Control crowds/disperse assembly/arrest of persons, if necessary.
 - 5. Establish security patrols in affected area.
 - 6. Assist in evacuation, if necessary.
 - 7. Determine cause of civil disturbance and make contact with leaders, if possible or if known.
- B. Post occurrences duties will include the continuance of security in affected areas and the maintenance of traffic/security checkpoints.

XIV. Civil Disturbance Reports

In order to prepare for future civil disturbances, a report will be prepared by the patrol supervisor. The report shall include the following:

Chronological order of events, including:

- 1. First indication of a disturbance.

2. Notification of field units.
3. Establishment of field command post and communication.
4. Notification of off-duty personnel/Chief of Police.
5. Time and location of assembly briefing.
6. Request for assistance from:
 - a. Newton County Sheriff's Office.
 - b. Georgia State Patrol Riot Squad.
 - c. Other law enforcement agencies.
 - d. National Guard/ Governor's office.
 - e. Fire department.
 - f. Emergency Medical Service/ hospital.
7. Establishment of traffic/security control points by location.
8. Special equipment requested from other agencies
9. Deployment times for special assistance personnel and equipment.
 - a. Location(s) of the disturbance.
 - b. Principal antagonists.
 - c. Reason for the disturbance.
 - d. Weapons used by antagonist.
 - e. Organized groups involved (if any).
 - f. Casualties to include:
 - i. Number injured.
 - ii. Number killed.
 - iii. Number treated and released.
 - j. Total number of arrests.
 - k. Date and time dispersed.
 - l. Date and time order restored.
 - m. Critique of police actions.
 - n. Recommendations for the future.

XV. Procedures for Mass Arrests

A. Assumptions

1. Widespread civil disorder has occurred in the City of Covington and mass arrests have been initiated.
2. School buses are available from the Newton County Board of Education to be used as mass arrest vehicles.
3. Additional personnel are available from the Newton County Sheriff's Office to assist in transporting and processing of arrestees.
4. Primary mass arrest processing site shall be the Newton County Sheriff's Office.

B. Arrest and Transport

1. Mass arrestees will be searched incident to arrest, prior to transport, and handcuffed behind the back. Arresting officers shall make a positive identification of arrestee before transporting to detention facility. If no I.D. is possible, such should be noted to personnel at the detention facility. No person will be released without confirmed identification.
2. Contraband and illegal weapons/concealed firearms will be tagged and identified for additional charges against the arrestee. Normal evidence collection procedures will be followed, if possible. Due to the volume of arrests, property should be entered into custody as soon as reasonably possible.
3. Transportation shall be made either in police vehicle or school bus to the Newton County Jail.
4. Mass arrests of juveniles will be processed at the Juvenile Intake Office.

C. Booking procedures

1. The primary booking/processing site will be the Newton County Jail.
2. Additional police personnel may be assigned to assist the jail personnel in the booking and/or security as needed to ensure the timely completion of the booking process.
3. Once the arrestee has been turned over to the Newton County Jail, they are subject to the policies and procedures of the Sheriff's Office.

XVI. Maintenance of Civil Disorder Plan

The Chief of Police shall be responsible for maintaining the Civil Disturbance Plan for the Covington Police Department. He shall review the plan at least annually or as needed and make such procedural changes therein as he may deem necessary.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton

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Chief of Police