

COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: CRITICAL INCIDENTS / INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

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I. Purpose

To provide for planning, response and initiatives and to expedite the mobilization of department personnel in an effective and efficient manner to those events, incidents and disasters.

II. Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to respond to those natural or man-made emergency situations, disasters, critical incidents and civil disturbances that occur with the city. In addition to the many functions the department may be required to perform, our foremost responsibility shall always be the protection and preservation of life, and secondly, the protection and security of property. The Chief of Police has primary responsibility for critical incident planning for the department.

III. Definitions

- A. Command Post – A centralized base of operation established near the site of an incident, at which primary command functions are executed.
- B. Command – One of the five major components of ICS. Command is responsible for overall management of the incident. Command is responsible for liaison duties, safety and public information (these duties may be assigned to individual officers as needed).
- C. Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – A pre-designated facility established to coordinate the overall agency response and support during a critical incident or high-risk incident.
- D. Finance – One of the five major components of ICS. Finance is responsible for fiscal and risk management issues involved in an incident, including cost-tracking, time-tracking, procurement of contract services, and compensation and claims management.
- E. Incident Commander – The first responder who assumes management control of an incident. The Incident Commander may be a subsequent responder who assumes management of the incident in the event that the other first responders are engaged with an active threat.

- F. Incident Command System – A system for command, control and coordination of a response that provides a means to coordinate the efforts of individual persons and agencies as they work toward the common goal of stabilizing an incident while protecting life, property and the environment.
- G. Logistics- One of the five major components of ICS. Logistics is responsible for providing all support needs to the incident.
- H. Operations – One of the five major components of ICS. Operations function is responsible for the management of all operations applicable to the incident to include all tactical activities, situation control, traffic control and direction, evacuations, providing for detainee transportation, processing and confinement, conducting post-incident investigation and restoration of normal operations.
- I. Planning – One of the five major components of ICS. Planning is responsible for collecting, evaluating, processing and disseminating information for use at the incident.
- J. Unified Command – A multi-agency command incorporating officials and personnel from agencies with jurisdictional responsibilities at an incident scene. When an incident's magnitude exceeds the capabilities, resources or jurisdiction of one agency, the ICS of an agency can evolve into and participate in an established Unified Command structure.
- K. Unusual Occurrence – Any natural or manmade event, civil disturbance, or any occurrence considered extremely unusual in the range of ordinary human experiences which threatens to cause or causes the loss of life or injury to citizens and/or severe damage to property and requires extraordinary measures to protect lives, meet human needs and achieve recovery.

IV. Procedures

- A. General
 - 1. Approach – Critical incidents require an action plan to be developed in order to ensure that the department makes an appropriate, well-organized response. To minimize the possibility of injury to officers and others, appropriate special equipment and trained personnel shall be requested as needed from the Georgia State Patrol, GEMA, Covington Fire Department, and other agencies as authorized by the Chief of Police.
 - 2. Responsibility for Coordination and Planning – It will be the responsibility of the appropriate Division Commander or his/her designee, to coordinate and plan functions for response to unusual occurrences. The appropriate commander or his/her designee will also be responsible for reviewing, updating and making procedural changes to plans when necessary. The plans will be accessible to all command personnel for review.
 - 3. In situations that are initiated by radio calls or spontaneous activities, the initial officer present is in command and shall be referred to as the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander may be relieved of the duties of Incident Commander, through a process of transfer from the first responder to another of higher rank or expertise. The officer will use

either readily available manpower or activate additional resources as necessary. Available resources include, but are not limited to:

- a. Environmental Protection Agency Emergency Response Team – responds to hazardous material incidents.
 - b. Emergency Medical Services – responds to life threatening situations
 - c. Fire Department – responds to requests for additional manpower when the threat of fire or explosion exists or wash down is required and to establish a rehabilitation center for police personnel.
 - d. Covington Fire Department Haz Mat Team
 - e. Any mutual aid support agreements that are in place.
4. The Chief of Police or his designee will maintain a liaison with the representatives of all available mutual aid agencies. When other special operation units are called upon to assist the department, agency personnel shall maintain the scene until assistance arrives.

B. Incident Command System (ICS)/All Hazards Plan

1. The ICS will be utilized if circumstances dictate the necessity of expanding personnel and resources beyond the scope of the first responder. ICS is the combination of personnel, procedures, equipment, facilities, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, and the responsibility for the management of assigned resources beginning with the first responder. ICS develops in a modular structure from the bottom up with command responsibility placed on the first responder. ICS must be applied to the global aspect of emergency management, such as capture of suspects, evacuations, media contacts, crowd control and scene security.
2. ICS develops in a modular structure based upon the nature of the incident. Only in rare cases is the entire agency mobilized for one incident. The department approved ICS structure will build from the bottom up with the initial responsibility and performance placed on the first responder, who often assumes the first role as incident commander or agency representative. The specific organizational structure that may be established for any given incident will be based upon the management needs of the incident. The first responder/Incident Commander, regardless of professional rank, has the latitude and authority to assign any person to any assignment deemed necessary to deal with a particular critical incident.
3. Based upon many unforeseen factors, some of which are individual levels of professional expertise, physical location at the time of the critical incident and the absolute need to insure sound incident command practice, personnel must be prepared to function at any level of ICS.
4. Unless specifically ordered by the Incident Commander to respond to a critical incident that is reasonably considered to be outside the boundaries or scope of an employee's duty assignment, all personnel

must maintain their current assigned duties or posts until relieved, assistance arrives or directed otherwise. Abandoning assigned duty posts in order to respond to a critical incident outside their respective duty assignment only leads to a breakdown in the incident command system and loss of order among responders and will not be tolerated. Officers' actions should be directed by the Incident Commander.

5. The ICS implements the design elements through an expandable management organization that eliminates voids and redundancies in assignments and is portable. The ICS can be used to manage planned events or unexpected emergencies. The incident management tasks fall into five general areas. These are included in the ICS organization as:

- a. Command
- b. Operations
- c. Planning
- d. Logistics
- e. Finance

6. Responsibilities of ICS: The following are the approved assignments and responsibilities in the ICS. Duty assignments are created by the first responder/Incident Commander/agency representative with consideration given to the extent of the critical incident. One person may be assigned multiple duties (example: Investigations Officer and Safety Officer).

- a. Command/Incident Commander

The Incident Commander is the first responder who assumes control of a critical incident by activating the incident command system, establishing a command post, notification and mobilization of additional personnel and obtaining support from other agencies, as needed. The Incident Commander may be a subsequent responder who assumes management of the critical incident in the event that other first responders are engaged with an active threat. Without exception, the Incident Commander is responsible for all activities associated with the critical incident to include the final authority on all aspects of operations, logistics, finance and planning. The Incident Commander has direct supervision over all other function officers; in particular, safety, public information dissemination, associated collateral duties at medical facilities, government buildings and any liaison to other responding supporting agencies.

In the event another entity has incident command responsibility for a critical incident, the first law enforcement responder shall assume the duty of agency representative. When another entity has responsibility of the incident command, this department's agency representative will not assume the authority of an Incident Commander. However, the department and all employees shall recognize the authority of the agency representative in making all policy decisions, as well as

possessing supervisory authority over all departmental activities, associated with the occurrence. Working in partnership with the other Incident Command Structure, the agency representative shall direct all law enforcement related functions (similar to the authority of an incident commander) using approved ICS principles.

The modular progression of incident command may call upon additional personnel and resources to accomplish the following functions as deemed necessary by the Incident Commander.

- i. The Incident Commander may assign a person to be the Liaison Officer. This person is responsible for organizing and briefing staff, identifying assisting agency/jurisdictional representatives and contacting them, and monitor the involvement of assisting agencies.
- ii. The Incident Commander may assign a person to be the Safety Officer. This person is responsible for developing and recommending measures to the Incident Commander for assuring persons health and safety and to assess and/or anticipate hazardous and unsafe conditions.
- iii. The Incident Commander may assign a person to be the Public Information Officer (generally, this will be one of the department's two POIs). This person shall be responsible for the release of information and rumor control and will follow the guidelines set forth in SOP A225. Civilian personnel directed by the PIO may be staffed at the police department as a community relations contact to answer calls from the community concerning the event. The Chief of Police may, at his discretion, conduct press briefings or interviews as necessary to assure the public that appropriate command actions are being taken.
- iv. The Incident Commander may assign a person to be the Hospital Officer. This person is responsible for coordination of all department activities at Newton Medical Center or other medical facility to include the management of employee-related injuries and casualties. The Hospital Officer reports directly to the Incident Commander and works in close partnership with the Chief of Police during cases of employee injury or death.

b. Operations.

This function is responsible for the management of all operations applicable to the critical incident to include, but not limited to, coordinating law enforcement related tactical and strategic plans, traffic control and perimeters, conducting evacuations, maintaining command post and scene security, and conducting post incident investigations. The Operations Functionary may

request additional resources and revise plans as necessary with the knowledge and approval of the Incident Commander.

- i. Operations will be responsible for handling or assigning duties of the Headquarters Officer. This person is responsible for coordinating operations in the Covington-Newton County 911 Center, managing security and operations for all government buildings, managing security and operations at the police department and serve as advisor to the Incident Commander in making policy and deployment decisions through the duration of the critical incident.
- ii. Operations will be responsible for handling or assigning duties of the Investigations Officer. This function is responsible for the investigation and case filing of any criminal conduct from action at the scene of a critical incident. Other responsibilities include the collection and preservation of evidence, gathering of intelligence information, investigating the use of deadly force and maintaining and preserving the complete criminal case file.

c. Planning

This function is responsible for the collection, evaluation, preparation and dissemination of information about the incident action plan, intelligence and contingency planning. The Planning functionary may also assemble alternative strategies, and determine the need for any specialized resources in support of the incident. This function will also be responsible for planning post-incident demobilization.

d. Logistics

This function is responsible for communications, transportation, medical support, providing/obtaining incidental equipment and supplies, provide food, refreshments, temporary restroom facilities, break areas, services and material in support of all personnel deployed at a critical incident. This person may be required to make emergency purchases through outside vendors. The Logistics functionary reports directly to the Incident Commander.

The Logistics Officer is also responsible for staging and has the authority to appoint a staging officer, if necessary. Staging includes managing and organizing all staging areas for all disciplines responding to critical incidents. Staging areas are maintained for collection of all personnel and resources until the staging officer allocates them to a particular assignment. The staging officer will assign each affected personnel one of three stage conditions: (1) assigned, (2) available, or (3) out of service.

e. Finance

This function is responsible for all financial and cost analysis aspects of the critical incident, to include processing of requisitions, field purchase orders and pay vouchers. The Finance Functionary is also responsible for maintaining required personnel records, preparing all employee injury claims, coordinating State and Federal funding for employee injury and death compensation and setting up separate private and public accounts to receive money on behalf of injured or killed employees. The Finance Functionary reports directly to the Incident Commander.

The Finance Functionary may assign a Family Liaison. The Family Liaison is responsible for managing the affairs of any department employee who is severely injured, incapacitated or killed in the line of duty, to include liaison for a decedent's beneficiaries. The Family Liaison works in close partnership with the Chief of Police and may work independently of an Incident Commander based upon concurrent circumstances.

7. Authority

The circumstances of the event will determine which entity will have responsibility/authority over the situation.

a. The Covington Police Department will assume responsibility for the following functions:

- i. Incident Scene Stabilization
- ii. Traffic Control
- iii. Hazardous Device Incidents
- iv. Hostage Negotiations
- v. Evidence Collection
- vi. Armed Tactical Intervention
- vii. Criminal Investigations
- viii. Incident Scene Security
- ix. Victim Services
- x. Evacuations
- xi. Crowd Control
- xii. Search Operations (joint with Covington Fire)
- xiii. Terrorist Incidents

- xiv. VIP Visits, such as Federal dignitaries, heads of state or other elected officials

In these situations, Covington Fire should provide an agency representative to consult and advise the law enforcement Incident Commander until a future transfer of command is appropriate.

- b. Covington Fire has responsibility for the following functions:

- i. Rescue Operations

- ii. EMS

- iii. Hazardous Materials

- iv. Fire Suppression

- v. Arson Investigation

- vi. Weather/Natural Disaster Related Critical Incidents. In these situations, the Covington Police Department will provide an agency representative to consult and advise the Fire Incident Commander until a future transfer of command is appropriate.

- c. Other agencies declaring jurisdictional control.

If Federal or State enforcement agencies declare their intent to control a situation, that department's assigned Incident Commander shall assume responsibility of the situation and become the Incident Commander. The Covington Police Department will assign an agency representative and make every attempt to provide the controlling agency with resources and personnel to assist with the situation.

8. Responsibility of the First Responder/Incident Commander

- a. Determine Overall Priorities. The first responder/Incident Commander must assess the whole of the incident and immediately develop a response plan based upon the following priorities:

- i. First Priority – Tactical intervention into the incident is initiated when a definite interaction with readily identifiable suspects is required to neutralize the incident or prevent additional victimization. The first responder's mission is to prevent a person or thing from being an active threat, decreasing the possibility of further injuries or deaths. Evacuations may be necessary to achieve this priority; however, evacuations are secondary to the eradication of active threats.

- ii. Second Priority – Stabilize the incident to prevent any threat escalation. Establish a perimeter.

- iii. Third Priority – Protect property.
 - iv. Fourth Priority – Establish the Incident Command System to manage all deployed and responding personnel and supplies.
 - v. Establish a command post.
 - vi. Fifth Priority – Facilitate any criminal investigation.
- b. Select a Strategy. Every incident requires a documented action plan.
 - c. Plan for joint coordination with other responders and agencies.
 - d. If necessary, activate appropriate tactical response resources: SWAT, Bomb Disposal, Dive Team, Forensics, etc.
 - e. Maximize the use of all available resources. All on scene personnel must be assigned a task or returned to the staging area.

9. Managing Disorder

Critical incidents must be managed by a sense of order, and in most cases, the first responder/Incident Commander must achieve order from chaos before any life safety or incident stabilization can occur. Failure to establish order immediately upon arrival to a critical incident will cause substantial problems in bringing the crisis to a successful conclusion. The first responder/Incident Commander must first establish immediate control over all public safety responders, who, in turn will assist in gaining control over the general public.

10. Additional required provisions during a response to a critical incident.

In the event of a critical incident (manmade or natural), the following additional procedures should be used as a guide for handling the situation in an appropriate manner.

- a. Communications: The Covington-Newton County 911 Center is designated as the primary communications center during critical incidents. Additional personnel may be assigned to the communications center during emergency operations. Officers should use their department radios as their primary communication. All communications should be conducted in plain language due to working with multiple agencies. The 911 Center can designate channels for use by several agencies for communications.
- b. Incident Command Post: The Incident Commander will be responsible for establishing a command post in a safe area near the emergency scene. He should coordinate activities with support divisions until the arrival of other agencies if needed. He will also be responsible for ensuring that supplies are at the command post including, but not limited to: call roster for all employees, situation maps (additional maps may be obtained

from the Fire Department), and cellular phones. An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may be set up, if necessary, as directed by the Chief of Police. The site of the incident command post may change if a situation escalates or the problem shifts to another location.

- c. Casualty Information: If there is any initial casualty information, it shall be forwarded to the Incident Commander. Any changes in casualty information should also be forwarded. The Incident Commander shall forward any casualty information to the PIO.
- d. Legal Considerations: The District Attorney, his assistant and/or the City Attorney will provide legal advice to the Incident Commander as deemed appropriate. Prosecutorial liaison will be determined by the degree of the charge(s), if any, and jurisdiction of the court.
- e. Transportation: The Logistics function should immediately assess the transportation needs of the situation and take whatever action is necessary to secure the required transportation. Transportation arrangements may be made by bus, utilizing the Newton County school bus system, under the Newton County Emergency Operations Plan.
- f. Equipment: The Logistics function should designate an employee or officer to be responsible for assigning any needed specialized equipment.
- g. Emergency Notification: The Incident Commander will ensure the information is transmitted to the Chain of Command.
- h. Support: Mutual aid support from other agencies will be requested as needed by the Incident Commander. Support agencies include, but are not limited to:

Newton County Sheriff's Office
Rockdale County Sheriff's Office
Conyers Police Department
Georgia State Patrol
Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Georgia National Guard
Georgia Emergency Management Agency
Georgia Office of Homeland Security

In the event that the National Guard assistance is needed in a critical incident, the chain of command to the Mayor will be followed. The Chief of Police may request assistance from the Newton County Emergency Management Agency and/or Georgia Emergency Management Agency. The appropriate chain of command should be followed on all requests for assistance.

- i. Public Facility Security: The Operations function will be responsible for the security of public facilities. Sites may include, but not limited to: Covington Police Department, City Hall, Water Authority, or Newton Medical Center. The officer assigned to the

security post shall have the responsibility of ensuring that records maintained by the department are secured and not in danger of being damaged or destroyed. In the event that department records are not secured or have been damaged and/or destroyed, the officer assigned to the security post shall make immediate notification to the affected division supervisors and advise them of the situation. If necessary, a police officer shall be stationed in the area to secure said records until the affected supervisors respond. Affected areas include Records, Municipal Court, Criminal Investigations Division, and the Chief's Office. The affected division supervisor shall be responsible for taking the necessary steps to ensure that all records are secured on site or that said records are removed to another location where they can be secured until such time that they can be returned and secured within the department.

11. Transfer of Command

Transfer of command may take place from a first responder, and subsequently upward through the chain of command, to a later arriving senior ranking person or to a person with expertise/specialized training in the situation (i.e. traffic accident investigator).

- a. Transfer of command should take place face to face to include a complete briefing of activities and circumstances.
- b. The person relieved of command shall complete a written report specifying the circumstances surrounding the transfer of command, to include the exact time and to whom the command was given. This report shall be forwarded to the Incident Commander.
- c. A ranking employee, normally at the middle or executive level management, may delegate authority to someone of lesser rank at any time during the tenure of the critical incident; however, the delegating ranking employee must understand that absolute singular command was also delegated.

12. Safety Alerts

The Safety Officer is responsible for issuing safety alerts, or warnings, to all responders describing any and all known hazards present or threatened at each critical incident scene. Safety alerts should be conducted whenever circumstances dictate. Citizens will be notified as the situation warrants.

13. De-escalation and Termination of ICS

Once the disturbance has been brought under control and the situation has returned to normal, the Incident Commander will begin de-escalation procedures to include, but not limited to: disengage officers as appropriate, lower the phase of the emergency, re-establish local services. A thorough inspection of the City should also be conducted to ascertain if any additional damage has been done attributable to the disaster.

The mobilization and response to a critical incident can be terminated when the critical incident has de-escalated to a point where all personnel and material resources have either been released or returned to routine service levels.

14. Post Incident Debriefing

As soon as practical, persons involved in any phase of the critical incident should be debriefed to mitigate the impact of the incident on personnel and to accelerate recovery processes. Provisions for follow up counseling should be considered for those having stress reactions to abnormal traumatic events'

Post incident debriefings should also be used to share information among all responders in order to learn from the incident and achieve greater successes during future responses.

15. After Action Reports

The Incident Commander is responsible for submitting an after action report at the conclusion of the critical incident to the Chief of Police, with copies to appropriate levels in the chain of command, to include the accreditation manager. The purpose of the after action report(s) is to evaluate the department's overall response to the critical incident, with the intent of serving as a foundation for future similar responses.

An after action report shall contain the following information:

- a. Brief description of the incident.
- b. Description and detail of services provided for the incident to include personnel and equipment.
- c. Cost analysis for the department to provide services, to include salaries, incidentals, equipment used and lost, and food costs.
- d. Copy of any event log(s) maintained by any person assigned to the incident.
- e. Copy of all reports submitted by any person assigned to the incident.
- f. Attachments, to include maps, forms used and any related documents.
- g. Summary of casualties, injuries to employees and citizens and assessment of private and public property lost.
- h. Final evaluation of the incident. Discussion of problems encountered and successes realized. This must be a critical evaluation of the overall response conducted by the department. The final evaluation shall provide suggestions to remedy any and all problems encountered during the critical incident. The suggestions may include policy changes, procedural changes, training solutions, and equipment acquisition or any other endeavor intended to prevent the problems from reoccurring in

the future. Assignments can be made by any command staff to any employee to prepare the necessary changes or modifications to policy or procedure to correct any deficiencies in response identified by the after action report.

16. Training.

The department Training Officer shall provide documented annual training on critical incidents/all hazard plans for all affected agency personnel. Training will draw from available personnel and will not deplete field personnel to have a significant effect on normal field operations. The annual training may include tabletop, actual exercises and multiple agency involvement.

17. The Chief of Police or his designee shall review after action reports to determine the effectiveness of the incident command structure and any training needs. An evaluation report shall be prepared and provided to the Chief of Police every three years as part of the accreditation self-analysis process. This report will review all major incidents (if any), coordination with other agencies, and the performance of agency personnel.

18. In all critical incidents, the Incident Command System should be activated and the above listed procedures followed. Listed below are some specific instances that may occur. The Incident Command System procedures listed in this policy should be followed, and then more specific procedures are listed in each individual policy.

- Hostage/Barricaded Gunman [E070- Hostage Barricaded Incidents.doc](#)
- Bomb Threats and Bomb Emergencies [P120- Bomb Threats.doc](#)
- Emergency Mobilization [E060 - Critical Incidents.doc](#)

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Stacey L. Cotton

Stacey L. Cotton
Chief of Police