

Santa Barbara City Fire Department - Standard Operating Procedures Emergency Operations	Code: E-XI-4
Civil Disturbance/Tactical Alert	
Chpt: XI Large Scale Emergencies	Revised: 3/28/12 Pages: 7

I. PURPOSE

A. A Tactical Alert describes a state of preparedness necessary to cope with civil disturbances. Special consideration shall be given to safety of personnel, special fire fighting tactics, protection of apparatus and equipment, etc. Activities outside of quarters shall be restricted to emergency response.

B. A Tactical Alert may be initiated within certain areas of the City or on a City-wide Department-wide basis.

II. CIVIL DISTURBANCE WITHIN THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA:

A. The Fire Department's plan for civil disturbance within the city is designed in two phases. The Duty B/C will initiate the PHASES

B. PHASE I – Civil disturbance is possible

1. This phase requires a higher sense of awareness that an act or actions of civil unrest may occur.
2. In this phase, all equipment attached to the exterior of fire apparatus should be placed into compartments and ladders should be strapped to brackets using web straps.
3. Crews should return to designated stations and remain in quarters with apparatus bay doors closed.
4. All gates, doors, and windows at the stations should be locked prior to leaving. All station lights should remain turned on.

C. PHASE II – Civil disturbance is imminent

1. Duty B/C shall authorize the recall of three engine companies to staff Stations 1, 2, and 4 with second crews.
2. These crews will form 5 "Task Forces"
3. Task Force 1
 - a) Lead Capt. in charge
 - b) All station 1 equipment

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4. Task Force 2
 - a) Senior Capt. at station 2 in charge
 - b) Eng. 2 and reserve eng. and crew
5. Task Force 3
 - a) Senior Capt. in charge
 - b) Eng. 3 and eng. 7
6. Task Force 4
 - a) Senior Capt. in charge
 - b) Eng. 4 and reserve eng. and crew
7. Task Force 6
 - a) Senior Capt. in charge
 - b) Eng. 6 and eng. 5
8. Priority Staffing
 - a) Task Force 1
 - b) Task Force 4
 - c) Task Force 2
9. Station 3 and 5 should be locked, all station lights left turned on, and reserve apparatus should be moved to the new location.

D. Request will be made to the Police Department to assign at least one officer and vehicle to each of the Task Force stations to serve as escort.

E. All off duty Staff members should report to Station 1 for possible reassignment.

III. MUTUAL AID REQUEST FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCE

A. Strike Team or Task Force leaders should carry at least two portable radios.

1. One of these can be shared with the police escort provided by the host agency.

B. Engine companies should carry three portables, one issued to each member of the crew.

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C. If we are asked to participate in a strike team, we will follow existing policies as for mutual aid requests (see [E-IV-2](#) section V-E).

IV. TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. If leaving town on a Strike Team or Task Force, remove the unit's Knox box key and leave it in the station

B. While responding in the city and it becomes necessary to abandon your apparatus, remove the unit's Knox box key and take it with you

V. OVERRUN SITUATION:

A. Prior to deploying into an incident area, have a plan to execute if a hostile crowd overrun situation occurs.

1. Brief all personnel, including law enforcement escort/security personnel with you.
2. Identify a specific signal that will be used if an evacuation of an area is necessary.
3. Consideration in overrun situation.
4. Abandon all other vehicles and evacuate on single apparatus prepositioned for quick exit from area.

B. If abandoning vehicles and time permits, disable motor (i.e. cut battery cables, cut ignition button wires, etc.).

1. Remove microphones from mobile radio sets.
2. Remove portable radios, any credit cards, etc.
3. Request law enforcement for extraction.

VI. STATE MUTUAL AID RESPONSE TO CIVIL UNREST INCIDENTS:

A. This document is intended to provide guidelines to Strike Team/Task Force Leaders and Company Officers when responding to civil unrest incidents.

B. Prior to Response

1. See [E-IV-2](#) Strike team assignments.

C. On Scene Protection of Personnel

D. Resources should be assigned and respond with a law enforcement escort.

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1. If such escort is not available, consideration should be given to the delay of entry into the designated area of civil unrest.

E. Responding resources may withdraw from emergency situations if the situation poses an extraordinary threat to the safety of personnel.

F. The following items should be worn by members riding on or in fire apparatus responding to, during, and returning from incident emergencies:

1. Full structure PPE including goggles or face shield.
2. Body armor shall be worn as follows:
 - a) Body armor shall be put on prior to leaving base, staging or mobilization centers.
 - b) Body armor shall be worn under turnout clothing.

G. Personnel riding in vehicles shall have windows closed and doors locked.

H. Units shall respond under emergency response conditions (red lights and siren). Responding units are exempt from the requirement to stop at signal lights and stop signs; unnecessary stopping should be avoided.

I. Discontinuing use of red lights and siren may be considered where such use would cause unwanted attention.

J. Personnel shall not be placed above ground on aerial apparatus.

K. Strike Team/Task Force Leaders, or any other personnel, shall not drive alone through the designated area of civil unrest.

VII. PROTECTION OF APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT

A. No apparatus shall be left unattended when in the designated area of civil unrest.

1. Exception: Strike Team/Task Force Leader vehicles shall be locked when unattended.

VIII. FIREARMS

A. The unauthorized carrying of weapons is a misdemeanor under California law and will not be tolerated or condoned by the Mutual Aid System.

IX. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

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- A. Strike Team/Task Force Leaders and Company Officers should consider the overall environment of an incident and the potential of violence to firefighting personnel or damage to apparatus and equipment prior to committing resources in a hostile area.
- B. Items for consideration shall be, but not limited to:
 - 1. Type of incident
 - 2. Size of crowd
 - 3. Attitude of crowd
 - 4. Adverse reaction to the firefighting force by the crowd
 - 5. Lack of law enforcement personnel at the scene
- C. Operations during “Riot Conditions” are influenced by the necessity to ensure the safety of personnel and the public and the security of apparatus and equipment.
- D. The “buddy system” shall be utilized whereby no member or unit operates or works alone at an emergency. Engineers should not be left alone.
- E. Apparatus shall be parked at an emergency in such a manner as to facilitate rapid withdrawal from the area.
- F. Apparatus shall be positioned in such a manner as to afford maximum protection to personnel.
- G. Fire suppression actions should be defensive with use of deck guns and limited hand lines.
- H. Operations involving the use of breathing apparatus should be kept to a minimum. Use of breathing apparatus should typically be reserved for life safety operations.
- I. Strike Team and Task Force resources are to stay together when responding.

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X. IF AN ATTACK OCCURS

- A. If you are responding, keep moving until you are out of the hostile area.
- B. If you are committed, take cover or withdraw if possible.
- C. Notify Incident Communications and request law enforcement assistance immediately.

XI. APPROACHING A STRUCTURE

- A. Check the streets surrounding the incident for loiterers, possible gang members, or other potential hazard groups. This can be extremely important if the victim is an adversary of the crowd.
- B. When approaching a structure, observe windows, doors, roofs, etc., for any unusual conditions. It is particularly important to check windows in large apartment buildings.
- C. Consider listening at the door - not knocking for ten seconds. Ten seconds of listening time may provide a good opportunity to evaluate the incident prior to committing yourself.
- D. Stand to one side of the door while listening and knocking.

XII. ENTERING A STRUCTURE

- A. Knock on the door. The initial knock should not be unusually loud or disturbing. At least two members should be at the door prior to knocking.
- B. Continue to stand to one side of the door.
- C. If someone says, "come in", DON'T. Ask the person to come to the door. If the person states they are unable to come to the door, carefully evaluate the situation prior to entering. Once inside the structure, you are much vulnerable to attack.
- D. If there is no response to the knock, check the rear and sides of the house. In certain circumstances, checking with the neighbors may provide valuable information, i.e., elderly person with heart condition inside, victim just transported by private vehicle to emergency room, etc. Consider having Communications check the call back number.
- E. If the door opens, look inside before entering.
- F. The persons nearest the door hinges should observe the portion of the room behind the door by glancing through the crack as the door opens.
- G. If there is a dog in the house, ask that it be taken into another room.

XIII. APARTMENT AND HOTEL SAFETY PROCEDURES

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- A. The manager can be a valuable source of information. The manager may have knowledge of violent residents and/or dangerous areas of the complex.
- B. If the complex is unfamiliar to you, ask the manager for a general layout, i.e., location of elevators, stairways, fire escapes, etc.
- C. Use the stairway as opposed to the elevators whenever possible.
- D. When using elevators, if the call is violent in nature, do not go to the designated floor. Consider going to the floor below the incident and using the stairs for the remaining distance.

XIV. HOSTILE CONFRONTATIONS

- A. If the opportunity presents itself, disengage immediately and consider the following:
 - 1. Engage in conversation, i.e., “why are you doing this?” Control of the situation is lost when taken by surprise by an armed individual. A percentage of this control can often be regained by getting the hostile person to converse with you.
- B. Attempt to get out of the “kill zone”. Run - get behind a car, fire apparatus, wall, or out of the structure.
- C. Consider mental state of assailant.
- D. The following considerations should be periodically reviewed when responding to violent incidents or operating in violence prone areas.
 - 1. LCES (See [S-VII-2](#))
 - 2. Ensure all members are operating on the appropriate radio channel.
 - 3. Discuss egress routes prior to entering structures, alleys, subterranean garages, etc.
 - 4. Establish a regrouping area in the event that members are forced to separate.
 - 5. Determine a commonly understood phrase or action that will discretely advise other emergency personnel of danger and to retreat.
- E. Ensure law enforcement has been requested.