

### 3.1.2.8 Operating in a Hostile Environment



YOUR ORGANIZATION  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

**TITLE:** Operating in a Hostile Environment

**SECTION/TOPIC:** Safety at Emergency Incidents

**NUMBER:** 3.1.2.8

**ISSUE DATE:**

**REVISED DATE:**

**PREPARED BY:**

**APPROVED BY:**

X

Preparer

X

Approver

These SOPs/SOGs are based on FEMA guidelines FA-197

#### 1.0 POLICY REFERENCE

CFR

NFPA

NIMS

#### 2.0 PURPOSE

This standard operating procedure/guideline addresses assessing hostile environments, dealing with potentially violent persons, identifying civil disturbance situations and terrorism incidents, interaction with law enforcement, delaying or suspending operations, modifying operations, resuming normal operations.

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the safe response of Fire Department companies to incidents involving violence.

#### 3.0 SCOPE

This SOP/SOG pertains to all personnel in this organization.

#### 4.0 DEFINITIONS

These definitions are pertinent to this SOP/SOG.

Violent Incidents: Violent incidents are defined as any type of incident in which Fire Department members may be exposed to harm as a result of a violent or threatening act.

## **5.0 PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES & INFORMATION**

### **5.1 Assessing Hostile Environments:**

#### DISPATCH AND RESPONSE POLICY

Based upon the circumstances of the violent incident, Fire Dispatch will process fire units according to one of two modes:

1. Stage for P.D...Confirmed Patient(s)
2. Respond directly to the P.D. secured scene and proceed with caution.

#### RESPONSE CODES

For calls where the incident taker knows or suspects that violence is involved, a Violent Incident Assignment (VI) will be dispatched.

- VI--closest Engine or Ladder and P.D.
- VI-ALS--ALS required, Rescue, and PD.  
(BC required for officer involved shooting)

The following is a list of the various Nature Codes that could be dispatched within this type of incident:

- Asslt – Assault
- Asslts – Assault, Stage per P.D.
- GSW – Gun Shot Wound
- GSWS – Gun Shot Wound, Stage per P.D.
- GSW2 – Gun Shot Wound, 2 patients
- GSW3S – Gun Shot Wound, 3 patients, Stage per P.D.

Command will be established on any VI assignment as needed (see Staging--Level I and Level II procedure)

Dispatch will collect as much information as possible and rapidly communicate that information to responding companies via radio and MCT. Dispatch will provide responding units with the Police channel the call is being worked on. The call will be assigned to Fire Channel 2 and the TRO and Lead Dispatcher will closely monitor the incident. The Deployment Chief/Supervisor will establish phone contact with P.D. until the scene has been secured. Units should monitor the P.D. channel and make radio contact with P.D. and announce that they are either staged or On the Scene.

The first-in company/unit should either stage in quarters until the scene is secured and reported as such by the Alarm Room, or proceed with caution as they respond. All other units responding will follow established staging procedures. In all cases, the first arriving unit or Command will make the decision to stage or to go into the scene. The decision should be based on experience, what can be seen, what can be heard, what can be learned from the radio or the MCT, what can be heard by listening to P.D. radio traffic, prior experience in the area--and other factors. REMEMBER a CODE 4 given by the Police Department is a report for the Officer making that report ONLY not the SCENE. The scene is only to be considered secured if the Alarm Room Chief/Supervisor gets a report for P.D. confirming that and relays that information to the Company Officer assigned to the incident.

If the decision to stage is made, the Company Officer shall notify both Dispatch Centers that the unit(s) is staged and their location. This notification to Dispatch is in addition to any other communications to the Police Department that the Company Officer may initiate.

When the decision to stage is made:

1. Members should consider the hazards at hand. They should Stage, Level 2 in Quarters if the incident is within 1 mile of the station. Otherwise, stage a minimum of ½ mile from the incident, out of sight of the incident, with at least two (2) means of egress (backing out doesn't count).
2. Members should remember that the crowd may be a hazard.
3. Units should turn off warning lights when staged and then turn them back on when completing the response to the scene. Turning off warning lights at the scene may reduce crowd attraction to the incident.
4. The best plan may be to retreat if necessary to ensure the safety of the crewmembers.

If Fire Department companies respond to an incident of an unknown nature and find themselves in a violent situation, they will immediately retreat to a safe location. Emergency traffic should be used if necessary, and the call should be balanced to a VI or VI-A assignment (whichever is appropriate). Dispatch should be advised of the need for rapid police response.

During violent situations where fire crews are at risk of danger/injury and need police assistance immediately, use the radio code "906." Dispatch will immediately advise the police dispatcher that a fire company is in trouble and has transmitted a "906" code, and needs police assistance immediately. Company officers should provide details of the situation when able to do so. Under a "906" code, Fire Dispatch will not ask the company for details or why the police are needed.

In some unsecured violent incidents, with patients, it may be necessary for the Police Department to deliver the patient(s) to fire companies at the perimeter (they become the Extrication Sector).

**5.2 Dealing with Potentially Violent Persons:**

**5.3 Identifying Civil Disturbance Situations and Terrorism Incidents:**

**5.4 Interaction with Law Enforcement:**

**5.5 Delaying or Suspending Operations:**

**5.6 Modifying Operations:**

**5.7 Resuming Normal Operations:**