

# **FORT FAIRFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

## **Standard Operating Procedure**

### **805 – HOSTAGE OR BARRICADED SUBJECT INCIDENTS**

|                              |                                             |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Effective Date</b>        | <b>July 28, 2026</b>                        |
| <b>Legacy SOPs Replaced</b>  | <b>SOP 41B – Hostage Barricaded Subject</b> |
| <b>Review Date</b>           | <b>July 28, 2027</b>                        |
| <b>Policy Classification</b> | <b>Operational</b>                          |
| <b>Authority</b>             | <b>Chief of Police</b>                      |
| <b>Version</b>               | <b>1.0</b>                                  |

## **I. PURPOSE**

To establish procedures for responding to hostage and barricaded subject incidents in a manner that prioritizes the preservation of human life, provides for command and control, supports peaceful resolution whenever feasible, and promotes the efficient coordination of resources.

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## **II. POLICY**

The agency shall respond to hostage or barricaded subject incidents using properly trained, equipped, and supervised personnel. The agency's priority of life shall be the protection of innocent people, emergency personnel, and subjects, respectively.

Officers shall make reasonable efforts to stabilize these incidents through containment, communication, de-escalation, time, distance, tactical planning, and crisis negotiation whenever feasible. The agency shall avoid unnecessary escalation and use the least intrusive resolution techniques reasonably likely to be effective while maintaining officer, hostage, and public safety.

This policy does not prohibit properly trained and equipped officers from taking direct and immediate action when an officer reasonably believes a hostage, officer, or other person faces an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury and immediate intervention is necessary to preserve life.

All uses of force during hostage or barricaded subject incidents shall comply with applicable law, agency policy, training, and the agency's Situational Use of Force policy.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Barricaded Criminal Suspect Incident** – Any situation in which a criminal suspect has taken a position in a structure, vehicle, or other physical location that does not allow immediate law enforcement access, whether fortified or not, and refuses lawful orders to surrender or exit. A barricaded criminal suspect may be known to be armed, believed to be armed, have access to weapons, or have an unknown weapons status.

**Barricaded Subject Incident** – Any situation in which a person who is not necessarily suspected of committing a crime, but who is the focus of a legitimate law enforcement intervention effort, has taken a position in a structure, vehicle, or other physical location that does not allow immediate law enforcement access, whether fortified or not, and refuses lawful orders to exit. A barricaded subject incident often involves threats of suicide, mental illness, emotional crisis, or other circumstances creating concern for the safety of the subject, officers, or others.

**Command Post** – A secure location from which the Incident Commander directs, coordinates, and documents the response.

**Containment** – The isolation of the suspect or subject within a controlled area to reduce escape opportunities, protect the public, and minimize the risk of injury.

**Crisis Negotiator** – A trained person authorized by the Incident Commander to communicate with the hostage taker, barricaded criminal suspect, barricaded subject, hostages, or other involved persons in an effort to peacefully resolve the incident.

**Hostage** – Any person held against their will by another through force, threat, intimidation, coercion, or implied threat.

**Hostage Incident** – Any situation in which a person is being held against their will by an armed, potentially armed, or otherwise dangerous person.

**Incident Commander** – The highest-ranking officer at the scene until specifically relieved by another officer authorized to assume command.

**Inner Perimeter** – The immediate containment boundary surrounding the incident location, intended to isolate the suspect or subject and protect responding personnel.

**Outer Perimeter** – A secondary security boundary established outside the inner perimeter to restrict unauthorized access, control pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and support operational safety.

**Priority of Life** – The operational principle that prioritizes protection of innocent persons and hostages, law enforcement and emergency personnel, and suspects or subjects, respectively.

**Specialized Unit** – A tactical team, crisis negotiation team, fire service unit, emergency medical service unit, canine unit, aviation unit, bomb team, or other specialized resource requested to assist with containment, communication, rescue, tactical planning, or resolution.

**Triggering Point** – A specific event, action, or circumstance identified in advance that may justify escalation, tactical intervention, emergency entry, or other operational response.

**Unified Command** – A multi-agency command structure used when more than one agency has jurisdictional, operational, or resource responsibilities during an incident.

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## IV. LEGAL AUTHORITY

### A. General Authority

Officers shall respond to hostage and barricaded subject incidents in accordance with the United States Constitution, the Constitution of the State of Maine, Maine statutory authority, and agency policy.

Officers shall be familiar with applicable Maine criminal law, including **17-A M.R.S. §15** governing warrantless arrests, **17-A M.R.S. §§106** through **108** governing justification and use of force, and **17-A M.R.S. §517** governing creating a police standoff.

Officers shall also remain familiar with current tactical best practices, applicable MCJA Board of Trustees standards, and mutual aid protocols governing hostage and barricaded subject responses.

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### B. Creating a Police Standoff

A person may commit the offense of creating a police standoff when the person is barricaded because of the person's own actions, is or claims to be armed with a dangerous weapon, is instructed by law enforcement to leave the barricaded location and fails to leave within the statutory time period. This statute does not require officers to force a tactical resolution and does not override the agency's responsibility to evaluate the totality of the circumstances, legal authority, safety priorities, and available alternatives.

### C. Use of Force

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to mean that an officer is automatically authorized to use force or deadly force during a hostage or barricaded subject incident.

Any use of force shall be based on the totality of the circumstances and shall comply with Maine law, constitutional standards, agency training, and agency policy. Tactical intervention may be appropriate when an officer reasonably believes immediate action is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury.

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## **V. OPERATIONS**

### **A. Initial Response**

The first responding officer shall assess the situation, identify immediate threats, notify communications, request supervisory response, and begin containment when reasonably safe to do so. The first responding officer shall assume incident command until relieved by a supervisor or another authorized officer.

Officers shall avoid initiating tactical action beyond what is necessary to protect life and prevent imminent serious injury. Officers shall recognize that law enforcement presence may affect the behavior of the suspect or subject and shall be prepared to act if the circumstances require immediate intervention.

The initial responding officer or Incident Commander shall determine whether specialized units should be requested, including:

- Tactical teams;
- Crisis negotiators;
- Fire and emergency medical services;
- Mutual aid resources; or
- Other specialized support services.

The Incident Commander should also evaluate whether an emergency communications plan for affected residents, schools, businesses, or governmental facilities is necessary.

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### **B. Command and Control**

The Incident Commander shall establish command and control as soon as practical. Command responsibilities shall include establishing a command post, identifying a clear chain of command, coordinating responding personnel, designating staging areas, maintaining communication with dispatch, and ensuring operational decisions are documented.

The command post should be located outside the suspect's line of sight and potential line of fire, provide sufficient space for responding personnel and vehicles, and allow access to necessary communications and planning resources.

When multiple agencies respond, the Incident Commander shall determine whether a unified command structure is appropriate.

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## **C. Communications with Other Agencies**

The Incident Commander shall ensure that responding agencies have an effective communications plan. The plan should address radio channels, interoperability, command notifications, staging instructions, tactical communications, negotiation communications, and emergency signals.

When practical, communications should include contingency planning for communications failures or loss of interoperability.

Communications personnel shall be kept informed of officer locations, command transfers, perimeter assignments, staging locations, road closures, and requests for additional resources.

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## **D. Inner and Outer Perimeters**

The Incident Commander shall ensure that an inner perimeter is established to contain the suspect or subject and protect personnel directly involved in the operation.

The Incident Commander shall also ensure that an outer perimeter is established to control access, protect the public, preserve operational security, and allow emergency vehicle movement.

Personnel assigned to perimeter positions shall:

- Maintain situational awareness;
- Avoid unnecessary exposure;

- Report changes in suspect or subject behavior; and
  - Prevent unauthorized people from entering the controlled area.
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## **E. Evacuation and Shelter Decisions**

The Incident Commander shall determine whether people in the affected area should be evacuated or sheltered in place. When evacuation is feasible and safer than remaining in place, officers shall move affected people beyond the outer perimeter.

People who refuse evacuation after being warned of the danger shall be identified and documented when practical. Friends, relatives, media representatives, or other unauthorized people shall not be allowed to enter the affected area unless specifically authorized by the Incident Commander for a legitimate operational purpose.

The Incident Commander shall continually reassess evacuation and shelter-in-place decisions as the incident evolves.

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## **F. Specialized Units and Support Services**

The Incident Commander shall determine whether specialized units are needed based on the threat level, presence of hostages, known or suspected weapons, location, available resources, mental health concerns, prior violence, criminal allegations, and the likelihood of peaceful resolution.

Specialized resources may include:

- Tactical teams;
- Crisis negotiators;
- Fire and emergency medical services;
- Canine teams;
- Aviation / drone assets;
- Bomb technicians;
- Mental health professionals; or
- Other mutual aid resources.

Specialized resources should be requested as early as practical when it appears their deployment may contribute to a safe resolution.

If the matter involves a barricaded subject who has not committed a crime and no lawful basis exists to force entry or take the person into custody, the Incident Commander shall evaluate alternative resolutions, including continued negotiation, referral to crisis

resources, maintaining containment, or disengagement when legally and tactically appropriate.

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## **G. Intelligence Gathering**

Officers shall gather and relay information relevant to safe resolution. Intelligence gathering should include, when available:

- The suspect's or subject's name and physical description;
- Clothing description;
- Criminal history;
- Mental health history;
- Military background;
- Known or suspected weapons;
- Drug or alcohol use;
- Prior violence or threats;
- Statements or demands;
- Number and identity of hostages or victims;
- Injuries;
- Access to vehicles or communications;
- Availability of surveillance systems or remotely accessible cameras; and
- Familiarity with the location.

When feasible, officers should obtain floor plans, photographs, diagrams, key information, utility information, phone numbers, door and window locations, alarm information, camera information, and any other details that may assist command, negotiation, or tactical planning.

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## **H. Crisis Negotiations**

When feasible, trained crisis negotiators should be used to establish communication, gather information, build rapport, reduce tension, and seek voluntary surrender or safe release of hostages.

Negotiators should operate from a secure location separate from tactical operations when practical. Negotiators shall coordinate with the Incident Commander and tactical personnel and shall provide updates regarding the suspect's or subject's behavior, statements, demands, emotional state, and potential triggering points.

The Incident Commander may authorize continued negotiations, modified negotiation strategies, or termination of negotiations based on the totality of the circumstances.

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## **I. Tactical Operations**

Tactical operations shall be coordinated through the Incident Commander and the tactical team leader when a tactical team is deployed.

The tactical team leader shall assist in assessing the situation, developing tactical options, assigning personnel, identifying equipment needs, preparing diagrams or operational plans, coordinating with negotiators, and keeping the Incident Commander informed of developments.

Tactical action shall be based on lawful authority, priority of life, threat assessment, available alternatives, and the totality of the circumstances. Officers shall not use tactics to resolve a barricade solely because time has passed or because the incident is inconvenient.

Whenever practical, tactical options should be coordinated with negotiation efforts to maximize opportunities for peaceful resolution.

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## **J. Media Relations**

The Incident Commander shall designate a media staging area when practical and assign a public information function. Media operations shall be managed in a manner that protects operational security, preserves investigative integrity, and safeguards victims, hostages, and the public.

Social media monitoring and public messaging should be coordinated through the designated public information function when operationally appropriate.

Unauthorized personnel shall not release operational information.

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## **K. Medical, Fire, and Psychological Support**

Emergency medical services and fire resources shall be staged when appropriate. The Incident Commander shall ensure emergency routes are identified and that EMS is available for hostages, victims, suspects, officers, and other involved persons.

When available and appropriate, mental health or psychological professionals may assist with negotiation strategy, witness or hostage support, crisis assessment, and post-incident support.

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## **L. Resolution and Post-Incident Actions**

After the incident is resolved, suspects shall be secured, searched, medically assessed, and removed from the scene as soon as practical. Hostages, victims, and witnesses shall be moved to safe locations, medically evaluated when needed, separated when appropriate, and debriefed.

Officers shall preserve the scene, protect evidence, document force used or injuries reported, and complete required reports. Victims and hostages shall be provided with information regarding available victim services when applicable.

The Incident Commander should ensure personnel involved in significant critical incidents are provided information regarding available peer support, employee assistance, or other wellness resources.

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## **M. After Action Review**

The agency shall conduct an after-action review following each hostage or barricaded subject incident. The review shall evaluate:

- The operation and command structure;
- Communications and interoperability;
- Interagency coordination;
- Containment and evacuation efforts;
- Negotiation and tactical operations;
- Use of specialized resources;
- Officer safety considerations;
- Community notification effectiveness;
- Equipment and staffing needs;
- Training needs;
- Policy compliance; and
- Recommended corrective action.

The Incident Commander or designee shall prepare, or cause the preparation of, an after-action report through the chain of command. The report shall be maintained in accordance with agency policy.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **BOT & MLEAP STANDARDS CROSSWALK**

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#### **Hostage or Barricaded Subject Incident Policy**

##### **Authority**

**25 M.R.S. § 2803-B – Law Enforcement Policies**

**BOT 4-1 – Hostage or Barricaded Subject Incident Policy**

**MLEAP 8.01 – Special Operations**

**Addressed in:** Sections I, II

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#### **Legal Authority**

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## **Authority**

**17-A M.R.S. §§ 15, 106–108, and 517**

**BOT 4-2 – Applicable Statutory Authority**

**Addressed in: Section IV**

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## **Required Definitions**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-3 – Required Definitions**

**Addressed in: Section III**

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## **Initial Response**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-4 – Initial Officer Responsibilities**

**BOT 4-5 – Initial Incident Management**

**MLEAP 8.01A – Initial Response**

**Addressed in: Section V.A**

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## **Command and Control**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-6 – Incident Command**

**BOT 4-7 – Command Responsibilities**

**MLEAP 8.01B – Incident Command**

**Addressed in: Section V.B**

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## **Communications and Interagency Coordination**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-9(e) – Communications Plan**

**MLEAP 8.01C – Communications and Coordination**

**Addressed in: Section V.C**

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## **Inner and Outer Perimeters**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-9(b) – Perimeter Security**

**Addressed in: Section V.D**

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## **Evacuation and Shelter Decisions**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-9(c) – Evacuation Procedures**

**MLEAP 8.01D – Scene Security and Evacuation**

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Addressed in: Section V.E

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## **Specialized Resources**

Authority

**BOT 4-8 – Specialized Units**

**MLEAP 8.01C – Specialized Resources / Tactical Operations**

Addressed in: Section V.F

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## **Intelligence Gathering**

Authority

**BOT 4-9(h) – Intelligence Gathering**

Addressed in: Section V.G

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## **Crisis Negotiations**

Authority

**BOT 4-8 – Specialized Units**

**MLEAP 8.01C – Tactical Operations**

Addressed in: Section V.H

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## **Tactical Operations**

Authority

**BOT 4-8 – Tactical Operations**

**17-A M.R.S. §§ 106–108**

**MLEAP 6.02 – Use of Force**

Addressed in: Section V.I

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## **Media Relations**

Authority

**BOT 4-9(g) – Media Relations**

Addressed in: Section V.J

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## **Medical, Fire, and Psychological Support**

Authority

**BOT 4-9(i) – Fire, EMS, and Support Services**

**MLEAP 8.01C – Specialized Resources / Tactical Operations**

Addressed in: Section V.K

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## **Resolution and Post-Incident Actions**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-10 – Policy Compliance and Operational Responsibilities**

**MLEAP 8.01 – Special Operations**

**Addressed in:** Section V.L

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## **After-Action Review**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-9(j) – After-Action Review**

**MLEAP 8.01 – Special Operations**

**Addressed in:** Section V.M

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## **Policy Compliance**

### **Authority**

**BOT 4-10 – Policy Compliance**

**Addressed in:** Sections II, IV, and V

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# **APPENDIX B**

## **HOSTAGE / BARRICADED SUBJECT INCIDENT CHECKLIST**

### **Incident Information**

- Date / Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Incident Location: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Reporting Party: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Nature of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Crime Committed (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Incident Commander: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Command Post Location: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Staging Area Location: \_\_\_\_\_
-

## Suspect / Subject Information

- Name / DOB: \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical Description: \_\_\_\_\_
- Clothing Description: \_\_\_\_\_
- Criminal History Known: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Mental Health Concerns: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Drug / Alcohol Use Suspected: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Military Background Known: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Weapons Known or Suspected: \_\_\_\_\_
- Shots Fired: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Threats Made: \_\_\_\_\_
- Statements / Demands: \_\_\_\_\_
- Known Triggering Factors: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hostage / Victim Information

- Number of Hostages / Victims: \_\_\_\_\_
- Injuries Reported: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Medical Needs Known: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Relationship to Suspect: \_\_\_\_\_
- Last Known Location / Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Scene / Structure Information

- Structure Type: \_\_\_\_\_
- Entry / Exit Points Identified: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Floor Plans Obtained: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Utilities Identified: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Cameras / Alarm Systems Present: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Dogs / Animals Present: ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Vehicles Involved: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Fortifications Observed: ☐ Yes ☐ No
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## Operational Actions

- Inner Perimeter Established: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Outer Perimeter Established: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Tactical Team Requested: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Negotiators Requested: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - EMS Requested / Staged: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Fire Department Requested / Staged: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Mutual Aid Requested: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Evacuations Conducted: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Media Area Established: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Public Information Officer Assigned: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 

## Communications

- Primary Radio Channel: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Secondary Channel: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Throw Phone / Dedicated Negotiation Line Established: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Communications Interoperability Confirmed: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 

## Resolution Information

- Subject Surrendered: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Tactical Resolution Implemented: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Arrest Made: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Injuries to Officers: ☐ Yes ☐ No
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- Injuries to Civilians / Hostages: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Medical Treatment Provided: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Victim Services Notification Completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No
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## Post-Incident Actions

- Scene Secured: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Evidence Preserved: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Debrief Conducted: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- After Action Review Initiated: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Supplemental Reports Completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

## APPENDIX C

# HOSTAGE / BARRICADED INCIDENT OPERATIONAL WORKSHEET

## Command and Operational Tracking Form

### Incident Identification

- Incident Number: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Date / Time Initiated: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Incident Commander: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Tactical Commander: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Negotiation Team Leader: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Command Post Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## Perimeter Assignments (1)

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter North |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter South |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter West  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter North |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter South |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter West  |         |               |

\*Additional assignment sheets below as needed for replacement teams

## Specialized Resources Requested

| Resource        | Requested Time | ETA | On Scene |
|-----------------|----------------|-----|----------|
| Tactical Team   |                |     |          |
| Negotiators     |                |     |          |
| EMS             |                |     |          |
| Fire Department |                |     |          |
| Canine Unit     |                |     |          |
| Aviation        |                |     |          |
| Bomb Squad      |                |     |          |
| Mutual Aid      |                |     |          |

## Intelligence Summary

- Suspect / Subject Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Known Weapons: \_\_\_\_\_
- Hostages Present: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Injuries Reported: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Mental Health Concerns: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Communication Established: ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Triggering Events Identified: ☐ Yes ☐ No
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## Tactical Intervention

Time Of Event / Action By Whom

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## Resolution Summary

- Resolution Type: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Subject in Custody: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Force Used: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Injuries Sustained: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Medical Treatment Provided: ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Scene Released By: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## Post-Incident Requirements

- ☐ Crime Scene Secured
- ☐ Evidence Logged
- ☐ Victim Services Notification
- ☐ Officer Debrief Completed
- ☐ After Action Review Scheduled
- ☐ Reports Completed
- ☐ Media Notification Completed

## Perimeter Assignments (2)

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter North |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter South |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter West  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter North |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter South |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter West  |         |               |

## Perimeter Assignments (3)

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter North |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter South |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter East  |         |               |

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter West  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter North |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter South |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter West  |         |               |

## Perimeter Assignments (4)

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter North |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter South |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter West  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter North |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter South |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter West  |         |               |

## Perimeter Assignments (5)

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter North |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter South |         |               |
| Inner Perimeter East  |         |               |

| Assignment            | Officer | Time Assigned |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|
| Inner Perimeter West  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter North |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter South |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter East  |         |               |
| Outer Perimeter West  |         |               |