2.10 Responding to Violent Scenes

2.10 Purpose
The purpose is ensuring a safe environment for ACS Responders to work at any scene. The safety of the ACS Responders is the first priority as the potential for violence is present on any call for service.

2.10.1 Policy
It is the policy of the Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS) to follow established approaches deemed safe and effective methods when responding to violent and potentially violent incidents of any scale.

2.10.2 Definition
Violent incidents are defined as shootings, stabbings, assaults, unruly crowds, civil disturbances, riots, or any other type of incident in which ACS personnel may be exposed to harm as a result of a violent or threatening act directed at ACS responders, other persons, or property.

Weapons can be guns or knives designed to kill, or makeshift weapons, such as anything that wasn't designated to be a weapon, but can be used as one.

2.10.3 Procedure for approaching violent scenes

1. Tactics for response to a violent scene that has been secured by APD require ACS Responders to take specific actions when spotting the vehicle at the address of the scene.

   a. If flashing lights are used then turn off several blocks away, if possible, prior to arrival on scene. Scan the scene prior, does the scene look secure?

   b. The first-in unit will stage at a minimum of ½ mile from the incident until APD has secured the scene and this is reported by the AFR alarm room dispatch. This allows for an approach to the scene from a safe position or direction as well as for effective tactical retreat, if needed.

   c. Proceed with caution after departing the vehicle

   d. Be aware of the control line either marked by APD or AFR line tape. The emergency personnel will use the line tape to divide large crowds to assist APD in maintaining order.

2. ACS Responders will notify AFR alarm room dispatch of staging location and will not proceed beyond the staging area until advised that the scene is confirmed secure, either by AFR alarm room dispatch or by APD.

   a. Example: "ACS unit# to Alarm, ACS# is staged at Central and 4th street; standing by for APD to secure scene."

   b. AFD alarm room dispatch will collect and provide as much scene information as possible and will rapidly communicate that information to responding units by radio.

   c. If and when APD advises that scene is secure, that information will be communicated to all on-scene and to AFR alarm room dispatch via radio.

3. General staging parameters and considerations.

  a. Level 1 staging, as defined by AFR (one block away, in the direction of travel), may not provide a sufficiently safe distance when violence is involved.

  b. ACS Personnel should consider the hazards at-hand and stage far enough away to avoid becoming a part of the incident.

  c. At least ½ mile away, out of line-of-sight and out of the line-of-fire for gunshots. You should have at least two means of egress.

  d. ACS Personnel should remember that any crowds can be a hazard and stage units accordingly at a safe distance. All units should turn off warning and interior cab lights while staged and on scene. This may reduce crowd attention or attraction to the incident.

2.10.4 Procedure for when an actual act of violence towards ACS Responder

1. If ACS Responders arrive to an incident and find themselves in a violent situation then they must immediately retreat to a safe location and radio into AFR alarm room dispatch to advise APD dispatch of the need for a rapid police response.

  a. Any ACS Responder requiring immediate assistance from APD will utilize the following AFR alarm room communication model.

  - Any radio communication to AFD alarm room dispatch or APD dispatch including the transmission "Emergency Traffic" and/or "34 is needed ASAP" will not be required to provide any further explanation to have APD or BCSO units dispatched Code 3.
  - If possible, the ACS Responder in danger will give the reason to the dispatcher.

  b. During violent situations where ACS Responders are at risk of danger or potential injury, or when they need immediate police assistance for any other urgent need, they must follow ACS 2.11 "Code 900" Radio Procedure.

2. AFR alarm room dispatch will immediately advise APD dispatch of the need for a rapid police response. AFR alarm room dispatch will remaining in constant communication with ACS Responders requesting immediate police response to transmit any details of the situation to be entered as comments in the CAD for APD.

3. If ACS Responders are in immediate danger or responding to potentially violent incidents and unable to radio into AFR alarm room to verbally request rapid police response due to the proximity of the violent offender, the red Emergency Button should be depressed.

  a. Activate the emergency alert by pressing the red button on the portable Radios. ACS Responders must follow the "Code 900" Radio Procedure when utilizing the Emergency After when immediate and rapid response is required by APD.

  b. When asked by the AFR alarm room if the members of the crew are okay, unless the phrase "ALL SAFE" is stated, the alarm room will immediate dispatch either APD or Bernalillo County Sheriffs Office (BCSO).

  c. The practice of stating "ALL SAFE" under hostile conditions is also used by the Bernalillo county Fire Department (BCFD); therefore, when responding to 911 calls for

service in BCFD's jurisdiction, AFR personnel will already be using known BCFD dispatch emergency terminology.

d. The BCFD refers to any Emergency Button activation as a "Code 900."

Referenced AFR SOG 5-1-14 Responding to Violent Scenes