

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

CONDUCTING BUSINESS STAKEOUTS

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish departmental guidelines for the tactical deployment of police officers when conducting police stakeouts in anticipation of the commission of a serious criminal act. During these operations it is the police department's intent to maximize enforcement effectiveness in the **safest** possible manner.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to provide for the **safety** of officers and citizens during a stakeout. Since stakeouts are an important department activity used in anticipation of enforcement actions against criminal suspects, who are possibly armed and because these assignments are inherently dangerous, officers assigned to these duties shall follow department policy and procedure designed to ensure operational effectiveness. The objectives of criminal arrests should never supersede the need to **protect** the officers and others against unreasonable risks.

Summary of Changes: New format

Definitions

Stakeout is the tactical deployment of police officers in anticipation of the commission of a crime at a specific location. For the purpose of this policy stakeout does not include surveillance activities when no immediate enforcement action is expected or observation for minor offenses such as underage alcohol purchases. The term '**operation**' will be synonymous with **stakeout** in regard to this policy directive.

Procedure

1 Preparation

- 1.1 Preparation should be the first consideration in taking the necessary steps for readiness in the deployment of police officers for stakeouts.
- 1.2 Officers assigned to stakeout duty shall review the department's policy for conducting these operations and the department's Use-of-Force Policy Directive 11-1.
- 1.3 The supervisor in charge of the operation shall go to the designated location in order to notify the business owner or manager of the stakeout. At this time he will survey the business in order to determine manpower allocations, equipment and logistical requirements.
- 1.4 Prepare a floor plan or obtain a blue print of the business, if there is one available.
- 1.5 Prepare a tactical plan with the assistance of the tactical team commander or other tactically sound supervisors, if there is a need for additional tactical knowledge or expertise. Have the plan readily available for the team briefing prior to the operational deployment.
 - 1.5.1 Guidelines to consider when preparing the tactical plan should include:
 - 1.5.1.1 Evaluation of officers assigned to the stakeout. These officers must be mature and experienced.
 - 1.5.1.2 Actions to take when encountering an armed suspect or multiple suspects.
 - 1.5.1.3 Decisions must be made during the tactical plan briefing as to when and where an encounter or arrest should take place. The first priority would be to arrest the subject before he enters the business. The next would be while he is exiting or moving away from the business. The last place to attempt an arrest would be inside the business. This arrest should only take place when it can be done safely, or when an emergency exits that requires immediate action in order to prevent deadly force or serious physical injury.
 - 1.5.1.4 The general rule of engagement is there should be two officers for every suspect in order to minimize any type of resistance.
 - 1.5.1.5 Equipment, such as body armor, weapons, vehicles, and radios must be approved by the supervisor in charge.

- 1.5.1.6 The supervisor in charge of the operation and the tactical team commander should prepare a contingency plan for the possible assistance of the tactical team in the event of a hostage situation, a barricaded suspect, or when intelligence reveals that the suspects are believed to carry any assault weapons, automatic pistols/rifles, explosives, or are known to have a propensity to display violence or volatile behavior.
- 1.5.1.7 If an emergency exists or time does not permit the development of a tactical or contingency plan, the supervisor in charge of the operation will use every means available in order to suppress and prevent the incident from occurring.

2 Prior to Deployment

- 2.1 The supervisor in charge of the operation shall assemble the stakeout team for a detailed briefing of the operation's tactical plan.
- 2.2 The tactical plan should include but not be limited to the following information:
 - 2.2.1 All available intelligence on the suspects, MO's, photographs, weapons used and potential for violence, drug use, method of transportation, and other relevant information.
 - 2.2.2 A detailed assessment of the stakeout location to include all entry and exit locations, workstations, positions of cover and concealment, and any other matters relating to unsafe fields of fire.
 - 2.2.3 Individual and team assignments and responsibilities for inside and outside personnel and manpower rotation and relief procedures.
 - 2.2.4 Review of contingency plans in cases relating to the use of force, confrontation and arrest of suspects, injury to officers or civilians, hostage situations, barricaded suspects, threatened use of explosives or other unexpected events, or potential logistical problems, such as communication or mechanical failure.

3 Deployment

- 3.1 Stakeouts may consist of an inside and outside team. Enforcement action should not be initiated by the inside team unless circumstances dictate such action for the safety of officers or others, or the tactical plan has designated such action. The inside team shall be used primarily to relay information to the outside team for purposes of arrest.
- 3.2 If an inside team is used, it shall be responsible for final briefings of the establishment's employees, instructing them in the actions they should take in the event of an armed encounter and informing them that they are not to initiate any enforcement actions on their own.
- 3.3 Stakeout teams are designated for enforcement actions only with regard to the tactical plan and shall not be used to enforce less serious infractions such as shoplifting while on assignment. Such infractions shall be handled on a routine basis by uniform patrol officers.
- 3.4 The Communication Center and patrol officers working in the immediate vicinity of a stakeout shall be informed of the operation as soon as it is practical.
- 3.5 Inside team officers who are not in concealed positions shall assume roles and attire similar to that of others in the establishment. Outside team officers shall observe good surveillance and concealment tactics at all times and maintain positions that provide easy and rapid access to the establishment.
- 3.6 In order to conceal their identity and equipment, officers shall exercise particular caution when entering and exiting stakeout locations. Officers shall not enter or leave as a group.
- 3.7 Weapons shall be readily available to team members at all times. All weapons shall be maintained in good condition and in a safe position.
- 3.8 Stakeout officers should be assigned a dedicated radio channel for purposes of the operation and radios should be equipped with earplugs for security purposes.
- 3.9 Outside officers shall be alert to the following types of situations and keep inside officers informed of the following suspicious persons or events:
 - 3.9.1 Persons loitering around the premises.
 - 3.9.2 Automobiles that drive by the business slowly and frequently.
 - 3.9.3 Persons wearing inappropriate, out-of- season clothing such as overcoats, raincoats and ski caps.
 - 3.9.4 Suspicious persons carrying shopping bags, duffle bags or coats.
- 3.10 Due to the fact that there is a high probability that during a business stakeout, operational intelligence and information may be subject to change, the supervisor in charge of the operation may depart from the established policies, when it becomes necessary to further maintain the safety of the public and/or the officers involved.

- 3.11 The objectives of criminal arrests should never supersede the department's obligation to protect the public and to keep its citizens safe.
- 3.12 Uniformed officers shall be summoned as soon as possible following a crime. All plainclothes officers at the scene shall ensure that they are properly and easily identifiable as law enforcement officers to responding officers, as well as to the public.

4 Post Deployment

- 4.1 When an incident occurs during a stakeout, the location should be secured, protected, and treated like any other crime scene.
 - 4.1.1 Standard operating procedures for handling a crime scene should be employed. (PD 31-1).
 - 4.1.2 Evidence should be preserved and witnesses should be located, identified, and separated.
 - 4.1.3 Officers involved in the incident should not be subjected to press interviews, and they should not make any public statements.
 - 4.1.4 Any information to be released to the media should be released in accordance with PD 7-1.

5 Debriefing and After Action Reporting

- 5.1 At the conclusion of any stakeout there must be a debriefing of all personnel involved.
 - 5.1.1 The supervisor in charge of the operation will debrief all of the police personnel, who were involved in the stakeout, once the incident has come to an end.
 - 5.1.1.1 This debriefing will take place in a secure environment, preferably in some area of the police department, where the officers can gather and be at liberty to discuss the operation.
 - 5.1.2 The reporting officer or investigator shall complete an incident report.
 - 5.1.3 Other officers involved in the incident shall document their actions on supplement reports.
 - 5.1.4 The supervisor in charge of the operation or his/her division commander shall, as soon as practical, advise the Chief of Police of the results of the operation and its conclusion.
 - 5.1.5 The supervisor in charge of the operation will ensure that a case file is completed and routed through the proper channels to the prosecutor's office for review.



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