



# CJI Management Quarterly

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The **Criminal Justice Institute** provides management, forensic science, and computer-related education and training, as well as research services and technical assistance, to Arkansas' law enforcement and criminal justice community.

This quarterly newsletter is designed to provide timely information to improve the management, leadership, and performance skills of law enforcement supervisors.

*Your comments and suggestions are solicited and welcomed.*

**Please make copies of this publication and distribute them to others in your agency.**

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT:

### How and Why It Affects Your Agency Part II

By *Dennis Schreck*

**C**risis events are not discriminatory; they occur in both urban communities and in smaller, rural settings. The randomness of these events, coupled with the increased threat of terrorist activity against the United States, makes it imperative that *all* law enforcement agencies, regardless of their size, are prepared to respond to crisis situations that may occur within their community.

In the last issue of *Management Quarterly*, we defined the basic characteristics of crisis management and provided an overview of some of the liability issues that will be faced by your agency in such an event. Now, we will discuss another important aspect of effectively managing a crisis event—confrontation management. Confrontation management is a process that consists of four distinct phases:

- **Phase I: Pre-Confrontation Preparation and Training**
- **Phase II: Immediate Response When a Crisis Occurs**
- **Phase III: Specific Planning During the Crisis**
- **Phase IV: Resolution of the Event**

#### PHASE I: Pre-Confrontation Preparation and Training

In times of crisis, prior planning is one of the most powerful tools you will possess. Without it, you may be forced to adopt a “fly by the seat of your pants” approach to crisis intervention, greatly diminishing your chances for a successful and peaceful resolution.

To begin the planning process, you must first assess the threat. Identify potential targets, both human and non-human. For example, ask yourself, “Are there ‘high profile’ citizens living within my jurisdiction who might be the targets of kidnappers or extortionists?” “Do I have facilities that could easily become targets of opportunity?”



A detailed assessment of potential problems should be completed not only by your agency, but by all agencies that might be involved if a crisis occurs. When this assessment has been completed and potential targets have been identified, strategies and tactics must be developed for implementation in the event of a crisis.

At this point in this planning phase, it is important for the person who will be the On Scene Commander (OSC) to solicit input from component leaders—tactical personnel, negotiators, snipers, and others who may possess pertinent information. Input from other public safety entities should be solicited as well since they will likely be dispatched during a crisis situation. Performing this type of coordination and liaison work beforehand will be invaluable during an actual crisis.

Now is the time to establish a command and control structure so there will be no doubt who will be in charge and what their responsibilities will be during a crisis. Many organizations, particularly in the fire and medical fields, are beginning to embrace the Incident Command System, a management model that provides an effective means for managing emergency situations that warrant a multi-agency response. The system ensures that all responding agencies work together in a coordinated effort for a swift response and efficient, safe use of resources. More information on this system can be found at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/is195.htm>.

Once roles and responsibilities have been established, document your plans on paper. These plans will become your Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) when a crisis occurs.

### Training

Without proper training, all of the steps described above will prove to be

futile. Your personnel will suffer, and the likelihood of a successful resolution to the crisis will be greatly reduced.

There are three areas of training that must be addressed prior to a crisis. The first is *Individual Skills*. After assessing the capabilities of your personnel, you will need to build upon their individual strengths through customized training. This could include training in the usage of firearms, sniper techniques, rappelling, or other specific skills that individuals may be called upon to use during a crisis.

The second area of training is *Component Skills*. This type of training is centered on the “team” approach to crisis resolution. For instance, your tactical team will need to train together in areas such as dynamic entries, assaults, and insertion of tear gas. Don’t forget that if you have crisis negotiators, they are PART of the tactical unit, NOT separate from them; therefore they should train with the tactical unit if you have one.

Team training sessions allow each individual to learn the capabilities of the others in their unit. It will also give them an indication of those areas in which they are proficient along with those areas in which they may require additional practice.

The third area of training is *System Skills*. This training combines all of the components of your crisis management team for command post exercises and field training exercises. Exercises should include role-playing scenarios to simulate realism. This not only assists all of the individuals who make up the various components, but will give the potential OSC a good idea of who performs well in stressful situations.

Even though it is difficult for agency heads to allow for the training of a potentially large group of individuals, it is extremely important,

for both reasons of individual safety and agency and personal liability, that these training sessions are scheduled at least once a month.

### PHASE II: Immediate Response When a Crisis Occurs

When a crisis occurs, chaos and confusion quickly follow. The idea of the *Immediate Response* stage is to eliminate as much of this as possible. When arriving at the scene of a crisis, take control of the crisis area as soon as possible. The goal here is to isolate the subjects who are posing a threat, both physically and psychologically. You must contain the threat and deny the subjects mobility if at all possible. The only time a subject should be allowed mobility is if it presents a definite advantage to law enforcement. This does not occur very often.

The next priority is to establish both an inner and outer perimeter with checkpoints for control in and out of the crisis site and command post. Have someone make a detailed sketch of the crisis area. This is used for many purposes, however, one of the most important is for use by your tactical team when they establish a tactical deployment/posture. Some other items to be addressed as soon as you arrive on scene include:

1. Do you have a contingency plan or SOP for this event?
2. Do you have a staging area?
3. Are there any injuries to anyone at this time?
4. If so, has medical assistance been requested?
5. Is your outer perimeter strong enough to contain the subject if he/she penetrates the inner perimeter?
6. Have innocent people been evacuated?

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Has a command post (CPX) been established?</li> <li>8. If you are dealing with explosives or hazardous materials, is the CPX outside the danger area?</li> <li>9. Is the CPX secure?</li> <li>10. Have you notified other agencies? State Police, FBI, ATF, DOE, DEA, Pine Bluff Arsenal, etc. <i>(You should have a complete list of phone numbers for all possible agencies you may have to contact.)</i></li> <li>11. What are some special equipment needs, and has this equipment been requested?</li> <li>12. Are proper logs being kept?</li> <li>13. Are all members of the crisis management team present in the CPX?</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The OSC has a situation briefing at which time he/she receives all of the information and intelligence that has thus far been developed. At this point, it is imperative that the OSC be in possession of all information so that he/she can begin to think about developing a strategy.</li> <li>2. The OSC would then meet with component leaders to discuss what information they have and to solicit input from all of them.</li> <li>3. Once the OSC has met with the component leaders, it is up to him/her to design the strategy, or action plan, that will be used.</li> <li>4. Once the strategy has been determined, the component leaders must develop a plan to carry out the strategy.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. The component leaders must brief the OSC and obtain his/her approval of the plan.</li> <li>6. The component leaders then will brief their teams and rehearse the plan until they are comfortable in its execution.</li> <li>7. Before actual implementation of the plan, the OSC should observe the members of all the teams and give his/her final approval.</li> <li>8. Implementation is the final step.</li> </ol> |
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#### **PHASE IV: Resolution of the Event**

The fourth and final phase is the *Resolution* stage. This immediately precedes the implementation of the action plan you have decided upon.

These are only a few of the questions to be answered during this phase. You should make a detailed checklist and use it as soon as the OSC arrives at the CPX.

#### **PHASE III: Specific Planning During the Crisis**

The third phase, *Specific Planning*, is the “nuts and bolts” stage of crisis management where plans are made in an effort to resolve the crisis. At this point, it is very important that the OSC solicit input from all members of the team. Only with their input is it possible to come up with the “best” plan to alleviate any threats and bring the crisis to a solution. Even though it is important that the OSC have input from all crisis management team members, he/she will make the final decisions as to what actions will or will not be taken.

In a typical situation the following could be the steps taken to accomplish this third phase:

#### **Some important considerations for the On Scene Commander during the *Specific Planning* phase include:**

1. Are maps and photos of the crisis site available?
2. Have all logical leads been assigned for investigation?
3. Have you clearly stated the “rules of engagement,” particularly if they involve the use of lethal force?
4. Have the “rules of engagement” been communicated to all of the personnel involved at the site?
5. Are you, the OSC, handling too many details, some of which you could delegate?
6. Have you provided for the dissemination of information to the press and established guidelines for this dissemination?
7. Can you rapidly communicate with all of the personnel involved on a timely basis, if need be?
8. If you have to leave the CPX, did you designate someone to act on your behalf?
9. If using incendiary tear gas, has the fire department been requested for support?

Some important items to be considered include:

1. Have you considered every possible action short of force?
2. Have you prepared a “surrender plan” for the subjects?
3. Have you instructed all personnel to remain clear of the crisis site until it has been reported to be secure by the tactical team?
4. Is medical support on the scene?
5. Do you have an interviewing plan ready to implement?
6. Do you have personnel ready to conduct a crime scene investigation?
7. Have you considered psychological support for treatment of post-shooting trauma victims?

Even after the crisis has been resolved, detailed investigative work still has to be completed. The OSC must be able to implement standard investigative procedures to enable successful prosecution if warranted.

### CONCLUSION

As you can see, crisis management is a highly specialized, necessary skill that has to be mastered by law enforcement personnel, from the agency head to the line officers. When a crisis occurs, there are a number of unique legal and liability questions that come into play.

Training is extremely important because most of the individuals who make up the various components of a crisis team do not use their skills during the normal performance of their duties. These skills must be sharpened

constantly for officer safety and confidence.

The *Preparation and Training* phase is perhaps the most important step in crisis management because of the preparation it allows for *before* a crisis occurs. It will be the most comprehensive and time consuming step, but also the most helpful one for your agency. When a crisis occurs within your jurisdiction, and one will, your agency will reap the benefits from the work that was done beforehand to establish a solid plan of action.

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