
	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT		
	Natural and Man-Made Disasters		
	GENERAL ORDER	1004.1	
Effective Date	05/17/2016	46.1.2, 54.1.1, 54.1.3, 81.2.4	
Authorized by:	Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE <i>Mark Sroka</i>	DATE 05/17/2016

I. DEPARTMENT POLICY

The Department recognizes the importance of planning for natural and man-made disasters and has appropriate plans so that members responding to such disasters have written guidelines and procedures to follow.

In the event of a major catastrophe or disaster, the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Plan may be activated and will take precedence over the City's Plan. However, there are many situations that arise which do not require the activation of the County's Emergency Operations Plan, but for which planning and a coordinated response is important.

Therefore, the Department has a written plan (copies of which are issued to supervisors and one copy is available to all personnel in the *Situation Map Box*), and written procedures contained in this directive from the perspective of a first-responder to provide guidance for the first arriving officer(s), or to handle a situation that is serious, but not serious enough to warrant activation of the County Plan.

II. AUTHORITY TO ACTIVATE THE COUNTY PLAN

A. City Manager Request and Approval

1. The City is included in the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Plan. When the plan is activated, members of the Department will assume the required roles and responsibilities, in accordance with the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Plan. Only the City Manager, or his/her designee, is authorized to request the plan's activation.
2. When the plan has been activated, the Montgomery County Chief Administrative Officer will assume command of the emergency situation.

B. Adherence to City Procedures

1. Until the County's Emergency Operations Plan is activated, officers will adhere to the procedures and guidelines outlined in this directive and in the Department's All Hazards Plan.

III. PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

A. Communications

1. During the response to, and at the scene of any disaster, effective communications is perhaps the single most important element to a successful resolution.
2. Members of the Department will request additional personnel to attempt to contain the situation until specialized resources and equipment arrive. Members must keep PSCC and Department supervisors and command staff informed of any situation to which they respond, with frequent updates, if possible.
3. Members utilizing radio communications must be aware that many citizens, members of the media, and inquisitive bystanders have scanners and will not hesitate to respond to a scene where police activity is in progress.
4. Members utilizing radio communications must also be aware that in some instances the use of the police mobile and/or portable radio is ill-advised because of a possible detonation.
 - a. If explosives are suspected or involved in any disaster situation, officers should use land line telephone communications, if possible.
 - b. If a police radio can be used, officers will ensure that they are a safe distance from the scene before a radio transmission is made.
5. If possible, an alternate radio channel should be requested from PSCC so that communications pertaining to the disaster will not interfere with other radio traffic.
6. Use of the City radio is permissible, and in some cases, advisable since it does not create additional traffic on MCP air.

B. Incident Command Post

1. The first arriving officer will assume command of the scene (from a police perspective, the fire incident commander will most likely be in-charge of the overall scene during rescue operations), until the arrival of a higher-ranking police officer, at which time command will be relinquished to the higher-ranking officer.

2. After quickly assessing the magnitude of the situation, the first arriving officer should establish an incident command post, which can be anything from a police vehicle to a formal structure.
3. The first arriving officer's vehicle is the incident's temporary "incident command post" until a supervisor determines that it is not necessary or the supervisor formally establishes an incident command post.
4. When the first arriving officer establishes a temporary incident command post, they should consider:
 - a. Locating it with the fire/rescue command post, ensuring the unified command post's security and the safety of the personnel staffing, as well as immediate communication with the police;
 - b. The involvement of hazardous materials (HAZMAT) and ensure that the command post is located a safe distance from the scene and upwind;
 - c. The necessity of suitable communications equipment for the command post, including mobile and portable transceivers, and if possible, a phone; and
 - d. Having an officer bring the station's Situation Map Box to the command post, if necessary.

C. Casualty Information

1. Until the arrival of officers of higher rank, the first arriving officer will attempt to learn if there are any injuries, and how many persons are injured or have been killed so that higher-ranking officers can be briefed upon their arrival.
2. If members of the media have begun to gather at or near the scene, the first arriving officer's responsibility will be to contain and control the scene. The first arriving officer will not release casualty information to members of the media, but will refer them to the appropriate media liaison representative.

CI. Public Information

1. The first arriving officer will brief the first arriving officer of higher-rank so that information released to the media and public is coordinated and accurate (See General Order 1201.1 – Media

Relations and Public Information).

E. Notification of, and Support From Other Agencies

1. If the first arriving officer ascertains that personnel from other agencies are needed, the request for them will be made via PSCC.
2. Requests for support/response from other agencies should be made after a careful assessment of why they are needed and what PSCC should tell them upon notification (i.e., train derailment with a tank car leaking, airplane crash, etc.). These requests should be as specific as possible regarding the assistance needed.
3. Notwithstanding the need for fire/rescue to conduct their operations, the first arriving officer should make every effort to protect the scene, especially in the event of a train derailment or plane crash, so that federal investigators can attempt to determine the probable cause of the crash.

F. Public Facility Security

1. If a public facility is threatened, the first arriving officer should assess this situation and make the responding supervisor aware of the threat.
2. If the facility's security is in immediate danger, the first arriving officer should direct additional responding officers to the threatened facility until the arrival of the supervisor.

G. Traffic Control

1. The first arriving officer should direct other responding officers to areas where traffic direction and control are needed in order to:
 - a. Keep traffic moving away from and around the incident;
 - b. Allow ingress for responders and egress for EMS; and
 - c. Ensure that the scene is secured and protected.
2. Officers directing or controlling traffic at or around the scene of the incident will:
 - a. Position their police vehicles in a manner that protects them and the scene;

- b. Wear high-visibility clothing;
- c. If feasible, allow media representatives closer access to the scene than private citizens, as long as the access will not hinder police/fire/rescue operations and/or the media representatives' safety;
- d. Effectively use flares, traffic cones, and portable signs, depending upon the nature of the incident;
- e. Be aware that at the scene of a hazardous materials leak/spill, or a natural gas leak, the ignition of flares may be prohibited;
- f. Consider all downed power lines to be energized unless they positively know differently;

H. Post-Occurrence Duties

- 1. Tasks, duties, and responsibilities for officers that responded to the incident will be assigned by the supervisor or Incident Commander.
- 2. The officer assigned to write the Event Report or the communications car will request a copy of PSCC's radio and/or telephone tape (See General Order 605.2 – [Requesting PSCC Radio and Telephone Tape Records](#)).
- 3. All Department members who participated in the incident will coordinate with the report writer so the Event Report can accurately reflect what each officer did.
- 4. The supervisor will arrange for a critique of the incident as soon as possible. Following the critique, an after-action report will be prepared by the supervisor and submitted to the Chief of Police (if the Chief of Police was not the incident commander), and the City Manager for review and approval.
- 5. After the report has been approved, dissemination of it will be as directed by the Chief of Police and/or City Manager.

I. Transportation

- 1. In the event transportation is needed to or from the area affected by the incident, PSCC will be requested to contact the following, to determine if, and to what extent, service can be provided:

- a. Ride-On Bus;
 - b. The City's Recreation Department and MCP academy (which has buses);
2. Any additional requests for transportation will be made in accordance with the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Plan.