


# Hostage and Barricade Incidents

## 407.1 POLICY HEADER

<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	<b>Revised Date:</b>
September 1, 2021	January 4, 2023
Authorization:  Jason Haberman Chief of Police	

## 407.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for situations where officers have legal cause to contact, detain or arrest a person, and the person refuses to submit to the lawful requests of the officers by remaining in a structure or vehicle and/or by taking a hostage.

The scope of this policy is not intended to address all variables that officers encounter during their initial response or when a hostage or barricade situation has developed. This policy does not require or recommend specific strategies or tactics for resolution as each incident is a dynamic and rapidly evolving event.

### 407.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Barricade situation** - An incident where a person maintains a position of cover or concealment and ignores or resists law enforcement personnel, and it is reasonable to believe the subject is armed with a dangerous or deadly weapon.

**Emergency situation** - Any situation where a person is holding a hostage and is threatening serious physical injury and may resist with the use of weapons, or a person has barricaded him/herself and taken a position of confinement to avoid apprehension and has the ability to resist with the use of weapons or is threatening suicide or harm to him/herself or others (18 Pa.C.S. § 5713.1).

**Hostage situation** - An incident where it is reasonable to believe a person is:

- Unlawfully held by a hostage-taker as security so that specified terms or conditions will be met.
- Unlawfully held against his/her will under threat or actual use of force.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

**Mobile communications tracking information** - Information generated by a communication common carrier or a communication service that indicates the location of an electronic device supported by the communication common carrier or communication service (18 P.S. § 42).

#### **407.3 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department to address hostage and barricade situations with due regard for the preservation of life and balancing the risk of injury, while obtaining the safe release of hostages, apprehending offenders and securing available evidence.

#### **407.4 COMMUNICATION**

When circumstances permit, initial responding officers should try to establish and maintain lines of communication with a barricaded person or hostage-taker. Officers should attempt to identify any additional subjects, inquire about victims and injuries, seek the release of hostages, gather intelligence information, identify time-sensitive demands or conditions and obtain the suspect's surrender. Supervisors serving in an incident command role should not assume responsibilities for communication with the subject.

When available, department-authorized negotiators should respond to the scene as soon as practicable and assume communication responsibilities. Negotiators are permitted to exercise flexibility in each situation based upon their training, the circumstances presented, suspect actions or demands, and the available resources. [For additional info on NEGOTIATION POINTS procedure click here.](#)

##### **407.4.1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

During an emergency situation, an officer may obtain real-time location data without a warrant when (18 P.S. § 42; 18 P.S. § 43):

- (a) The officer reasonably believes that an emergency involving the immediate danger to a person requires the disclosure, without delay, of mobile communications tracking information concerning a specific person.
- (b) A warrant cannot be obtained in time to prevent the identified danger.
- (c) The possessor of the mobile communications tracking information believes in good faith that an emergency involving danger to a person requires disclosure without delay.

##### **407.4.2 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

An officer should provide a written request to the possessor of the mobile communications tracking information, including the following information (18 P.S. § 42):

- (a) The name of the officer making the request
- (b) The jurisdiction of the officer
- (c) A description of the requested real-time location data, including the need for the mobile communications tracking information
- (d) A declaration that the mobile communications tracking information is needed in an emergency situation that involves the risk of death or serious physical harm to a person

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

who possesses a telecommunication device and that this emergency situation requires disclosure, without delay of information relating to the emergency

- (e) The officer's signature

#### **407.4.3 ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Certified officers designated by the Pennsylvania State Police, a district attorney or by the Attorney General, may intercept wire or oral communications where the officer (18 Pa.C.S. § 5713.1):

- (a) Reasonably believes an emergency situation exists.
- (b) Determines an order allowing interception could normally be obtained but for the emergency situation.
- (c) Completes an application for an order approving the interception within 48 hours after commencing the interception.

#### **407.5 FIRST RESPONDER CONSIDERATIONS**

First responding officers should promptly and carefully evaluate all available information to determine whether an incident involves, or may later develop into, a hostage or barricade situation.

The first responding officer should immediately request a supervisor's response as soon as it is determined that a hostage or barricade situation exists. The first responding officer shall assume the duties of the supervisor until relieved by a supervisor or a more qualified responder. The officer shall continually evaluate the situation, including the level of risk to officers, to the persons involved and to bystanders, and the resources currently available.

The handling officer should brief the arriving supervisor of the incident, including information about suspects and victims, the extent of any injuries, additional resources or equipment that may be needed, and current perimeters and evacuation areas.

##### **407.5.1 BARRICADE SITUATION**

Unless circumstances require otherwise, officers handling a barricade situation should attempt to avoid a forceful confrontation in favor of stabilizing the incident by establishing and maintaining lines of communication while awaiting the arrival of specialized personnel and trained negotiators. In the interim, the following options, while not all-inclusive or in any particular order, should be considered:

- (a) Ensure injured persons are evacuated from the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so. Request medical assistance.
- (b) Assign personnel to an arrest team to control the subject should he/she attempt to exit the building, structure or vehicle, and attack, use deadly force, attempt to escape or surrender prior to additional resources arriving.
- (c) Request additional personnel, resources and equipment as needed (e.g., canine team, air support).
- (d) Provide responding emergency personnel with a safe arrival route to the location.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

- (e) Evacuate uninjured persons in the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so.
- (f) Attempt to obtain a line of communication and gather as much information on the subject as possible, including weapons, other involved parties, additional hazards or injuries.
- (g) Establish an inner and outer perimeter as circumstances require and resources permit to prevent unauthorized access.
- (h) Evacuate bystanders, residents and businesses within the inner and then outer perimeter as appropriate. Check for injuries, the presence of other involved subjects, witnesses, evidence or additional information.
- (i) If necessary and available, establish a tactical or exclusive radio frequency for the incident.

#### 407.5.2 HOSTAGE SITUATION

Officers presented with a hostage situation should attempt to avoid a forceful confrontation in favor of controlling the incident in anticipation of the arrival of specialized personnel and trained hostage negotiators. However, it is understood that hostage situations are dynamic and can require that officers react quickly to developing or changing threats. The following options, while not all-inclusive or in any particular order, should be considered:

- (a) Ensure injured persons are evacuated from the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so. Request medical assistance.
- (b) Assign personnel to an arrest team to control the subject should he/she attempt to exit the building, structure or vehicle, and attack, use deadly force, attempt to escape or surrender prior to additional resources arriving.
- (c) Establish an emergency entry team in the event it becomes necessary to rapidly enter a building, structure or vehicle, such as when the suspect is using deadly force against any hostages (see the Rapid Response and Deployment Policy).
- (d) Assist hostages or potential hostages to escape if it is reasonably safe to do so. Hostages should be kept separated, if practicable, pending further interview. In order to gain investigative and intelligence information and to ensure that a suspect has not masqueraded as a hostage, all freed hostages, whether they were released or escaped, must be taken into custody, interviewed, and debriefed.
- (e) Request additional personnel, resources and equipment as needed (e.g., canine team, air support).
- (f) Provide responding emergency personnel with a safe arrival route to the location.
- (g) Evacuate uninjured persons in the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so.
- (h) Coordinate pursuit or surveillance vehicles and control of travel routes.
- (i) Attempt to obtain a line of communication and gather as much information about the suspect as possible, including any weapons, victims and their injuries, additional hazards, other involved parties and any other relevant intelligence information.

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

- (j) Establish an inner and outer perimeter as resources and circumstances permit to prevent unauthorized access.
- (k) Evacuate bystanders, residents and businesses within the inner and then outer perimeter as appropriate. Check for injuries, the presence of other involved subjects, witnesses, evidence or additional information.
- (l) If necessary and available, establish a tactical or exclusive radio frequency for the incident.

#### **407.6 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon being notified that a hostage or barricade situation exists, the supervisor should immediately respond to the scene, assess the risk level of the situation, establish a proper chain of command, notify the Duty Officer and assume the role of Incident Commander until properly relieved. This includes requesting Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) response if appropriate and apprising the CIRT Commander of the circumstances. In addition, the following options, listed here in no particular order, should be considered:

- (a) Ensure injured persons are evacuated and treated by medical personnel.
- (b) Ensure the completion of necessary first responder responsibilities or assignments.
- (c) Every effort must be made to prevent a static situation from becoming mobile or expanding in scope.
- (d) Request crisis negotiators, specialized assignment members, additional department members, resources or equipment as appropriate.
- (e) Establish a command post location as resources and circumstances permit.
- (f) Designate assistants who can help with intelligence information and documentation of the incident.
- (g) If it is practicable to do so, arrange for video documentation of the operation.
- (h) Consider contacting utility and communication providers when restricting such services (e.g., electric power, gas, telephone service).
- (i) Ensure adequate law enforcement coverage for the remainder of the Municipality during the incident. The supervisor should direct nonessential personnel away from the scene unless they have been summoned by the supervisor or the Dispatch Center.
- (j) Identify a media staging area outside the outer perimeter and have the department PIO or a designated temporary media representative provide media access in accordance with the Media Relations Policy.
- (k) Identify the need for mutual aid and the transition or relief of personnel for incidents of extended duration.
- (l) Debrief personnel and review documentation as appropriate.

#### **407.7 CIRT RESPONSIBILITIES**

It will be the CIRT Commander's decision, with input from the Incident Commander, whether to deploy the CIRT during a hostage or barricade situation. Once the CIRT Commander authorizes

# Mt. Lebanon Police Department

## Policy Manual

### *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

deployment, the CIRT Commander or the authorized designee will be responsible for the tactical response and negotiations. The Incident Commander shall continue to supervise the command post operation, outer perimeter security, evacuation and media access, and will support the CIRT. The Incident Commander and the CIRT Commander or the authorized designees shall maintain direct communications at all times.

#### **407.8 REPORTING**

Unless otherwise relieved by a supervisor or Incident Commander, the handling officer at the scene is responsible for completion and/or coordination of incident reports.

[For additional info on DOCUMENTATION procedure click here.](#)