



**Cuyahoga County Sheriff**  
**Frank Bova**

## **CUYAHOGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

### **ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENT**

#### **201**

#### **PHILOSOPHY**

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in targeting and attempting to kill humans. An active shooter incident (ASI) is an inherently dangerous and dynamic situation, varying greatly from one attack to another. Time is of the essence with ASIs, as past studies have shown that the suspect's intent is to harm or kill as many victims as possible. For this reason, the immediate deployment of Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department (CCSD) deputies, unless at the scene of another high-risk situation, is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.

The active shooter concept represents a shift in patrol response tactics, equipment needs, and command protocol. ASIs require the initial law enforcement responders to have the authority and the capability to take whatever action is reasonably necessary<sup>1</sup> to protect the lives of others in these situations, including the use of deadly force, without waiting for command staff or for the arrival of specialty units such as SWAT or crisis negotiators.

#### **PURPOSE**

These guidelines will establish operating procedures for deputies to follow in the case of an ASI. As with all critical incidents, ASIs are situational and deputies should always base their decisions on reason and common sense.

It is the goal of the CCSD to effectively manage and resolve ASIs by:

- capturing or neutralizing the shooter(s);
- protecting lives in proximity to the active shooter(s); and
- containing and isolating the scene.

#### **TACTICAL PROCEDURES**

All enforcement personnel who are not on a high priority call shall respond to the scene of an ASI and notify communications. First responding deputies, if practical, should notify radio. Given the unique nature of ASIs, these deputies are granted the authority and responsibility to take immediate action to contain and neutralize ASIs. For this reason, deputies, when arriving to the scene, shall first find and stop the shooter, not aid injured victims.

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<sup>1</sup> As with all CCSD policies, deputies' actions will be judged by what an ordinary, reasonable deputy, when faced with a similar situation, would do.

## **INCIDENT COMMAND**

Once the ASI has been neutralized, patrol and/or tactical personnel can formulate a structured and deliberate plan. The incident command officer (ICO) will establish a command post. In doing so, the ICO shall immediately:

- choose a safe staging area for arriving personnel;
- order the dispatcher to initiate the notification of command;
- form rescue teams, if necessary;
- arrange a safe staging area for medical units and treatment of the injured; and
- notify the public information officer to stage the media in a safe location outside the inner perimeter.

If the suspect is arrested or incapacitated, regular procedures will be followed regarding the investigation and evidence preservation. If the suspect barricades himself/herself so that the dynamics of the situation change to that of a barricaded suspect, CCSD policy regarding a barricaded suspect shall apply.

## **MAJOR INCIDENT DEBRIEFING**

Within three (3) days following an ASI, the ICO shall ensure an incident review has been completed. The CCSD command staff, the incident commander, and other necessary individuals shall participate in a debriefing of the incident. The debriefing shall:

- include a synopsis of the incident reviewing the CCSD's response and investigation;
- identify any major issues that arose during the incident;
- determine if the supervision, investigation, and evidence processing were being properly conducted and documented.



Frank Bova,  
Sheriff