


FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  GENERAL ORDER	SUBJECT: HOSTAGE AND BARRICADE PROCEDURES		NUMBER: 521
	EFFECTIVE DATE: August 11, 2022	REVIEW: August 2025	
RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: OPERATIONS SUPPORT BUREAU			<input type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Replaces: 520.3 <input type="checkbox"/> Revised:
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:	CALEA	VLEPSC	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines and procedures for officer responses to situations that involve hostage and/or barricaded individuals.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) that unless immediate action is necessary to preserve life, the resources of the Special Operations Division (SOD) shall be utilized whenever hostage or barricaded individual situations occur. These resources shall include, but not be limited to, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD), Technical Response Unit (TRU), Fairfax County Mental Health resources, tactical analyst, safety officer, tactical medic, K9, and Traffic Division motor units. Once these resources are on a scene and available, the role of the patrol officer shall generally be restricted to that of containment. All officers shall account for the priority of life on all hostage and/or barricade scenes.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Legal Authority: Statue or section of the Code of Virginia under which an individual may be legally detained by law enforcement.
- B. Barricaded Individual: Person who uses any shelter, conveyance, structure, building, open field, or other location as a barrier against law enforcement and refuses to exit and submit to lawful authority. Armed or potentially armed barricaded individuals must have the ability, intent, and means to cause injury to others.
- C. Hostage: Person(s) held against their consent, typically as security for the fulfillment of conditions or demands.
- D. Priority of Life: Prioritization of officer actions, to include (1) hostages, (2)

innocent by-standers, (3) police and other first responders, and (4) offenders.

IV. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. **Procedures:** Responding patrol officers, supervisors, duty officers, and commanders shall follow all procedures and responsibilities outlined in [FCPD Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) 13-048](#) on all hostage/barricade scenes.
- B. **Officer Responsibilities:** Officers on a hostage or barricade scene shall account for (1) legal authority, (2) potential dangers posed to the community, (3) scene perimeter and safety of all officers, and (4) the need for specialized resources. Any request for specialized resource callout approval shall be conducted through the proper chain of command and authorized by the Operations Support Bureau (OSB) Commander or their designee.
1. **Potential Swatting Incidents:** Officers should factor in, prior to attempting to make contact with any individual at a location where a report of a hostage or barricade incident has been communicated through the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC), whether or not the incident constitutes a false “swatting” incident. Officers should consider whether the scene matches the 9-1-1 call description and follow-up with criminal investigations of making a false report to police whenever possible.
- C. **Single-Person Barricades:** On single-person barricades and in accordance with the priority of life, entry into the shelter, conveyance, structure, building, open field, or other location should generally be avoided. The barricaded individual should be given commands to exit and be brought towards officers who remain behind cover. Negotiations and attempts to communicate with the individual should continue while specialized resources respond to assist in resolving the situation. The primary goal for all officers is to contain and stabilize the situation until it can be safely resolved. All initiated negotiations should be from behind appropriate cover, concealment, and consistent with protecting the priority of life.
- D. **Supervisor Responsibilities:** Supervisors shall respond to a hostage/barricade event and announce command of the scene via the police radio until relieved by higher authority. Upon arrival, supervisors shall reaffirm legal authority, assess potential dangers to the surrounding community, maintain scene perimeter and promote the safety of assisting officers, and coordinate the need for any specialized resources. The Duty Officer and/or district station commander shall also respond to the scene in a timely manner and establish incident command in accordance with [FCPD SOP 13-048](#).

General Order 521 becomes effective on the above date and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

ISSUED BY:



Chief of Police

APPROVED BY:



County Executive