

Major and Critical Incident Evaluation and Notification

8.01.01 PURPOSE

The San Francisco Police Department (the Department) stands for Safety with Respect for All. We will ensure residents, visitors, and members are safe and feel safe.

This order defines major and critical incidents and establishes policies and procedures sworn members shall follow in making the appropriate notifications to command personnel. The Department will respond quickly to these safety risks and will do so with the spirit of dignity and in collaboration with the community.

By evaluating each major and critical incident, the Department improves future responses through measuring, monitoring, and training to uphold our commitment to policing without bias and addressing any issues in an open and collaborative manner. We will actively collaborate with City agencies and community organizations to jointly address identified challenges as we strive to maintain and build trust and respect as the guardian of Constitutional and human rights.

Critical and major incidents are broadly witnessed by the community and provide our members the opportunity to showcase the spirit of mutual respect and fairness we embrace in our work.

8.01.02 POLICY

EVALUATION - It is the policy of the San Francisco Police Department that should a major or critical incident occur, the District Captain or, if not immediately available, the Night Captain or Weekend Captain, shall make a prompt evaluation and notification. If neither is immediately available, the Lieutenant on duty in the district of occurrence shall make the evaluation and notification.

8.01.03 DEFINITIONS

- A. **MAJOR INCIDENT** - An event involving potential or actual injury, death, or property damage requiring an exceptional emergency response. This includes natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, major fires, etc.) and human-caused emergencies (plane crash, riot, terrorist acts, etc.) that require extensive response and commitment of resources to control or resolve.
- B. **CRITICAL INCIDENT** - Any incident with a life-threatening situation, a defined terrain objective, and requiring a coordinated tactical response should be declared as a critical incident. Procedures and guidelines for requesting the Tactical Unit should be followed.

The following situations constitute a major incident:

1. Riot, insurrection, or potentially violent demonstration (see DGO 8.03 *Crowd Control*)
2. Explosion of a destructive device or found suspicious item requiring an EOD response to the scene (see DGO 8.08 *Bomb Threats, Clandestine Laboratories, Destructive Devices, Explosions, and Fireworks*)
3. Airplane crash
4. Major fire (five alarms or greater) (see DGO 8.06 *Fire Procedures*)
5. Hazardous material incident (see DGO 8.07 *Hazardous Material Incidents*)
6. Earthquake or any natural calamity involving multiple casualties or significant destruction of property, or the likelihood of either
7. Mass Casualty event (gas line explosion, traffic collision, construction site, etc.)

The following situations constitute a critical incident:

1. Active Attacker Incident – One or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area (see *Requesting the Tactical Unit / SWAT and Call-Out Procedures* policy)
2. Hostage/Barricaded Suspect – criminally involved (see DGO 8.02 *Hostage & Barricaded Suspect*)
3. Sniper (see *Requesting the Tactical Unit / SWAT and Call-Out Procedures* policy)
4. Officer-Involved Shooting (see DGO 8.11 *Investigation of Officer-Involved Shootings and Discharges*)
5. Officer shot or critically injured while on duty
6. Custody escape (see DGO 5.18 *Prisoner Handling and Transportation*)
7. In-Custody Death (see DGO 8.12 *In Custody Deaths*)
8. Verified Child Abduction (see *Guidelines for Handling Stranger and Parental Abduction of Children* policy)

8.01.04 PROCEDURES

Leadership - Critical and major incidents happen infrequently and generally require a large-scale response. They usually involve property damage, injury or death, and have a devastating impact on the community. Two key leadership components of any critical incident are incident command, and teamwork. Incident command is a role that requires experience and training. Who takes command will depend on a variety of factors including the type of occurrence, jurisdiction, personnel available, and city/county protocol. Regardless of who is in command, peace officers and other public servants have to work together as a team to achieve success.

Action Plan - The incident commander is responsible for seeing that an appropriate plan of action is implemented to deal with the immediate situation. Required actions will vary according to the specifics of each incident.

The tactics used to manage an incident must be reassessed and evaluated throughout the operation. Additional resources may become necessary or specific tactics may need to be modified.

A. DUTIES OF THE FIRST ARRIVING OFFICER(S)

1. Determine if a situation meets the criteria of either a major or critical incident.
2. Determine the hazard (person or material) and location of the incident and immediately communicate that information to DEM and responding units. If feasible, immediately isolate the hazard and evacuate/shelter persons in peril.
3. Notify the field supervisor and Platoon Commander that either a major or critical incident is occurring and request response to the scene.
4. The senior officer of the first arriving unit is responsible for the command and control of the incident unless a supervisor assigns this responsibility to another member, or a more experienced officer declares and takes responsibility, prior to the arrival of a supervisor. This officer shall have the latitude and authority to assign any other officers to any assignment or task.

B. DUTIES OF THE FIRST ARRIVING SUPERVISOR ON SCENE

1. Notify DEM, monitor radio communications, respond to the incident (e.g., "3X100, I'm monitoring the incident and responding.") Upon arrival, assume command, assess the situation, request the appropriate resources, and establish a preliminary Command Post when feasible.
2. Continually gather and ensure further information is communicated to DEM and responding units.

C. DUTIES OF THE PLATOON COMMANDER

1. Respond to the scene and formally assume the role of Operational Commander including command of the Incident Command Post until relieved by a member of higher rank.
2. Evaluate the scene, confirm that a major or critical incident exists, and assess suitability of Command Post location.

3. Determine what resources (i.e., personnel and equipment), will be needed to resolve the situation, provide for officer safety as well as the safety of others, ensure protection of property, and resolve or control the situation.
4. As soon as practicable, notify the District Station Captain or, in their absence, the Night Captain or Weekend Captain.

D. DUTIES OF THE DISTRICT STATION CAPTAIN

1. Respond to the scene of all confirmed major or critical incidents and formally assume the role as Operational Commander to ensure all duties listed in 8.01.04 of this directive are completed.
2. Personally Notify the Deputy Chief of Operations or Field Operations Bureau Commander via cellular phone.
3. Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, establishing law and order, identifying necessary resources, enforcing emergency rules and regulations, and/or providing emergency care for the sick and injured.

NOTE: When the District Station Captain is unavailable, the Night Captain or Weekend Captain shall assume the duties of the District Station Captain.

E. POST-INCIDENT

The appropriate SFPD unit leading the critical or major incident response will review and facilitate debriefings with involved officers. The unit will conduct an after action written report that analyzes the major or critical incident considering the Department's training, policies, and procedures and make written recommendations with the goals of improving future response and performance.

References

Guidelines for Handling Stranger and Parental Abductions of Children
Requesting the Tactical Unit / SWAT and Call-Out Procedures
DGO 5.01, Use of Force Policy and Proper Control of a Person
DGO 5.18, Prisoner Handling and Transportation
DGO 6.02, Physical Evidence and Crime Scenes
DGO 8.02, Hostage and Barricaded Suspect Incidents
DGO 8.03, Crowd Control
DGO 8.06, Fire Procedures
DGO 8.07, Hazardous Material Incidents
DGO 8.08, Bomb Threats, Clandestine Laboratories, Destructive Devices, Explosions, and Fireworks
DGO 8.11, Investigation of Officer-Involved Shootings and Discharges
DGO 8.12, In-Custody Deaths
Event Management Manual, SFPD
Emergency Operations Plan, City & County of San Francisco
POST Learning Domain 26 "Critical Incidents" Version 3.1
SFPD forms 496 A-E