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Crisis Situations

This procedure is designed to provide guidelines for the development of specific plans to respond to crisis and hostage situations that will offer the highest level of protection to human life. In emergency situations, the overriding concern of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (ODOC) is the protection of life and property. In a crisis or hostage situation, staff member actions will be directed to safeguard the public, preserve life, prevent injuries, and protect community and state property. The goals of the ODOC in dealing with a crisis or hostage situation is to safely effect a peaceful resolution with the freeing of any hostages and other staff, and, if at all possible, the peaceful apprehension of the hostage takers. Should it become evident that lives may be lost; any actions undertaken must still emphasize the preservation of the lives of all involved. (2-CO-3B-02M, 5-ACI-3B-14M)

For the purpose of this procedure, the term “facility head” refers to wardens and community corrections centers administrators responsible for the housing and supervision of offenders and the term “unit head” will apply to unit chief administrators/administrators.

I. Definitions

A. Crisis Negotiation Coordinator

The crisis negotiation coordinator (CNC) is the person designated by the chief administrator of Special Operations to oversee the Crisis Negotiation Team’s (CNT) activities. This person will:

1. Coordinate the selection of the team leader, assistant team leader, and members;
2. Maintain a list of team leaders and members;
3. Coordinate training for team leader and assistant team leader;
4. Ensure team leader and assistant team leader are providing sufficient and appropriate training to team members to maintain readiness;
5. Ensure the crisis negotiation team leader and assistant team leader will complete at a minimum, a CNT Team Leader course; and
6. Ensure the chief administrator of Institutions, the chief administrator of Community Corrections and Contract Services, and each facility head has current contact information for all CNT members.

B. Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) Leader

The team leader will be assigned by the Crisis Negotiation Coordinator (CNC) to assist with the following:

1. Coordinate training and exercises to ensure constant readiness and competence of team members.
2. During crisis or hostage situations, the team leader will locate the negotiations post, coordinate and direct the team, develop the negotiation plan, and maintain constant communication with the facility head’s command post. The team leader will assist the facility head in planning, discussion and action, with the goal of a positive

resolution of the incident.

C. Crisis Negotiation Assistant Team (CNT) Leader

The assistant team leader will:

1. Assist the team leader in training and overall readiness of the team;
2. Serve as liaison between team members and team leader during emergency situations;
3. Facilitate changes or updates in procedures and equipment needs; and
4. Assume the team leader role when necessary.

D. Crisis Situation

Any event that is or is expected to lead to an unstable or dangerous situation affecting an individual or group.

E. First Responder

The first person on scene, or dealing with a crisis or hostage situation, who may set a successful tone for negotiations, or create unnecessary barriers. First responders are not negotiators and should advise the person(s) in crisis, or hostage takers, of such. CNT negotiators, upon arrival, will begin negotiations.

F. Hostage

A person held as security for fulfillment of certain demands.

G. Hostage Situation

Any condition where a person or people are held illegally and against their will; denied their right to move, act, speak freely, and make decisions on their own; a condition that endangers life, or poses the threat of danger, while holding a person or persons in a restricted state against their will.

H. Hostage Taker

A person who has taken hostage(s), or is a barricaded subject, and is threatening to commit violence against their victim(s) or themselves.

I. Negotiate

To arrange or settle by conferring or discussing.

J. Primary Negotiator

Under the supervision of the team leader, the primary negotiator is the only direct contact with the person(s) in crisis or hostage taker(s) during the negotiation process. They have the responsibility for being a sounding board, information processor, and facilitator for problem solving.

K. Secondary Negotiator

Under the supervision of the team leader, the secondary negotiator is the person responsible to the team leader and serves as backup negotiator. This position regulates and provides information to the primary negotiator and acts as a recorder and communicator and keeps negotiations on a predetermined path.

II. Crisis Negotiation Team

The purpose of the CNT is to assist facilities/units during crisis or potential crisis situations. This is accomplished by providing trained negotiators and the resources necessary to successfully achieve the goal of preservation of life.

A. Establishment of CNT

1. The chief administrator of Special Operations will designate a crisis negotiation coordinator (CNC). The chief administrator of Institutions and the chief administrator of Community Corrections and Contract Services will establish a crisis negotiation team under advice of the CNC. The CNC will maintain oversight of the team and team leaders.

The CNC will work with the chief administrator of Special Operations to ensure the team is adequately staffed.

2. Normally, the CNT will consist of up to 52 negotiators, an assistant team leader, and a team leader, which may be assigned by the CNC. Additional negotiators may be authorized by the coordinator.
3. The team will be composed of representatives from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender identities.

4. Membership in the team may also include representatives from other ODOC units with the approval of the appropriate unit head.
5. All potential team members must be recommended by the facility/unit head. Potential team members will go through an interview process conducted by the assistant team leader or the team leader, and at least two other CNT members. The committee must meet the criteria specified in [OP-110235](#) entitled "Hiring and Promotional Procedures."

Consideration will be given to those applicants that demonstrate the following:

- a. Desire to be a negotiator (staff will serve on a voluntary basis);
 - b. Functions well under stress;
 - c. Emotionally/professionally mature;
 - d. Patient;
 - e. Flexible, but persistent;
 - f. Excellent verbal skills;
 - g. Excellent listening skills;
 - h. Good physical condition;
 - i. Familiar with institutional operations and offender behavior;
 - j. Willingness to accept responsibility with limited or no authority;
 - k. Able to handle failure;
 - l. Problem solver; and
 - m. Have the ability to fend off personality conflicts for the greater reward of successful negotiations.
6. Potential team members will be required to undergo the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) testing and evaluation.

7. Recommendations must be approved by the CNC prior to assignment to the team.

B. CNT Training

All CNT members will receive extensive training in negotiation techniques and related subjects pertaining to crisis and hostage type situations.

1. CNT Training Requirements

- a. Normally within the first year after being appointed to the team, new CNT members will undergo 40 hours of basic hostage negotiation training.
- b. All CNT members will be required to attend an eight hour training session each month, at times and locations established by the team leader. Additional training sessions may be approved by the CNC

2. Absences

When it becomes necessary to be absent from training, the member will notify the team leader or assistant team leader in advance. CNT members exceeding three unexcused absences from training sessions during a one year period of time will be removed from the CNT.

3. Emergency Drills

The crisis negotiation team will be available to participate in emergency drills in which crisis situations are simulated. The CNT coordinator/designee will conduct annual drills with notification made to the affected administrator of Institutions/Community Corrections as to when the drill is conducted, followed by a brief written synopsis of the drill activities.

C. Removal from CNT

Any CNT member who receives formal disciplinary action may be removed from the team by the facility/unit head, with approval from the chief administrator of Institutions or the chief administrator of Community Corrections and Contract Services. The facility head will notify the CNC of any removals from their facility.

III. Procedures for Crisis and Hostage Situation

A. Team Activation

1. Upon learning that a crisis or hostage situation exists, the facility head or shift supervisor/staff member in charge at the time will ensure a well-defined perimeter is established, and officers/available staff members are placed along the perimeter to ensure no other person enters the area and places themselves in a position of becoming a hostage/victim.
2. Once the perimeter has been established, the facility head or shift supervisor/staff member in charge will activate ICS in accordance with [OP-050102](#) entitled "Departmental and Facility Emergency Plans for Riots, Disturbances, Utility Failures and Major Disasters for State Operated Facilities," [OP-052001](#) entitled "Emergency Procedures for Private Prisons," or [OP-053001](#) entitled "Community Corrections Emergency Plans for Riots, Disturbances, Utility Failures and Major Disasters."
3. The facility/unit head will immediately notify the CNC for team activation. Other notifications will be made in accordance with [OP-050108](#) entitled "Use of Force Standards and Reportable Incidents." The affected facility head will also immediately notify CNT members assigned to that facility to respond.
4. If a means of communication (e.g. phone, intercom, etc.) is available to contact the hostage taker, the CNT members assigned to the affected facility will begin negotiations as soon as possible in cooperation with the facility/unit head. If no means of communication is available, the facility/unit head, CNT members, and the tactical commander will determine if the scene is safe enough for voice-to-voice negotiations with a Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) escort until a throw phone can arrive. If the scene is determined to be safe, the CNT member(s) will be escorted to within hearing distance by no less than three CERT members
5. CNT members will be assigned positions as they arrive at the affected facility by the senior CNT members on location. When the team leader arrives, they will take command of the team. The CNT will be divided into two shifts that will work 12 hours, and no more, at a time. If a team member arrives at the affected facility and is assigned to the second shift, they will immediately be sent to rest in preparation for their shift.

6. A detailed incident report will be prepared by all activated CNT members as specified in [OP-050109](#) entitled "Reporting of Incidents" and submitted to the CNC. The CNC will compile all reports and forward them to the facility head.

B. Assisting Outside Law Enforcement Agencies

The agency director and chief administrator of Special Operations may authorize the crisis negotiation team to assist outside law enforcement agencies. A representative of the requesting outside law enforcement agency must be present while the crisis negotiation team is providing assistance.

C. Non-Negotiable Demands

1. Any ODOC employee who becomes a hostage immediately loses all administrative authority or ranking authority over non-hostage staff. Non-hostage staff will not comply with any demands or orders issued by such personnel while they remain a hostage.
2. CNT members function only as communicators and will have no decision-making authority. The decision-making authority is vested with the director of the ODOC or their designee; however, the following items are **non-negotiable**:
 - a. Escape/release;
 - b. Introduction of weapons;
 - c. Introduction of alcoholic beverages/illegal drugs;
 - d. Exchange of hostages;
 - e. Amnesty; or
 - f. Money.

IV. First Responder Training

All facility/unit heads will ensure first responder training is incorporated into the facility/unit annual in-service training.

V. Dangerous Aspect of Employment

Facility heads will inform all their staff members of this possibly dangerous

aspect of employment. In addition, all employees will be provided a copy of the Hostage Handbook, and any subsequent revisions. (5-ACI-1C-01) The Hostage Handbook will be reviewed annually by the crisis team leaders and revised as needed. (2-CO-1C-01, 5-ACI-3B-14M)

VI. References

Policy Statement P-050100 entitled "Emergency Plans for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections"

OP-050102 entitled "Departmental and Facility Emergency Plans for Riots, Disturbances, Utility Failures and Major Disasters for State Operated Facilities"

OP-050108 entitled "Use of Force and Reportable Standards"

OP-050109 entitled "Reporting of Incidents"

OP-052001 entitled "Emergency Procedures for Private Prisons"

OP-053001 entitled "Community Corrections Emergency Plans for Riots, Disturbances, Utility Failures and Major Disasters"

OP-110235 entitled "Hiring and Promotional Procedures"

VII. Action

The facility/unit heads and affected chief administrators/administrators will be responsible for compliance with this procedure.

The chief administrator of Special Operations is responsible for the annual review and revisions.

Any exception to this procedure will require prior written approval from the agency director.

This procedure is effective as indicated.

Replaced: OP-050401 entitled "Crisis Situations" dated October 28, 2020

Deleted: OP-050401 Revision-01 dated January 21, 2021

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