

Section 6: Jail Emergencies Response Plan

Subject: Hostage Situation

Minimum Standard: 5120:1-8-03(B)(4)

Revised: 10/2008, 12/2011

Authorized: _____ Effective date: _____
Sheriff Paul A. Sigsworth

POLICY

The Erie County Jail shall have policies and procedures, and practices which evidence that there is a plan that guides the jail's response to emergencies. All jail personnel will be trained in the implementation of the emergency plan. The emergency plan will include procedures to be followed in situations that threaten jail security.

DEFINITION

A jail emergency can be, but not limited to, escape, hostage situation, fire, riot, food poisoning, civil disturbance in the community, natural disaster, suicide, other death, outbreak of contagious disease, inmate strike and other disturbances, bomb threat, or any action that affects or jeopardizes the security of the Erie County Jail and/or the safety of the inmates and/or staff.

PROCEDURE

A. Policy:

1. The first priority in a hostage situation is to preserve life and prevent harm to anyone taken hostage.
2. A hostage(s) is never allowed to be taken out of the security perimeter by a hostage taker(s).
3. A hostage(s) has no authority over any staff member regardless of position or rank.

B. Discovery:

1. The Corrections Officer who first becomes aware of the hostage situation should:
 1. Immediately terminate all movement.
 2. Immediately advise the Shift Supervisor or OIC via radio transmission of the incident and its location. The Shift Supervisor will:
 - a. Begin an immediate official count, securing all inmates in their cells until the count is complete and the facility is secure.
 3. Secure the immediate Area.
 4. Close all surrounding doors.
 5. Contain the situation to as small of an area as physically possible.
 6. Advise support staff of the situation and relocate them to a secure area
 7. Inmates will not be accepted for booking or released until authorized by the Sheriff or Jail Administrator.
 8. Maintenance, service, or delivery personnel will not be allowed to leave or enter the security perimeter until cleared by Road Division Personnel.

Section 6: Jail Emergencies Response Plan

Subject: Hostage Situation (Continued)

Minimum Standard: 5120:1-8-03(B)(4)

Revised: 10/2008, 12/2011

C. Notification:

1. The Shift Supervisor will:
 1. Immediately notify Dispatch, the Jail Administrator, and the Sheriff.
 - a. The Dispatcher will;
 - i. Alert the Road Patrol of the situation
 - ii. Contact Perkins Fire and EMS and request a squad to standby.
 2. Determine, to the degree possible, the identity of the hostage taker and the hostage and gather all pertinent information on those persons for use in the negotiation process.
2. No information will be released to the news media without approval of the Sheriff or his designee.

D. Reporting to Responders:

1. The Shift Supervisor shall provide an accurate report of the hostage situation to responding agencies to include;
 1. Number, identity, and location of hostage(s) and hostage taker(s).
 2. Type and number of weapons (if known) hostages are being threatened with.
 3. Visible injuries (if known).
 4. Any security concerns.

E. Response:

1. Negotiations – preferred resolution.
2. Tactical – Only after negotiations have failed and authorized by the Sheriff or designee.

F. Negotiations:

1. The Sheriff or designee will direct the procedure or assign a designee to act as negotiator. The following general policies shall apply to hostage taking situations:
 1. At no time will any inmate be permitted release from jail.
 2. The designated negotiator will not be empowered to make final decisions regarding negotiable items.
 - a. Any promises or concessions must be authorized by the Sheriff or designee.
 3. Orders or commands given by the hostage, regardless of rank, will not be honored.
 4. No person except the designated negotiator shall be in contact with the hostage taker(s), unless specifically directed to do so by the Sheriff or designee.
 5. Corrections Staff will not interfere with the negotiation process, nor make any promises or concessions to the hostage taker(s).

Section 6: Jail Emergencies Response Plan

Subject: Hostage Situation (Continued)

Minimum Standard: 5120:1-8-03(B)(4)

Revised: 10/2008, 12/2011

G. Reporting:

1. All corrections officers involved are required to submit a detailed written report of the incident as soon as possible. The Shift Supervisor will place an HTST (Hostage Situation) Event, attaching the inmate, in the Shift Log of the Jail's Record Management System.

H. Investigation:

1. In the event of a hostage situation, the Detective Bureau of the Erie County Sheriff's Office will conduct a criminal investigation.

I. Crisis Intervention:

1. A hostage situation can be mentally taxing and difficult for those involved. Any staff member requesting mental health assistance will be referred to a qualified mental health professional by the Sheriff, Jail Administrator, or designee.

J. Evaluation:

1. A complete evaluation of the hostage situation, including circumstances that led up to and actions taken by corrections staff, will be conducted by the Jail Administrator.
2. The Jail Administrator will present all findings of the evaluation in writing to the corrections staff and the Sheriff.