



# Critical Response

T O O L K I T

*for First-Line Supervisors*



POLICE EXECUTIVE  
RESEARCH FORUM



*Community Oriented Policing Services*  
*U.S. Department of Justice*

# Critical Response Toolkit for First-Line Supervisors

When major events occur, the first officers on the scene will look to their sergeants for direction. Ensuring that these law enforcement professionals have the knowledge, experience, skills and tools to handle any situation is critical to the success of the coordinated response. This Toolkit is designed to help your agency better prepare your first-line supervisory team for critical incidents.



## **The Need for Better Training**

There is broad recognition among law enforcement officials of the importance of first-line supervisors. However, research on effective supervisory training is sparse, and relatively few law enforcement agencies have strengthened their policies and training practices to emphasize preparing first-line supervisors for the important decisions they must make, particularly those related to critical incidents.

In many agencies, systems for selecting and training first-line supervisors have not changed in decades. Few agencies provide immediate training to new supervisors at all, and even fewer agencies teach new supervisors strategies and tactics related to critical thinking and decision-making skills, handling high-risk and crisis situations, major incident management, and how supervisors should prepare their officers to respond effectively during an incident.

This **Critical Response Toolkit for First-Line Supervisors** (Toolkit) will help you bridge this gap in training.

## **How to Use the Toolkit**

The Toolkit is organized into three main areas — preparation before a critical incident, how to handle a critical incident, and what to do following a critical incident. Each area contains a variety of useful information to help first-line supervisors gain the knowledge and skills necessary to confidently navigate a critical incident and direct those in their command on the important roles that each of them must play.

The Toolkit is designed as a continuum, covering all three elements of a critical incident response in order. However, the material in individual areas can stand on its own as well. In addition, the Toolkit includes a listing of resources to help sergeants and their agencies effectively manage critical incidents.

The Toolkit is organized into three main areas:

- Preparation before a critical incident
- How to handle a critical incident
- What to do following a critical incident

## Toolkit Background and Methodology

The **Critical Response Toolkit for First-Line Supervisors** (Toolkit) builds on previous work PERF has done in this area, as well as the knowledge and insights of numerous law enforcement professionals.

In April 2018, PERF hosted a national meeting of law enforcement executives and first-line supervisors to discuss the importance of the sergeant rank in law enforcement agencies. After the meeting, PERF published [Promoting Excellence in First-Line Supervision: New Approaches to Selection, Training, and Leadership Development](#), a report which highlights the conversations that took place at the conference as well as other PERF research on the issue. The report examines topics such as how crucial the rank of sergeant is to an agency, and best practices for sergeant testing, selection, evaluation and career development.

The report also detailed the shortcomings of much of the training for first-line supervisors, especially related to critical incidents. PERF designed this Toolkit to address the deficiency in first-line supervisors' training and response to critical incidents.

PERF comprehensively reviewed research on effective FLS supervisory styles and how those styles influence patrol officer behavior and productivity. In 2019, PERF conducted site visits at five partner agencies and facilitated several focus groups that included agency members of different ranks, experiences, and assignments. The five partner agencies were:

- Camden County (NJ) Police Department
- New York City Police Department
- Tucson Police Department
- Metropolitan Nashville Police Department
- Harris County (TX) Sheriff's Office

In addition, PERF assembled a team of subject matter experts (SMEs) to advise the project team, review all documents and site visit findings, and submit additional resources for the Toolkit. The Toolkit was greatly enhanced by the commitment and expertise of:

- Captain Kevin Lutz – Camden County (NJ) Police Department
- Assistant Chief Sean Patterson – University of Tennessee Police Department
- Inspector Matthew Galvin – New York City Police Department
- Sergeant John Flynn – New York City Police Department
- Sergeant Bryan Hubbard – Oakland (CA) Police Department
- Sheriff Tim Cameron – St. Mary's County (MD) Sheriff's Office
- Sergeant Shawn Moses – St. Mary's County (MD) Sheriff's Office
- Lieutenant Shelly Katkowski – Burlington (NC) Police Department
- Officer Cameron Deane – Cambridge (MA) Police Department

- Lieutenant Daniel Warren – Riverside (CA) Police Department
- Lieutenant Kevin Kilgore – University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Police Department
- Captain Gregory Bean – Marathon County (WI) Sheriff's Office
- Commander Matthew McCord – Tulsa (OK) Police Department
- Assistant Chief Rodney Reed – Harris County (TX) Fire Marshal's Office
- Lieutenant Chris Cook – Arlington (TX) Police Department

The Toolkit's contents are based on information collected from the literature review and focus groups, feedback from a national webinar that PERF hosted, contributions from SMEs, and collaboration and direction from the COPS Office.



# Before a Critical Incident

Preparation is key to the successful resolution of critical incidents. It is vital that law enforcement agencies invest in their first-line supervisors (FLSs) by preparing and training them well before they encounter a critical incident.

**Here are four key action items for an agency to complete to prepare their first-line supervisors before a critical incident.**

1. Provide training *before* members start their new role as supervisor and ensure that the training is scenario-based
2. Train for critical incidents with other department units and outside agencies and their supervisors
3. Give new FLSs opportunities to be observed in the field and shadow veteran supervisors
4. Proactively establish relationships with community stakeholders

## Provide training before members start their new role as supervisor and ensure that the training is scenario-based.

When supervisors arrive on scene of a critical incident, they will fall back on their training. That is why it is imperative that critical incident training for first-line supervisors take place *before* they start their new role.

These trainings must involve more than PowerPoints and lectures on administrative tasks. New supervisors need to be engaged and challenged with real-life scenarios that give them the opportunity to test their skills prior to being on the street. This is especially important for critical incidents, where the situations are dynamic and the stakes are high.

Tabletop exercises that simulate a critical incident allow new supervisors to familiarize themselves with the necessary actions they must take in an emergency situation. While these exercises will be less stressful than a real incident, if agencies can simulate a stressful situation in practice, supervisors will have a more realistic idea of how they will respond in the field. Mistakes can be corrected in advance, instead of making them during a real incident. Each tabletop exercise should be followed by a thorough

debrief to discuss the experience. This allows new supervisors to both observe and practice organizing and conducting meaningful debriefs.

If resources are available, first-line supervisors should be given the opportunity to attend trainings outside of their department. This gives new supervisors opportunities to advance their skills and gain new perspectives, which can benefit the whole department.

Key Topics to Include in FLS Training:

*NOTE: While these skills are important for the everyday work of First-Line Supervisors, they are especially important to critical incidents.*

- Transitioning to the Role of Supervisor
  - The transition from officer to sergeant is not easy. In fact, it may be the most difficult transition an officer faces in their career.
  - There is a shift in mindset from a patrol officer to now managing a group of patrol officers.
- Personnel Management
  - As the name implies, first-line supervisors have a duty to manage and supervise their officers.
  - There are different management styles, each with pros and cons.
  - New supervisors should learn about each one and work towards developing their own personal management style.
- Leadership Skills
  - Not only do supervisors need to manage their officers, they need to show strong leadership skills at all times, especially under pressure.
  - While some people may be natural leaders, there is always room to grow and practice leadership skills.
- Crime Scene Management
  - First-line supervisors are in charge of:
    - Securing the scene
    - Directing personnel (and limiting unnecessary personnel from the scene)
    - Ensuring evidence is properly examined and collected.
- Officer Safety and Wellness
  - Law enforcement officers are regularly exposed to a range of traumatic scenes. This can take a toll on one's physical and mental well-being.

- Supervisors should know the safety and wellness resources that are available to officers.
- Supervisors should also learn how to recognize warning signs that officers are exhibiting stress, as well as when to intervene with officers who may need assistance.
- Supervisors must foster an environment where it is not perceived as “weak” to ask for help.
- **Community Engagement**
  - Every supervisor will have to engage with the community during incidents
  - Improving communication skills, with a focus on community stakeholders, is essential.
  - Supervisors should understand how social and traditional news media operate and how to work with reporters.
  - Prior to a critical incident, departments should train first-line supervisors in their agency’s media and social media policies.
  - Depending on the agency, if first-line supervisors are not authorized to update the media, they should know where to direct the public to go for current and accurate information on a critical incident.

***Promising Practice: Tucson Police Department: New Supervisor Program***

*The Tucson Police Department developed a 52-week supervisory program for new sergeants, lasting the entire probationary period. The program includes a 40-hour training block at the Academy that provides instruction on leadership skills, transitioning from officer to sergeant, conflict resolution, communication skills, scene management, community interaction, and more.*

*Multiple scenarios are included in the training, including ones on critical incidents like barricade situations, active shooter and clearing buildings, officer involved shooting incidents, and responding to use-of-force situations. The training block is followed by 10 weeks of field training, with a focus on three main topics:*

- *Critical Incident Response/Crime Scene Management*
- *Community Engagement*
- *Employee Management*

*The remainder of the probationary period is a training course teaching new sergeants the skills, concepts, and tactics they need to know as a first-line supervisor. Sergeants complete orientations in all areas of the department, such as the Mental Health Support Team, Records department, Legal department, and the Specialized Response Division. New sergeants also receive an orientation from the agency’s Critical Incident Review Board, a group of sworn and non-sworn members who review the facts of major incidents, document lessons learned, and prepare a written report for the Chief.*

*The different orientations allow for the sergeants to be exposed to incidents they may not have frequently encountered in their careers thus far, learn more about available resources, and understand the importance of documenting events prior to an actual event unfolding.*

*Throughout the course, sergeants must complete projects aimed at impacting crime and calls for service in the division to which they are assigned. The projects that focus on Calls for Service target specific locations with a high call volume. Crime Reduction Plans target a larger crime issue in a particular division.*

*There is also a Community Engagement Program as part of the course. Sergeants partner with a local non-profit/non-governmental organization to learn about the needs of the Tucson community and receive assistance on their Crime Reduction Plan. They must also attend one community association meeting a month and present on crime trends in their division.*

*These interactions allow the sergeant to appreciate the importance of these community relationships before, during and after a critical event. Sergeants have the opportunity to cultivate these relationships in advance and understand the unique nature of each neighborhood.*

*The program also includes policy review, administrative training, reading, and journaling assignments.*

*Every three months, probationary sergeants receive a 360-degree evaluation of their progress, with includes feedback from their direct reports, overlapping personnel, peers, lieutenants, and their assigned captain. This program prepares sergeants for every aspect of their supervisory role, building their leadership skills and giving them the tools to use in any type of incident, including critical incidents.*

*The following four documents outline TPD's 52-week training plan for probationary sergeants.*

1. [Probationary Sergeant Training Plan](#)
2. [Probationary Sergeant Weekly Training Assignments](#)
3. [Sergeant's Academy Syllabus](#)
4. [Probationary Sergeant Training Plan Tracking Spreadsheet](#)

**Helpful Resource:** [Media Relations Resources - IACP](#)

*The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has assembled various resources and considerations for agencies needing assistance creating a public information office, gaining a better understanding of the importance of a good media relations strategy, and improving the communication flow from an agency to its community stakeholders. This resource is useful for FLSs whose agencies allow them to interact with the media or FLSs who would like to learn media relations best practices.*

## Train for critical incidents with other department units and outside agencies and their supervisors.

Critical incidents often include other department units and outside agencies as part of the response. Therefore, trainings should incorporate those other agencies and their supervisors.

These trainings should include scenarios for the group to practice and debrief. Collaborative training also provides an opportunity to identify and discuss any potential problems or gaps in resources. It is also helpful to review the other agencies' policies on critical incidents and create Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to formalize partnerships and establish protocols when necessary.

Sometimes policies may conflict or use terms used that other agencies are unfamiliar with. For example, some agencies use 10-codes while others use plain-language, different agencies will use acronyms unique to their departments, or have different policies regarding speaking to the media and sharing information with the public. It is important to discuss these topics in advance, before an incident arises.

Suggested agencies to include:

- Emergency Communication Centers
- Fire and EMS departments
- Private security at venues such as stadiums and malls
- Local fusion centers
- Other regional agencies that may be part of a critical incident response
- Public and private mental health departments and organizations

### ***Promising Practice: Harris County Sheriff's Office New Blue NIMS Training***

*Harris County Sheriff's Office has developed a training course in partnership with the county Fire Marshal's Office that covers incident command for both every day and critical incidents that involve a multi-agency response. The training course, called Blue NIMS<sup>®</sup>, provides guidance on the application of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) for both every day and critical incidents.*

*The following resources include the course description and overview as well as the course outline. For more information, contact HCFMO Deputy Chief Rodney Reed at [Rodney.Reed@fmo.hctx.net](mailto:Rodney.Reed@fmo.hctx.net).*

1. [Course Overview](#)
2. [Course Outline](#)

## Give new FLSs opportunities to be observed in the field and shadow veteran supervisors.

In addition to training, new supervisors may benefit from participating in an observation or shadowing experience. Experiential learning is critical. Having someone else with whom to discuss ideas and issues helps FLSs develop their own decision-making skills. Shadowing opportunities can be built into the FLS training as a formal FTO program or it can be done informally.

### ***Promising Practice: Sergeants FTO Program and Informal Shadowing Opportunities***

*The Camden County, NJ Police Department requires all new sergeants to finish their training program by going through a four-week sergeants FTO program.*

*For the first two weeks, a newly appointed sergeant will ride along with and observe a senior training sergeant. During this time, the senior sergeant will train the new sergeant on topics and criteria including managing roll call, appearance and attitude, supervisory duties, and communication skills.*

*During the next two weeks, the senior sergeant will evaluate the new sergeant. Each day the senior sergeant completes an evaluation form, rating the new sergeant on the above criteria. In addition, new supervisors must demonstrate their ability to receive critical feedback review and understand policies such as vehicle pursuits and use of force reporting, and respond to a critical incident. The evaluation also asks the senior sergeant to detail a specific incident that went well or needed improvement each day. After the successful completion of the FTO program, the new sergeant is released from training.*

*Shadowing and mentoring can also be done more informally. One commander in the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department whose precinct regularly sees both planned and unplanned protests said that he offers to have new sergeants shadow him during these incidents.*

*Other commanders said they encourage their sergeants to seek out these opportunities when possible. By fostering a culture where veteran personnel are eager to help newer staff, shadowing can become a natural practice in the agency. The Daily Observation Report sheet is linked below.*

### **[Supervisors Daily Observation Report](#)**

## Proactively establish relationships with community stakeholders.

The community can be a great resource for law enforcement agencies, especially during and following a critical incident.

There are multiple benefits to establishing a positive relationship with the community in advance of a critical incident. Supervisors will become familiar with the people they police and the geographical layout of the area, helping to ensure that they can make quick and informed decisions during a critical incident.

Through regular interaction with community members and leaders, supervisors will also become familiar with key stakeholders, including school administrators, religious leaders, business community representatives, and medical center staff. These individuals can be helpful in providing intelligence and additional resources when necessary.

### **Action Items for Supervisors:**

- 1) Become familiar with the layout of major community gathering places, such as malls, stadiums, public parks and event venues, and ask about their emergency response plans.
- 2) Meet with key internal and external stakeholders.
  - Internal stakeholders can include city or county agencies like:
    - Public Works Department, Human Resources, Community Services, Economic Development, Mental Health, and others. They will have connections to resources that could be crucial to a successful response.
  - External stakeholders include:
    - School administrators, religious leaders, business community representatives, medical center staff and discuss how to partner better during critical incidents.
- 3) Keep lines of communication open with stakeholders both during and after a critical incident, keeping them updated and seeing if they have useful information to provide.
- 4) Address any misinformation about critical incidents. Community stakeholders can be especially well-positioned to help dispel rumors that often arise after a critical incident.

### ***Promising Practice: Metropolitan Nashville PD Relies on Established Relationships in Responding to Mall Shooting***

*In May 2018, a dispute in the Opry Mills Mall in Nashville led to a shooting of one person, causing mall patrons to either evacuate or hide inside of stores. The initial 9-1-1 calls were for an active shooter situation and Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPD) units expected a mass casualty incident while to responding to the scene.*

*The Opry Mills Mall is a sizeable complex that has over 200 stores, a movie theater, and restaurants. Several of the responding supervisors were familiar with the layout of the mall, the multiple points of entry and exit, and importantly, the mall management and security teams. This was because the police had previously trained with mall security and management on responding to a critical incident within the mall.*

*Based on the training, a MNPD sergeant knew to immediately go to the mall control room. He worked with the mall management and security team to help organize the MNPD response to the shooting. The police department had also trained with the fire department and paramedics which allowed for a more coordinated and smoother response to what was initially thought to be a mass casualty event.*

*Upon arrival, there was miscommunication between mall management and the MNPd on whether there was a single master key to unlock every store in the mall. However, given their familiarity with one another, sergeants were able to communicate with mall management the specifics of what they were requesting and were able to get the individual keys to each store. Then, locksmiths and SWAT members paired up to unlock each store in the mall and search for additional suspects and/or survivors.*

*Pre-planning and proactive communication from sergeants were essential during this incident. Had the MNPd not trained with the Opry Mills Mall's management and security personnel, supervisors reported that their response to the critical incident would have been much slower. It took a long time to conduct a complete security sweep of all of the mall's stores, but supervisors said that because they had already established relationships with important mall employees and knew the layout which helped ensure a safe and timely response.*



# Managing a Critical Incident

Critical incidents can be dynamic and dangerous. First Line Supervisors (FLSs) can benefit from having resources to help them manage these situations. This section contains several strategies for effectively managing a critical incident including PERF's [Critical Decision-Making Model](#), the [7-C's of a Critical Incident](#), a [checklist for managing a critical incident](#), and additional resources provided by several other law enforcement agencies

## PERF's Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM)

### Background information on the CDM

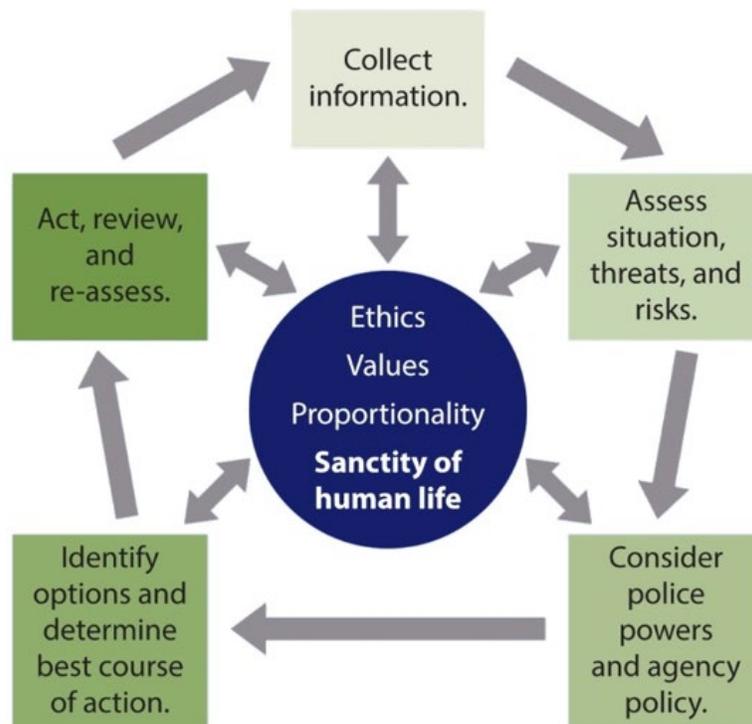
Adapted from the police forces in the United Kingdom, PERF's [Critical Decision-Making Model \(CDM\)](#) can help law enforcement personnel quickly make organized, logical, and ethical decisions. PERF has primarily used the CDM as a decision-making tool when training agencies to de-escalate potential use-of-force incidents; however, the CDM can be used by law enforcement as a decision-making tool for many types of critical incidents.

The CDM is a five-step tool that is anchored by a set of core values (customized for each agency). The CDM can help first-line supervisors (FLSs) make crucial and time-sensitive decisions during critical incidents. When supervisors work their way through the CDM, or "spin the model," they will go through a structured set of directions that will help them manage dynamic situations and ensure a safe outcome.

If the issue is not resolved, FLSs must go back to Step 1 and continue the process by beginning to collect more information. As information evolves, supervisors should reevaluate the response, change and reallocate resources, and update all responders on the new direction of the operation. **This process is called "spinning the model."** FLSs should "spin the model," considering each step of the CDM until each issue is successfully completed and the critical incident is resolved.

At each step in the model, FLSs should be considering the CDM core to determine whether each action taken is in accordance with their agency's mission and values. This helps to ensure that all decisions made and actions taken are in accordance with department policy and the critical incident is resolved safely.

The CDM provides a structure for how many law enforcement officials, supervisors, and officers already make decisions. Like any new activity, the CDM becomes second-nature with enough practice.



### Core

The CDM is a circular five-step process that first-line supervisors can use to safely and efficiently resolve critical incidents. In the middle of the CDM is the core. PERF recommends that departments and individuals edit the core and enter the principles that guide all of their work. Ethics, values, proportionality, and the sanctity of human life are important factors when considering any decision; however, other principles may be more important for agencies when they consider this decision-making processes.

- **Step 1 – Collect Information**  
 Collect all information possible prior to arriving on scene. This includes listening to radio transmissions by dispatchers and officers, scanning call information on a mobile data terminal, and reviewing prior calls for service at the location of the incident or criminal history of any of the involved subjects. While it is listed as Step 1 in the CDM, information collection is an ongoing activity when using the model.
- **Step 2 – Assess the situation, threats, and risks**  
 Supervisors gauge the magnitude of the critical incident and assess factors such as whether the initial information is accurate, if there are enough personnel on scene, whether immediate police action needs to be taken, and if there are any risks present to officers or bystanders.
- **Step 3 – Consider police powers and agency policy**  
 While it may be a given on critical incident scenes, supervisors should always determine whether their officers have the legal right to be on scene. FLSs should ask themselves if this is a police matter, and, if so, given the information the FLS has collected and assessed, what are the legal powers they have and how do their agency’s policies guide their decision making?

- **Step 4 – Identify options and determine the best course of action.**

This step includes:

- Considering what you are trying to achieve during the critical incident:
- Address immediate threat.
- Take the subject into custody. Note that in some instances taking the subject into custody right away might not be advisable or necessary.
- Establish communications with the subject (if possible).
- Attempt to buy more time for additional officers or resources to respond to the scene.
- Communicating with their officers.
- Determining the most appropriate tactics to safely and effectively respond to the critical incident.

- **Step 5 – Act, review, and re-assess.**

In this step, FLSs must act, or give orders to their officers to take action. Once completed, FLSs need to assess whether the actions were completed properly and had the intended effect.

**Promising Practice: How the Burlington, NC Police Department Uses the CDM**

*The Camden County, NJ Police Department was one of the first agencies to integrate the Critical Decision-Making Model (CDM) into its policies, procedures, and training. Other agencies have followed suit. Here are five ways that the Burlington, NC Police Department is using the CDM:*



### **1. Remedial Training:**

*Following an individual incident, a supervisor or training staff member may sit down with an officer or other employee to work through the event using the CDM. The CDM provides a structured way to review incident from start to finish. This process allows the employee to better understand their decision-making, and repetition with the CDM helps it to become a natural process.*

### **2. After Action and Debriefs**

*The Burlington PD also uses the CDM in After Actions and Debriefs of critical incidents. In going through the event, the department typically uses a first-line supervisor as the facilitator. The goal is to help everyone involved to understand both their legal authority to be involved in the incident in the first place and why decisions were made along the way. The CDM allows for reflection on how and what information was received and processed, risks present or posed, and how they were assessed. Further, the CDM provides a structured way for evaluating what actions were taken, what the results were, and how the incident was brought to a conclusion. This allows for misinformation, missteps, successes, and pitfalls to be uncovered and discussed, and for any corrective steps to be identified.*

### **3. Vehicle Operations:**

*During driver's training, the Burlington PD uses the CDM for emergency driving and pursuit driving policy review. These high-liability activities need to be reviewed regularly, and the CDM provides the tools for trainers to build their lessons using a consistent model for delivery. Also, the CDM is used when reviewing officer-involved vehicle crashes to allow the officer to understand the impact of their decisions before, during, and after an at-fault crash.*

### **4. Firearms:**

*During firearms decision-making courses, the Burlington PD designs its training objectives using the CDM. This allows the trainer and the officer to navigate through the course, and then while debriefing the decision-making course, the CDM provides the outline for discussion and feedback.*

### **5. Scenario-Based Training:**

*The Burlington PD has found that all scenario-based training exercises – not just use-of-force scenarios – can be created utilizing the framework of the CDM. The initial training objectives, the script of the scenario, and the debrief portion of the activity can all be based on the five-step model. Using the CDM throughout the training curriculum provides for consistency, familiarity, and reapplication of the model in all aspects of training.*

*For more information about the Burlington Police Department's use of the CDM, contact Lt. Shelly Katkowski at [SKatkowski@burlingtonnc.gov](mailto:SKatkowski@burlingtonnc.gov).*

## The 7 C's of a Critical Incident

The 7 C's were explained to PERF and developed by Inspector Matt Galvin of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). When developed, Inspector Galvin was the Executive Officer of NYPD's Emergency Services Unit (ESU). The ESU is responsible for responding to many critical incidents in the city such as hostage barricades, suicide-by-cop situations, mass casualty events, and the like. ESU detectives receive additional communications, negotiations, and tactics training.

While many of these steps were developed for the NYPD ESU, it is not solely for specialty units like the ESU. Patrol sergeants can master these steps and use this list to be successful on critical incidents. Deploying these tactics and following the checklist can help any group of supervisors and officers to be successful.

### **C-1. Take Command of the scene.**

- There should be a system of roles, responsibilities, and procedures that ensure command of personnel and resources are funneled through one entity.
- Always designate an Incident Commander (IC) regardless of the size and nature of the incident. Sometimes, the IC may be a first-line supervisor, who needs to be prepared to manage and direct officials who outrank the FLS.
- Establish a command post. The command post should be staged in a location a safe distance away from the incident scene.
- In large-scale incidents that may require the response of multiple agencies or jurisdictions, consider unifying the command so all agency commanders can coordinate the incident response.
- Display confidence. When FLSs project confidence, they in turn instill confidence in their officers. No one wants to follow orders from someone who is not confident in their decisions. If an FLS is confident, it will make their officers more decisive and officers will be more likely to follow orders from the FLS.
- Be the supervisor. While this may seem obvious, FLSs need to focus more on the big picture of an incident, gathering intel and delegating the smaller tasks. FLSs cannot operate as both a first responder and a supervisor. This supervisory mindset is different from that of an officer, and some supervisors struggle to make the transition.

### **C-2. Be in Control**

- FLSs must always keep themselves under control during a rapidly evolving, stressful, and emotionally taxing critical incident. There is an "emotional contagion" at work in critical incidents: when FLSs are calm and under control, the people they are directing are more likely to act the same way.

- Being calm during a chaotic situation also helps instill confidence in responding officers. Officers will look for guidance on how to react themselves.
- FLSs must ensure the actions of those under their command are controlled and focused on the mission/task at hand.
- If officers are using excessive force, acting in a way that endangers fellow officers or bystanders, or jeopardizing the police response to the incident, FLSs have a duty to intervene and remove those officers from the incident.

### **C-3. Communicate**

- FLSs must clearly and calmly communicate to their officers and over the radio.
- Clear communication facilitates efficiency and teamwork.
- Communication can help with decision-making. Someone else on scene may have had similar experience and could recommend a best practice approach.
- Always be clear in issuing directions and ensure all officers, not just a few, understand what directions they are to follow. During a chaotic scene, orders can easily be misunderstood. FLSs should speak clearly and directly to their officers, naming them when giving commands. For example, FLSs could say:
  - “Officer [Name], watch that door.”
  - “Officer [Name], stand by this evidence/weapon.”
  - “Officer [Name], go with the ambulance to the hospital.”
- Ensure that there is a common radio channel at an incident. That radio channel must be kept clear of non-incident communication. If not, it can lead to agencies or individuals not knowing or understanding what actions are being conducted.
- As the incident commander, the FLS is also responsible for communicating updates to agency leaders, command centers, etc.

### **C-4. Containment – make sure the scene is safe.**

- Establish perimeters and zones (hot/warm/cold).
- Control ingress and egress points.
- Consider the possibility of a sudden and unexpected event that occurs at an incident and how to respond without overwhelming or overtaking the overall mission.

### **C-5. Coordinate the resources that are available to you.**

- No critical incidents are static. There will always be moving parts.
- Coordination ties together the prior four C’s. This ensures a safe and efficient incident response.

- Preventing unnecessary personnel from entering and operating within the scene. At many critical incidents, there is a tendency for personnel to “self-dispatch” to the scene. The incident commander should be clear with dispatchers on what resources are—and are not—needed on the scene.
  - Those officers and resources that respond to the scene should report to a previously established staging area.
- Have situational awareness to quickly determine where to direct responding officers and resources.
- Be aware of your officers’ strengths and weaknesses; know what resources your agency has and know how to call for them; and be familiar with the area to plan for the best response.
- Officers’ biological needs should be considered, including food and water as well as bathroom breaks. Consider partnering with outside organizations such as the Red Cross or Salvation Army for assistance.

**C-6. Complacency – these incidents are dynamic; do not become complacent.**

- FLSs must ensure they and their officers do not become complacent, especially during long operational periods.
- Complacency can occur at all ranks on scene.
- Maintain situational awareness.
- FLSs should consider adequate relief and rotation to refresh personnel if possible.

**C-7. Critique – Conduct debrief sessions to discuss both positive and negative actions during the incident. (This “C” is covered in greater detail in Part 3 – After a Critical Incident.)**

- Debrief sessions ensure that mistakes aren’t repeated at future incidents.
- Use debrief sessions as a learning opportunity to train and prepare for the next incident.
- Use constructive criticism.
- All primary personnel on scene have a perspective and should contribute to the discussion.
- Identify vulnerabilities, pitfalls, and shortcomings.

***Promising Practice: The 7-C’s in Practice – An Example from the NYPD***

*The following incident is real-life example of the 7-C’s in action. It demonstrates the importance of the first first-line supervisor taking charge of the scene through a comprehensive and coordinated response that follows the 7-C’s. It also illustrates how, by using the 7-C’s, the initial supervisor can smoothly hand off incident command to a higher-ranking member once they arrive on scene.*

*In January 2021, security at the Queens Place Mall in Queens, NY called 9-1-1, reporting a suspicious vehicle. The vehicle was a Tesla with Nevada license plates and was parked on the mall's parking garage entrance ramp.*

*Mall security called 9-1-1 at 9:30am, 30 minutes before the mall was to open and reported that the car appeared to be loaded with explosives.*

*A New York City Police Department (NYPD) patrol unit responded, and upon arrival conducted a cursory search of the area in question. On a spiral entrance ramp between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the parking garage, they discovered a black Tesla with Nevada plates and political propaganda taped over the exterior of the vehicle. The patrol unit confirmed what appeared to be an explosive device inside of the vehicle. They conducted a check of the license plates and discovered that the vehicle had been reported stolen two days prior in Las Vegas, NV. At the mall, witnesses reported observing two unidentified males walking away from the garage entrance hours earlier.*

*The unit requested backup and a patrol supervisor.*

*The "7-C's" began once the supervisor arrived. There is inherently a great deal of fluidity with the "C's," so they are not always used in order.*

- *The Supervisor was the acting Incident Commander (IC) and immediately requested additional personnel. **(C-1 Command) (C-2 Control)***
  - *A mobilization was activated for Patrol personnel, Emergency Service Unit, Bomb Squad, Detective Bureau, and Traffic Division. The Fire Department (FDNY) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) were also requested. **(C-5 Coordinate)***
- *A Command Post was established 1-block away. **(C-1 Command)***
- *A mobilization/staging area was designated over the radio. The staging area was placed behind another building which acted as cover from a potential blast. **(C-1 Command)***
- *The patrol supervisor gave preliminary briefings to responding agencies and department units who then developed a joint operational plan. **(C-3 Communicate) (C-5 Coordinate)***
- *Patrol assignments were promptly given by the supervisor with instructions for particular officers and posts. These included the evacuation of adjacent buildings, traffic control in a two block perimeter, video canvas etc. **(C-3 Communicate) (C-5 Coordinate)***
  - *Points of ingress and operational zones were established. **(C-4 Containment)***
  - *Traffic routes were communicated via dispatchers and the Operations Division. **(C-4 Containment)***
- *The Borough Commander arrived, who was briefed and assumed IC with his deputy acting as his aide to further coordinate resources at the scene. **(C-3 Communicate) (C-5 Coordinate)***
- *Investigators from the NYPD and federal agencies were on the scene and worked together to quickly gather information and intelligence. They communicated verified information to the IC, who in turn notified officials at NYPD Headquarters for dissemination to the Executive Staff as well as our Public Information staff. **(C-3 Communicate)***

- *Once the scene was established, specialized personnel can perform their specific responsibilities. (C-5 Coordinate) (C-6 Complacency)*
- *This incident was safely mitigated in approximately 2 ½ hours with the suspected explosive device identified as a hoax. The large scene then collapsed to a smaller scene for evidence processing, and detectives took over the investigation. (C-5 Coordinate) (C-6 Complacency)*
- *There was not a formal After Action Review conducted; however, an informal debrief among individual units occurred. (C-7 Critique)*

## Checklist for Managing Critical Incident Responses

Below is a checklist that agency first-line supervisors (FLSs) can use in managing critical incidents. Agencies and supervisors should consult both best practices and their agencies' policies before constructing a comprehensive "checklist" that provides detailed, concrete steps that FLSs should take in key areas. The following checklist can be used as a guide.

- Establish a perimeter and isolate the subject or the focus of the incident.
- Secure the scene and, if necessary, evacuate civilians.
- Establish a command post and staging areas a safe distance away from the scene for officers and resources to respond to.
- Manage and assign personnel responding to the scene. Assignments could include:
  - Managing traffic
  - Maintaining a perimeter
  - Responsibility for making notifications
  - Hospital or prisoner transport
  - Information control or scene scribe
  - Evidence/weapons control
  - Plain clothes or field intelligence to talk and listen to civilians
  - Canvass the area for suspects, victims, and/or witnesses
- Manage self-deployments
  - Ensure that self-deployed officers do not overwhelm an already chaotic scene.
  - Ensure enough officers remain in service to handle the normal calls-for-service not related to the critical incident.
- Traffic management (including maintaining points of entry for arriving resources)

- On the perimeter, ensure that there are clear access and exit points for other first responders, such as the fire department and EMS.
- Inside the perimeter, there should also be a route cleared for emergency vehicles to access the location in the event that victims need to be transported to the hospital or other time-sensitive actions are required. Responding units should only park on one side of the road to leave room for these vehicles.
- Internal communications
  - Make all notifications to senior officials and department entities.
    - If possible, have another FLS or assign an officer to maintain communications with senior officials who may ask for updates during an incident.
  - Ensure that the dispatch center is kept informed of all major developments.
  - Keep officers informed of major developments on scene
  - Solicit information from senior officers and the first officers to arrive on scene.
  - If possible, have all participating units switch radio channels or work with dispatch to keep the radio clear of non-critical incident communications to ensure that participating units can communicate clearly and effectively during the incident.
- External communications
  - Ensure that witnesses and anyone associated with the subject (if applicable) are interviewed.
  - If unfamiliar with a building's layout, solicit information from people who work or reside in the building (if applicable).
  - When possible, communicate pertinent public safety information with the civilians directly impacted by the critical incident.
  - Establish a designated media area and assign a PIO or supervisor to give updates.
- Warm handoff
  - If an incident extends into another shift, ensure all relevant information is shared with any personnel relieving the outgoing shift, especially other supervisors.
- Documentation
  - If possible, assign a scribe to record all personnel arriving and leaving the scene of the critical incident. The scribe should also document all resources that arrive on scene and major actions taken. Scribes should also record the times for all major actions.
  - Dry erase whiteboards should be used by the incident commander. All intelligence information, scene diagrams, officer assignments, and operational directives, can be illustrated on the boards. The whiteboard allows for smoother transition of command and can be photographed as evidence for after-action reports.

***Helpful Resources:***

- [\*\*\*Tucson Police Department's OIS Checklist\*\*\*](#)  
This reference guide from the Tucson Police Department, a partner agency, lists the required procedures that incident commanders must complete during the response to officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths.
- [\*\*\*Metropolitan Nashville Police Department's Field Supervisor Reference Guide\*\*\*](#)  
This reference guide from the MNPd, one of our partner agencies, lists 46 incidents an FLS may face during a tour of duty. Each incident has actions the FLS should take to appropriately respond to the incident. While these actions are MNPd-specific, this guide can be used by any FLS. In addition, agencies can use it as a template should they want to create a field reference guide specific to their agency.
- [\*\*\*Tulsa Police Department's Critical Incident Response Manual\*\*\*](#)  
This manual is from the Tulsa Police Department, one of our partner agencies, and includes a decision making chart for law enforcement responding to a critical incident. It also includes checklists for 10 critical incident scenarios and a sample after action report. Parts of this guide are specific to Tulsa, but it can be used as a reference for other agencies and first-line supervisors.



# Post-Critical Incident

Just as training before a critical incident is critical, so is the act of debriefing after one. A critical incident is not over after the initial response ends. Assessing how the response went is essential for improving both individual and agency performance.

**There are three key aspects to a post-incident response:**

1. Debriefs
2. After-action reports
3. Officer wellness programs.

## Debriefs

Debriefs help identify what went right and wrong during the incident. Debriefs are a good opportunity to bring together everyone involved in the response, not just first-line supervisors (FLSs). However, debriefs are especially important to FLSs because they provide an opportunity for officers to comment on how the supervisors can better support or direct them during an incident.

Ideally, there should be two types of debriefs conducted after a critical incident: a “hotwash” and a formal debrief.

- **An informal “hotwash”** immediately following the incident is helpful in capturing feedback from everyone on scene, including responders from other agencies. A first-line supervisor can facilitate the hotwash and have another officer serve as a scribe to document the feedback. **A hotwash focuses on immediate concerns**, such as tactics, officer safety and wellness, and is good for gathering quick feedback for the agency. Taking the feedback back to the agency then allows for a more in-depth analysis of the incident.
- **A formal debrief** may happen shortly after the incident and is a more organized process. These kinds of debriefs should also include the dispatcher(s) that handled the incident and can include other agencies or jail officials (if utilized). Whereas a hotwash is about immediate issues, formal debriefs are better suited to address longer term concerns of the agency, such as changes to training and protocols.

## Formatting a Debrief

Regardless of the kind of debrief, a similar structure should be followed. Below is an example of how to format a debrief:

1. The FLS and/or the first responding officer(s) should briefly describe the incident.
  1. This person should provide an overview of the incident and its objective, starting with the initial call for service and progressing through the response to the resolution. At this point in the process there is no analysis of the event, simply a list of facts about the response.
2. Have all responding personnel briefly describe their role in the incident and what specific actions they took throughout the incident.
3. Discuss the initial plan and include backup plans if Plan A did not work.
4. Was Plan A effective?
5. If yes, why? If no, why?
6. The FLS and all personnel who were present should identify any issues they witnessed such as tactical concerns, internal and external communication errors, as well as deployment and assignment shortcomings.
7. All present personnel should identify the key takeaways and lessons learned from the incident and establish future tactical improvements and policy considerations.

## Other Issues to Consider

Debriefs are meant to encourage open and honest conversation. Each participant should be prepared to admit to their shortcomings and accept constructive criticism from others, as appropriate. This setting usually does not occur organically, so supervisors must encourage an environment where participants feel comfortable and compelled to honestly share their feedback. If this environment is not established, debrief participants may be tempted to not acknowledge shortcomings or blame mistakes on other units or departments.

Supervisors must also be aware that the participants who could add the most constructive feedback may be people at the lowest ranks. FLSs should ensure that officers do not feel intimidated to speak up. Supervisors set the tone during the debrief process and need to make sure it is productive and constructive.

The debrief should also identify positive aspects of the response. The focus of conversation is not on calling people out, but on identifying ways to improve and tying each positive and negative action back to agency policy or training. No incident is without room for improvement.

Summary debriefs during roll call can be beneficial, especially for people who were not part of the response. All can learn from the incident. A first-line supervisor can comment on the facts of the

incident and provide a summary of the feedback, prompting a larger conversation. This can lead to agency-wide improvements to trainings, policies, and procedures.

**Summary of FLSs' role in the initial debriefing process:**

- Facilitate hotwashes and formal debriefs.
- Encourage participants to be open and honest.
- Provide critical feedback to team members.
- Provide feedback to other responding units or resources.

**Helpful Resources:**

- *This policy details how to debrief and produce an after-action report following a critical incident. It describes the process for both components, gives a timeline for each, and includes a section on how to retain reports for future reference. (Page 66 - Policy 301, "Debriefing of Critical Incidents")*  
[Debriefing and After-Action Report Policy - Riverside \(CA\) Police Department](#)
- *From the Wiltshire Police in the United Kingdom, this document provides guidance on the benefits of debriefing an incident, different kinds of debriefs, and how to hold an effective debrief.*  
[Debriefing Procedure for Critical Incidents - Wiltshire Police](#)
- *From the College of Policing in the United Kingdom, this document provides guidance on how to brief before an incident and how to debrief after one.*  
[Briefing and Debriefing Guidance - College of Policing](#)
- *FEMA uses this Hot Wash Form in training exercises. It can also serve as a basic model for other agencies that wish to implement hot washes. The form prompts participants of the hot wash to list the top three organizational strengths, top three items for improvement, and general comments on the incident.*  
[Hot Wash Form – FEMA](#)

## After-Action Reports

Following a debrief, it is beneficial to produce an after-action report (AAR) to share with the entire agency. An after-action report should discuss:

- What happened in the incident
- What the agency's response was
- What went well in the response

- What needs to be improved

**The after-action report can help identify common trends in critical incident responses. If AARs reveal trends in policy violations or training shortcomings across several critical incidents, the documents should be used by policy and training personnel to make adjustments as needed.** Areas to focus on include training, communication, policies, and procedures. Having a standardized after-action report form and an official policy on AARs will help formalize and standardize the process.

The after-action report is not to be used for disciplinary action or to blame certain personnel for the outcome of the incident. Although individual actions and decision-making will be considered, the goal of the AAR is to identify and address shortcomings in the agency. Once an after-action report is written, it should be disseminated internally for all agency personnel to learn from.

Exactly who is responsible for drafting the AAR will depend on the agency. In some cases, the on-scene FLS may be called upon to put together the report, especially if they served as the Incident Commander. Even if they are not responsible for drafting the AAR, first-line supervisors still play a critical role in assembling information and providing input to the AAR team.

### ***Promising Practice: Learning from Other Agencies***

*In addition to debriefing their own critical incidents, first-line supervisors can often learn valuable lessons by examining the experiences of other agencies in managing critical incidents.*

*These types of analyses of outside agencies do not replace the need to perform debriefs and after-action reviews of how your agency handled a critical incident. Rather, these external analyses can supplement your internal reviews and help you identify and prepare for different contingencies in the future.*

*For example, if another agency recently handled a type of critical incident that your department has not confronted before, it can be valuable to study what that agency faced and how it responded. Such an analysis can reveal the need for new or different training, equipment, or tactics in your agency should you be presented with a similar situation.*

*To conduct these external reviews, it is important to assemble as much information as possible about the critical incident and the other agency's response. This could include after-action reports, video of the incident (both open source and body-worn camera, if available), and any other documents that may be informative. If the other agency is willing to assist, it would also be valuable to debrief the incident with a first-line supervisor from that agency.*

*Once the background information has been collected and analyzed, first-line supervisors can present it to their teams or during roll calls and ask a series of "what if" questions:*

- *If this same type of incident were to take place in our jurisdiction, what would our response look like?*
- *What did the other agency do well that we could try to replicate?*

- *What might we try to do differently?*
- *Do we have the necessary training, equipment, and other resources to effectively handle this type of situation? And if not, how do we plug those gaps?*
- *How would we measure success in this type of incident?*

*Remember: the purpose here is not to critique how the other agency performed. Instead, it is to make your own agency better prepared and improve your performance by learning from the experiences of someone else.*

*One potential area where FLSs could apply this approach is the response to the demonstrations and riots that occurred in the summer of 2020 following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and other high-profile incidents. Several agencies have produced and made public after-action reports about their response to the demonstrations and riots. Studying those after-action reports and asking some “what if” questions could help FLSs better plan for and manage similar incidents involving their agencies in the future.*

#### **Helpful Resources:**

- *This policy on After-Action Reports addresses when to complete a report, who is involved in the process, and how the report is disseminated in the department.*  
[\*\*After-Action Policy and Report Format - Seattle Police Department\*\*](#)
- *The Tucson Police Department conducts a Critical Incident Review Board after major incidents such as an officer-involved shooting, pursuits that result in serious injury or death, events where police action caused a loss of public confidence in law enforcement. This pamphlet outlines the purpose and parameters of a Critical Incident Review Board.*  
[\*\*Critical Incident Review Board – Operations Pamphlet - Tucson Police Department\*\*](#)
- *This is a transcript of a webinar, “Making the Most of your After Action Review,” hosted by Rob Trivino. The webinar discusses the key components of an after action review, how to run a review, and possible roadblocks agencies may encounter while implementing reviews. The full webinar is available for purchase as part of a course on after action reviews.*  
[\*\*Making the Most of your After Action Review - Justice Clearinghouse\*\*](#)

## Officer Wellness Programs

Critical incidents can be traumatic events for responding personnel. Law enforcement agencies need to evaluate their officer wellness programs and ensure they are providing their personnel with the necessary resources after a critical incident.

First-line supervisors play an important role in officer wellness. FLSs should monitor their officers for signs of depression or other mental health issues, especially after a traumatic critical incident. If a supervisor perceives one of their officers is depressed or at-risk for suicide, they should:

1. Check-in with that officer and ask them how they are doing.
2. Monitor sick leave – depression, substance abuse, and other issues will appear here first.
3. Watch for at-risk behaviors, such as alcohol abuse (hangover at work, weight gain or loss, consistent sleepiness), withdrawing from activities, isolating themselves from friends or family, or giving away possessions. A reduction in exercise or quitting a beloved hobby can also be warning signs.
4. Look for noticeable changes in their mood such as an increase in anxiety and irritability.
5. Encourage the officer to visit your agency's Employee Assistance Program, Peer Support Unit, or other resources your agency provides.

Different agencies have different resources; FLSs should be aware of what is available in their agency and be trained on how to address wellness issues with their officers. FLSs should also recognize that some officers may feel more comfortable talking with professionals who are familiar with law enforcement.

Key elements of an Officer Wellness Program in the aftermath of a critical incident can include the following:

- An Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- A Peer Support Program
- A relationship with a Critical Incident Stress Management group

#### **Helpful Resources:**

- *In response to a national surge of police suicides, the Police Executive Research Forum partnered with the New York City Police Department to host a day-long conference that discussed the extent and nature of police suicides and shared best practices for expanding officer wellness opportunities across the field. This report highlights the day's discussions and examines additional research from the field.*  
[\*\*An Occupational Risk: What Every Police Agency Should Do To Prevent Suicide Among Its Officers\*\*](#)
- *The Police Executive Research Forum published this report highlighting the San Diego Police Department's officer wellness programs. After a string of traumatic incidents involving officers in 2011, the department responded by forming a Wellness Unit. The unit focuses on supporting the physical and emotional health of all members of the department. This report documents*

*the main components of the wellness initiative and provides promising practices for other agencies to consider.*

**[Building and Sustaining an Officer Wellness Program: Lessons from the San Diego Police Department](#)**

- *This handbook provides information for law enforcement officers who have recently experienced a critical incident. It discusses the impact of critical incidents on an officer's mental health, stress management and wellness strategies, and suggestions for agency protocols that support officers after critical incidents.*

**[The Law Enforcement Critical Incident Handbook - Jack Digliani](#)**

- *The IACP has various resources on officer wellness, including a webinar on vicarious trauma, infographics on supporting law enforcement families, model policies, and reports on officer suicide.*

**[Law Enforcement Agency and Officer Resilience Training Program - IACP](#)**



# Helpful Resources

PERF has assembled a variety of helpful resources that correspond with the three sections of this toolkit, covering [Pre-](#), [During](#), and [Post-Incident](#) topics.

- The General Resources contain a Quick Reference Guide and other documents that apply to multiple sections, as well as several COVID-19 focused policies and procedures.
- The Pre-Incident section contains training plans from partner agencies, sample training guides, and scenarios for reality-based training opportunities.
- The During-Incident section contains several critical incident reference guides that provide guidance to incident commanders for various events.
- The Post-Incident section contains guides for conducting hotwashes, debriefs, and after-action reports. This section also includes sample programs and other resources that address officer-wellness issues.

## General Resources

### [Critical Response Toolkit for First-Line Supervisors: Quick Reference Guide](#)

This tri-fold pamphlet allows first-line supervisors to easily print and carry with them a summarized version of the toolkit. The Quick Reference Guide primarily focuses on Part 2 of the Toolkit, *During the Incident*, so FLS's can swiftly reference checklists and other best practices when responding to a critical incident.

### [Promoting Excellence in First-Line Supervision: New Approaches to Selection, Training, and Leadership Development](#)

This publication is a part of PERF's Critical Issues in Policing Series and highlights the discussion that occurred among 175 police executives and sergeants on April 3, 2018, in Washington, D.C. on the importance of first-line supervisors in police agencies. Conference participants examined topics such as how crucial the rank of sergeant is to an agency, best practices for sergeant testing and selection, training first-line supervisors, and evaluating and developing sergeants' careers.

### [Research in Brief: The Untapped Potential of First-Line Supervisors](#)

This January 2018 article from Police Chief magazine summarizes much of the research on first-line supervisors, including Dr. Robin Engel's work on how individuals' supervisory styles influence officer behavior.

### [Lessons Learned: The Role of First-Line Supervisors during COVID-19](#)

Through interviews and focus groups conducted via conference calls with sergeants, PERF assembled a

brief report on actions, policies, and practices used by agencies and sergeants during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resource mirrors this toolkit by outlining the lessons learned in three phases: Preparations, Action, and Assessment.

#### [COVID-19 Safety Guidance and Operation Protocols - Camden County \(NJ\) Police Department](#)

A Special Order that provides guidelines for all Camden County Police Department (CCPD) employees. These guidelines are instructions for interacting with department members as well as the community during calls for service, with the goal of protecting the safety of all CCPD employees and the Camden community.

#### [COVID-19 Protocols - Tulsa Police Department](#)

This guide, distributed by the Tulsa Police Department, provides its employees with a single source of instructions on the department's response and changes in practice that protect employees and community members from contracting and spreading COVID-19. Sections include guidance for interacting with others, changes in dispatch and responding to calls for services, arrest procedures, and more.

## Pre-Incident Resources

### **Probationary Sergeant Training Plan - Tucson Police Department (TPD)**

The following four documents outline TPD's 52-week training plan for probationary sergeants.

1. [Probationary Sergeant Training Plan](#)  
This document provides a general description of the 52-week probationary sergeant training program.
2. [Probationary Sergeant Weekly Training Assignments](#)  
This document outlines the weekly steps and required actions probationary sergeants must complete each week throughout the duration of the 52-week probationary sergeant training period.
3. [Sergeant's Academy Syllabus](#)  
A 40-hour training course for newly promoted sergeants at TPD's academy. The syllabus outlines all topics and activities that will be covered during the course. Topics and activities include conflict resolution, critical incident management, crime scene management, community engagement, and use-of-force investigations. Each day includes a scenario-based training exercise.
4. [Probationary Sergeant Training Plan Tracking Spreadsheet](#)

### [Supervisors Daily Observation Report](#)

This resource, submitted by a partner agency, is intended to report daily activities and progress during a sergeant's field training. Criteria include managing roll call, appearance and attitude, performance during a variety of supervisory duties, and communication skills.

### **Blue NIMS Course - Harris County (TX) Fire Marshal's Office (HCFMO)**

The Blue NIMS<sup>®</sup> course takes the fundamental principles taught by the FEMA National Incident Management System (NIMS), as well as the Incident Command System (ICS), and links them with best

practices in law enforcement and unified response operations. The following resources include the course description and overview as well as the course outline. For more information, contact HCFMO Deputy Chief Rodney Reed at [Rodney.Reed@fmo.hctx.net](mailto:Rodney.Reed@fmo.hctx.net).

1. [Course Overview](#)
2. [Course Outline](#)

### [Media Relations Resources - IACP](#)

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has assembled various resources and considerations for agencies needing assistance creating a public information office, gaining a better understanding of the importance of a good media relations strategy, and improving the communication flow from an agency to its community stakeholders. This resource is useful for FLSs whose agencies allow them to interact with the media or FLSs who would like to learn media relations best practices.

### [Social Media Guidebook for Law Enforcement Agencies: Strategies for Effective Community Engagement - Urban Institute](#)

This resource from the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center provides a strategy for promoting an agency's social media and using it as a tool for community engagement. The guidebook lays out a four-step strategy for agencies that want to improve their use of social media as a community policing tool. The steps include assess your agency's current social media use and capacity, establish goals, measure progress, and use data-driven strategies to help reach your social media goals. Many of these same principles and strategies apply to critical incident response as well.

### [Tabletop Scenario Examples](#)

This resource provides seven sample table-top scenarios for First-Line Supervisors (FLSs). Agency trainers may use them to supplement existing in-service training programs or as templates for designing new curriculum.

Subject Matter Experts (SME) from PERF developed each scenario to challenge the decision-making abilities of both new and veteran FLSs. When conducting table-top scenario exercises, agency trainers must act as facilitators who guide the participants through each scenario by presenting the situation in stages, then asking tough, thought-provoking questions at each stage about how the FLSs will respond. After gathering the responses, the facilitator should offer alternate viewpoints for the FLSs to consider before moving to the next stage of the event. The overall role of the facilitator is to generate thoughtful discussion throughout the entire scenario based upon the decisions and overall performance of the participating FLSs.

- [All Scenarios](#)
- [Introduction to Scenarios](#)
- [Officer Involved Shooting Scenario](#)
- [Domestic Violence Escalation Scenario](#)

- [Man on Roof Scenario](#)
- [Unexpected Civil Unrest Scenario](#)
- [Chemical Spill Scenario](#)
- [Domestic Violence Involving Police Officer Scenario](#)
- [Active Shooter Scenario](#)

## During an Incident Resources

### [Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics \(ICAT\) - Module 2: The Critical Decision-Making Model \(CDM\)](#)

PERF first developed its ICAT training in 2016. A crucial component of this training is the CDM, which provides a process for how law enforcement personnel can efficiently make sensible decisions during high-pressure situations. The CDM can help sergeants make decisions in a variety of circumstances, including during a critical incident. The linked training will teach law enforcement of all ranks the key principles of the CDM. It also helps FLSs understand and articulate the benefits of the CDM.

### [Field Supervisors Reference Guide - Metropolitan Nashville Police Department \(MNPD\)](#)

This reference guide from the MNPD, one of our partner agencies, lists 46 incidents an FLS may face during a tour of duty. Each incident has actions the FLS should take to appropriately respond to the incident. While these actions are MNPD-specific, this guide can be used by any FLS. In addition, agencies can use it as a template should they want to create a field reference guide specific to their agency.

### [Critical Incident Checklist: The “Cook” Book Guide to Managing Critical Incidents - Arlington \(TX\) Police Department](#)

Developed by Lt. Christopher Cook and Zhivonni Cook of the Arlington, (TX) Police Department, this resource provides valuable information and a checklist for planning and organizing an agency’s communication strategy with the media during and after a critical incident. There are scenario-specific checklists for Public Information Officers (PIOs) to consult, PIO roles and responsibilities, strategies for working around news cycles, tips for conducting press conferences, and more general communications strategies. This is a useful resource for FLSs who may have PIO responsibilities during a critical incident or who may need to provide support to an agency PIO.

### [Officer-Involved Shooting and In-Custody Death Scene Reference Guide - Tucson Police Department](#)

This reference guide from the Tucson Police Department, a partner agency, lists the required procedures that incident commanders must complete during the response to officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths.

### [Tulsa Police Department’s Critical Incident Response Manual](#)

This manual is from the Tulsa Police Department, one of our partner agencies, and includes a decision making chart for law enforcement responding to a critical incident. It also includes checklists for 10

critical incident scenarios and a sample after action report. Parts of this guide are specific to Tulsa, but it can be used as a reference for other agencies and first-line supervisors.

## Post-Incident Resources

### Hot Washes, Debriefs and After-Action Reports

#### [Hot Wash Form – FEMA](#)

FEMA uses this Hot Wash Form in training exercises. It can also serve as a basic model for other agencies that wish to implement hot washes. The form prompts participants of the hot wash to list the top three organizational strengths, top three items for improvement, and general comments on the incident.

#### [Briefing and Debriefing Guidance - College of Policing](#)

From the College of Policing in the United Kingdom, this document provides guidance on how to brief before an incident and how to debrief after one.

#### [Post Incident Supervisor or Senior Officer Led Debriefings - New York City Police Department](#)

The NYPD provides guidance to its members on facilitating a debriefing. This resource discusses how to conduct an in-formal debriefing with patrol officers post incident.

#### [Debriefing Procedure for Critical Incidents - Wiltshire Police](#)

From the Wiltshire Police in the United Kingdom, this document provides guidance on the benefits of debriefing an incident, different kinds of debriefs, and how to hold an effective debrief.

#### [Debriefing and After-Action Report Policy - Riverside \(CA\) Police Department](#)

*(Page 66 - Policy 301, "Debriefing of Critical Incidents")*

This policy details how to debrief and produce an after-action report following a critical incident. It describes the process for both components, gives a timeline for each, and includes a section on how to retain reports for future reference.

#### [After-Action Policy and Report Format - Seattle Police Department](#)

This policy on After-Action Reports addresses when to complete a report, who is involved in the process, and how the report is disseminated in the department.

#### [Critical Incident Review Board – Operations Pamphlet - Tucson Police Department](#)

The Tucson Police Department conducts a Critical Incident Review Board after major incidents such as an officer-involved shooting, pursuits that result in serious injury or death, events where police action caused a loss of public confidence in law enforcement. This pamphlet outlines the purpose and parameters of a Critical Incident Review Board.

#### [Making the Most of your After Action Review - Justice Clearinghouse](#)

This is a transcript of a webinar, "Making the Most of your After Action Review," hosted by Rob Trivino. The webinar discusses the key components of an after action review, how to run a review, and possible roadblocks agencies may encounter while implementing reviews. The full webinar is available for purchase as part of a course on after action reviews.

## Officer Wellness

### [Building and Sustaining an Officer Wellness Program: Lessons from the San Diego Police Department](#)

**- PERF** The Police Executive Research Forum published this report highlighting the San Diego Police Department's officer wellness programs. After a string of traumatic incidents involving officers in 2011, the department responded by forming a Wellness Unit. The unit focuses on supporting the physical and emotional health of all members of the department. This report documents the main components of the wellness initiative and provides promising practices for other agencies to consider.

### [The Law Enforcement Critical Incident Handbook - Jack Digliani](#)

This handbook provides information for law enforcement officers who have recently experienced a critical incident. It discusses the impact of critical incidents on an officer's mental health, stress management and wellness strategies, and suggestions for agency protocols that support officers after critical incidents.

### [Law Enforcement Agency and Officer Resilience Training Program - IACP](#)

The IACP has various resources on officer wellness, including a webinar on vicarious trauma, infographics on supporting law enforcement families, model policies, and reports on officer suicide.

### [Critical Incident Stress Management \(CISM\) Protocol](#) and [Police Survival Handout - Cambridge \(MA\) Police Department](#)

These resources from the Cambridge (MA) Police Department provide agency-specific information on activating the department's CISM protocol. Other documents include the policy and procedures of the Greater Boston CISM Team as well as helpful strategies for confronting officers who have experienced a critical incident.

### [Peer-2-Peer Support Program](#) and [Peer-2-Peer Resources -Tulsa Police Department](#)

These documents provide information on the Tulsa Police Department's peer support program as well as agency-specific contact information and national resources for those struggling with depression, suicide, substance abuse, family issues, and grief.

### [Mental Health Resources for NYPD Members - New York City Police Department](#)

This website lists the range of mental health and wellness resources that are available to members of the NYPD. It includes both internal resources such as the Employee Assistance Unit and the peer support program, and a variety of external resources.

### [An Occupational Risk: What Every Police Agency Should Do To Prevent Suicide Among Its Officers - PERF](#)

In response to a national surge of police suicides, the Police Executive Research Forum partnered with the New York City Police Department to host a day-long conference that discussed the extent and nature of police suicides and shared best practices for expanding officer wellness opportunities across the field. This report highlights the day's discussions and examines additional research from the field.

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