



Twentynine Palms Public Cemetery District

POLICY TITLE: Emergency Response Guideline for Hostile or Violent Incidents

POLICY NUMBER: 2305

2305.1

Purpose of the Policy:

To provide direction for the District Board of Directors and staff regarding responses to hostile or violent incidents including possible armed intruders or related threats on District facilities or properties.

2305.2

Background:

The potential for hostile or violent incidents on District facilities or operational locations always exists. Recent incidents involving armed intruders have occurred in increasing frequency involving injuries and deaths at government institutions, offices and educational facilities. Often, an intruder is a person who is an ex-employee, customer, or person known to the agency. The person often is upset at an event or person who works at the facility. However, armed intruders can be any person with or without a prior relationship with the District or its officers and employees. Incidents involving armed intruders can escalate to include multiple persons and potentially taking of hostages, including District customers.

Threats of these types are dire emergencies and the safety and well being of employees and/or customers is the District's highest priority.

2305.3

Response to an Incident:

Any evidence of the exposure to a hostile or violent person or situation on District facilities or operating areas should be taken seriously. Any District Director or employee observing or sensing that a violent or hostile situation is occurring or threatened should consider precautionary and safety actions. Any event resulting in awareness of a possible violent act including gunfire, explosion, fighting, or scuffling could indicate an incident of violent potential. Any staff person observing such potential activities should take steps to protect themselves and others on the District premises, including but not limited to:

- a) Attempt to communicate the situation to everyone in the facility by means of telephone, paging, email and/or radio system including basic information that a potential incident is occurring. If a perpetrator(s) is seen or known, information on the person(s) should be provided.
- b) Since different types and levels of workplace violence may require various responses, establishing basis information on the type of event is essential. Examples are:
 - 1) Gunfire: Awareness of gunfire in a District facility should result in evacuation to the extent possible. If not possible, securing of rooms or offices and notification of others by phone or email is encouraged. Calling emergency services via 911 is imperative once it is safe to do so. Remain in the most secure location possible until contacted by public safety personnel or a facility supervisor, etc.
 - 2) Explosion: An explosion could occur naturally or by violent intention. Awareness of an explosion or fire in the facility should result in immediate evacuation in accordance with established fire safety procedures. Response to a planned location is important so safety personnel can determine who is out of the facility. Physical or bomb threat: Awareness of a telephone or in-person



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threat to facility or staff should be met with action to evacuate and clear staff from the threatened area. Calling 911 as soon as it is safe to do so is imperative.

- 3) Situations involving hostages: If a possible hostage incident is known, evacuation of the facility is paramount to safety of persons in the area. Contact 911 as soon as it is safe to do so.
- 4) Irrate customer/threat at counter or meeting: When any person threatens a staff person or customer at a District facility in a manner causing fear for safety, action to summon public safety personnel by 911 should be taken. In no way should steps be taken to physically confront or subdue such a person except in defense of life at the facility. If a volatile situation occurs at a Board of Directors or other public meeting, the person chairing or hosting the meeting should take steps to control the situation or adjourn the meeting to abate the confrontation, if possible. In event of threatening or hostile situation, call 911 immediately and proceed with evacuation or other appropriate actions.

2305.4

Planning for Emergency Incidents: Steps should be taken to plan response capabilities for emergencies in addition to fires, earthquakes, etc. that may involve hostile situations. These include but are not limited to:

- a) Preparation of a facility evacuation plan for each room. Post the plan at each doorway and hallway exit. Establish a safe area zone for staging.
- b) Procedures to lock both exterior and interior doors to secure the facility.
- c) Develop an emergency notice code word Use of a Code is recommended.
 1. **Please call the Police:** "I have to use the restroom"
 2. **Please come to the office for Assistance:** "The Bay door is open"
- d) Training of all personnel in dealing with customers, employees, and other persons in threatening situations and in how to identify and assess potential threats or volatile situations. All employees assigned or expected to serve at the front desk or counter shall receive such training regularly. (memberplus.sdrma.org)
- e) All employees and members of the Board of Directors shall receive training on response to violent or hostile incidents. In the event of a potential incident, employees should notify a supervisor, or the General Manager as may be possible or call 911. If assessment of a possible threat is needed, the General Manager or ranking staff person shall be notified. Public safety agency shall be contacted by 911 whenever a perceived threat is considered valid.



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Actions for Violent or Armed Threat Situation: The existence or potential for an event involving a violent person or armed intruder at a District facility should be considered an emergency condition. Actions could include some or all:

- a) Notify your supervisor or General Manager and other staff immediately if a threat is received but not actively in process. If validated, contact public safety by calling 911 immediately.
- b) The General Manager or ranking staff member shall evaluate the situation and consider appropriate actions including shutting down operations and evacuation and/or locking down the facility until public safety response abates the threat.
- c) Initiate notification of other facility staff of active threat by emergency code procedure. Evacuate the facility if possible. Secure money or computer equipment if time allows.
- d) Activate an alarm for notifying other staff or an alarm company if one engaged by the District. A call contact would be included in procedure to double check for safety at the facility.
- e) Upon sighting an armed intruder, an alert to all employees should be made by page, or radio.
- f) Secure your work area or evacuate if safely possible. If not able to evacuate, find a safe hiding place and stay put until contacted by public safety personnel.
- g) Once outdoors after an evacuation, proceed to designated staging area to report in for identification. Inform public safety personnel of any information on the incident.
- h) Attempt to remain calm and assist others; wait for instructions from public safety or supervisory personnel.
- i) Do not attempt to look around to see what is happening. Evacuate whenever possible and with others in areas you see directly. Do not confront or attempt to apprehend a violent perpetrator unless directly attacked for self-defense. Do not assume someone already called 911, call them immediately.

2305.6

Post Event Actions: Following the clear announcement of ending of a violent or hostile-person situation, contact public safety or supervisory personnel for instructions. Report any firsthand observations or other knowledge of the incident. Contact your family and immediate friends so they will not take any unnecessary actions to respond to news reports. Await direction as to return to work or other steps dependent on level of the incident. If not able to do so, consult with your supervisor or notify the ranking person on-site.

An Emergency Response Coordinator shall evaluate and debrief any major incident and take needed steps to abate the conditions after the event and prepare as necessary for continued operations. Planning and actions to address conditions are expected and your input via your supervisor is important. There may be the potential to lock-down or close the facility for some time or other corrective steps. If necessary, seek direction on what actions you should take to assist in procedure.