

AREA EVACUATION

Purpose:

To provide a means of closing an area or moving people from an area in which life safety conditions have become unsafe or may become unsafe due to an emergency situation.

Guidelines:

In a variety of possible situations, it may be necessary to evacuate an area within the district. An evacuation of any thing more than a single structure requires a coordinated effort between the Incident Commander and law enforcement at the scene to ensure that evacuation is rapid, complete, and without unnecessary duplication of effort. It requires a definite plan and a method of reporting progress.

- A. When evacuation of an area is indicated due to an imminent hazard, the limits of the evacuation area will normally be determined by the Incident Commander in consultation with law enforcement at the scene. The practical considerations of what resources are available and what degree of risk is involved will necessarily be factors in the determination of evacuation limits.
- B. The Incident Commander shall, upon determination of the necessity for evacuation, coordinate with law enforcement on the scene to plan and execute evacuation of an area.
- C. Fire units will not normally be utilized for evacuation operations. However, they may be utilized if available and not needed for control operations.

Responsibilities:

- A. Law enforcement will be responsible for securing the perimeter of the evacuation area, and for coordination of the evacuation.
- B. The Incident Commander will be responsible for assessment of the degree of danger and the need for evacuation, and for the physical safety of personnel operating within the evacuation zone.

Public Information:

Any major evacuation will require and benefit from complete public information notification. A Public Information Officer should be assigned to communicate with the media as quickly as possible to explain exactly what the situation is and what people involved should do.

Evacuation Centers:

- A. In most situations it is desirable to have a location where evacuees can be directed. This center should be located and identified as quickly as possible.
- B. Area churches and schools can be designated as evacuation centers.

Organization of Evacuation:

Once the desired area of evacuation and the operational perimeter have been established, a plan is necessary to actually effect the desired evacuation. This will be dependent on the resources available and the situation type. Personnel from one or several agencies may be involved in actually alerting citizens and assisting them to evacuate.

- A. Establish a Unified Command Post for all involved agencies. Utilize maps of the area to make assignments and report progress jointly to avoid duplication or omissions.
- B. Assign units (if they are available) to evacuate specific objectives (a building, a block, a street, etc.) and report completion.
- C. Start with areas in most immediate danger first. Assign priorities according to degree of risk.
- D. Advise personnel if evacuees are to be directed to particular evacuation centers.
- E. Use P.A. function on electronic sirens to alert citizens or door-to-door individual notification. If the situation is urgent, do not hesitate to make noise and attract attention.

Additional Situations:

In addition to conventional evacuations, some situations may indicate different approaches.

- A. Atmospheric Hazard – Some hazardous materials situations may pose a problem to persons exposed to outside air only. A wind-carried irritant vapor or gas may cause this. In this case the best alternative may be to advise people to stay indoors with windows closed and air conditioners shut down.
- B. Advisory Notification – In some situations it may be necessary to notify citizens of potential risk and suggest that they relocate for their own convenience. As an example, this situation could occur when street flooding is expected, but no immediate threat to physical safety is indicated.