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7.3.11 GT Hostage Barricade Response

A hostage/barricade situation is a critical event that requires a specialized public safety response to best ensure an acceptable resolution. To manage a crisis, resources must be identified, acquired and applied with a rational, problem-solving approach. Several steps must be taken to assist emergency response agencies in resolving the crisis as quickly and as safely as possible, including:

1. Notification

When confronted with a hostage/barricade situation, the following entities must be notified and requested to respond:

- a. **Immediately** call 911, if with additional personnel, have them call campus police 678-226-7377 Lawrenceville campus, 470-282-5440, Alpharetta North Fulton campus
- b. If available, provide information regarding suspect(s)
 - description
 - location
 - type(s) of weapons
 - number of hostages

Negotiation: Discourage staff and students from trying to “negotiate” with hostage takers or people who have barricaded themselves inside the school. Lack of training and experience with these incidents many times causes the best intentions to make the situation worse. Wait for law enforcement. Law enforcement has trained/experienced negotiators and tactical personnel who will respond.

- a. **Fire Department:** The fire department will be on scene to extinguish any fires that may result from the hostage/barricade situation. In addition, the fire department has trained/experienced personnel and equipment, which will be absolutely necessary in the event of an emergency rescue.
- b. **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** EMS must be on the scene to provide emergency medical attention for injuries and illnesses.

- c. **School Staff:** School staff must be immediately notified via the use of a simple word or phrase via email, radio transmitter, or intercom system so that they can begin implementing protection procedures as required.
- d. **Emergency/911 Communications:** Emergency communications will assist with the transmission of critical information to the various responding agencies and to other concerned agencies and persons.
- e. **Local Emergency Management Agency:** Local emergency management personnel can assist with response effort coordination and with requesting and introducing additional resources into the area. EMA personnel can also assist with media and family reunification facilitation.

2. Evacuation

- a. All students and staff must simultaneously be protected and notified.
- b. An evacuation should be considered or may be needed when a perpetrator has been confined to or isolated in one specific room or area. At this time, an orderly evacuation, coordinated with law enforcement, will greatly reduce the potential of injury to students and staff not directly involved in the crisis.
- c. A lockdown should be considered or may be needed when a perpetrator is not confined to or isolated in a specific area of the school but rather is roaming throughout the campus. Under these circumstances, a lockdown will greatly reduce the potential of injury to students and staff not directly involved in the crisis until such time as a safe and orderly evacuation can be initiated in coordination with law enforcement.
- d. The following points are to be considered during movement of students and staff:
 - Assembly areas will be established at least 1000 feet from the incident location.
 - All staff members must be familiar with all evacuation points and perimeters.
 - Schools should request that law enforcement dispatch resources to the assembly areas.

3. Reunification Sites

- a. Students/Staff must be provided with a copy of the school assembly sites. The location of school assembly sites should not be pre-announced to ensure the security of the locations. Administrators should coordinate with news media so they can inform parents of the location of designated school assembly sites.
- b. Student/Staff assembly sites must be far enough away from the incident to ensure the safety of staff and students.
- c. Student/Staff assembly sites must be far enough away from the incident to ensure that emergency response vehicles and personnel are not hindered in doing their jobs.
- d. Members of the media and the general public should not be allowed to be close enough to the actual incident to be in danger.

4. Coordination with Emergency Response Agencies

The college must establish coordination with emergency response agencies before a crisis occurs. When a crisis happens, the following points will be critical to a successful outcome:

- a. Command and control by law enforcement: Police and other law enforcement agencies must be prepared to take complete control of the situation, establishing a command post as close to the incident as possible. In a hostage situation, resolution of the incident is law enforcement's responsibility. Assist them in that effort.
- b. Establishment of perimeters: Law enforcement must be able to identify, prior to an incident, where primary and secondary perimeters can be established around the school property.
- c. Establishment of assembly sites: Inform law enforcement agencies, prior to an incident, where the assembly sites will be so that appropriate personnel can be posted there to interview parents and students.
- d. Crowd control: law enforcement and fire departments must be able to identify areas around the school property where barriers are needed to control crowds.

- e. Media: Prior to an actual incident, school staff should identify and coordinate specific areas outside school grounds where members of the media can congregate, with their trucks, cameras and other equipment, to be updated by the designated spokesperson(s) as needed.
- f. Walk through scenarios: School staff must coordinate with all branches of emergency response agencies to conduct walk-through, practice scenarios or drills inside the school so that public safety personnel can become familiar with the building(s) and its surroundings. Police, fire, and rescue agencies will need access to current floor plans of the school.
- g. Designate a staff member to meet emergency response personnel as they arrive at the school: Gwinnett Tech officer.
- h. Most injuries and deaths in hostage/barricade situations occur within the first few minutes of the situation. Control of the situation through a pre-planned response is crucial. Once the situation is stabilized, time works in favor of reducing the use of violence by a perpetrator. You must prepare yourself for a resolution, which may take hours or even days.

5. What to Do If I Am Taken Hostage

- a. Be patient. Time is on your side. Avoid drastic action. The initial 45 minutes are the most dangerous. Follow instructions, be alert and stay alive. The captor is emotionally unbalanced. Don't try to reason with him/her.
- b. Treat the captor like royalty. Don't speak unless spoken to and then only when necessary. Don't patronize or talk down to your captor, who may be in an agitated state. Avoid appearing hostile. Maintain eye contact with the captor at all times if possible, but do not stare.
- c. Try to rest. Be observant. The personal safety of others may depend on your memory. Avoid speculating. Comply with instructions as best you can. Avoid arguments. Expect the unexpected. You may be released or escape.
- d. Attempt to establish rapport with the captor, but do not negotiate. If medication, first aid, or bathroom privileges are needed by anyone, say so. The captors in all probability do not want to harm the persons that they are holding. Such direct action further implicates them in additional offenses. Be prepared to answer the police on the phone.