

**POLICY
413**

**EFFECTIVE
DATE
12-16-08**

Eugene Police Department



Evacuate, Withdraw and Abandon Protocols

413.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to standardize procedures and terminology with those of the Fire Service in terms of situations when it is necessary to evacuate civilians, or for public safety personnel to withdraw from, or abandon, an area or structure. There may be some situations in which fire personnel would be ordered to leave a scene where police would remain, such as a situation in which fire personnel suddenly encountered gunfire or a similar threat which police personnel would have a responsibility to resolve.

413.2 DEFINITIONS

Evacuate: The removal of civilians from hazardous areas or structures. The term “evacuate” does not pertain to police officers, firefighters, or other emergency response personnel.

Withdraw: The orderly egress of public safety personnel, not civilians, from a hazard area. When ordered to withdraw, personnel will take their equipment with them. They will most likely exit the area from same point they entered. Under “Withdraw” conditions, there is no crisis or imminent danger. A “Withdraw” command will initiate an orderly and controlled egress from the building or area.

Abandon: The emergency removal of public safety personnel, not civilians, from a hazard area. Under these conditions, personnel are in immediate danger (e.g., inside a building which is subject to imminent collapse) and must exit immediately by whatever means possible. Personnel may be on their own to survive, and only survival tools and equipment which will not slow down or impede egress should be retained during egress.

413.3 EVACUATE

413.3.1 DECISION TO EVACUATE

- (a) A decision to evacuate civilians from an area would normally be made by the Incident Commander.

- (b) Large scale evacuations within the City involving neighborhoods, or large geographical areas, are the responsibility of the Police Department under the City's Emergency Plan, Evacuation Annex.
- (c) If the incident involves a fire or release of chemicals, police personnel will coordinate with Fire Command on police personal safety considerations and direction and evacuation routes for the evacuees.

413.3.2 EVACUATION PROCEDURES GENERALLY

- (a) Work outward from the incident site.
- (b) Systematically contact affected persons by any reasonable means. If personal notification of all these individuals is not feasible (e.g., hazard, number of people to notify), consider utilizing the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS.) Also consider whether a media advisory might be effective.
- (c) Tell affected individuals to lock their doors and to take only small valuables, a minimum number of personal items (including essentials, such as glasses and canes), and necessary medication with them.
- (d) Provide directions showing a safe route from the area.
- (e) Refer those who are displaced and need temporary food and shelter to resources that can assist them.
- (f) Arrange for medical assistance and transport for the sick and injured.
- (g) Remember that some residents will not leave even if ordered to do so. Document any refusals to leave, and ensure that incident command is advised. Do not allow unauthorized persons to enter the evacuated area.
- (h) Maintain a list of who has left, and obtain a phone number where they can be reached (or an address if the phone number is not available), so they can be contacted after the emergency is over.

413.3.3 EVACUATION PROCEDURES – CRIMINAL INCIDENTS

In addition to the procedures above, these factors are relevant to evacuations related to criminal incidents:

- (a) For some high-risk incidents, such as these involving snipers or hostages, evacuation may be more dangerous than remaining in the area. In this case, attempt to contact persons in the area and advise them of steps they can take to “shelter in place” and maximize their safety. In these situations in particular, use of

the both the CENS system and the Emergency Alerting System (EAS) is advised as part of the plan.

- (b) When appropriate, question evacuees about the incident, including suspects, hostages, local geography, floor plans, and other relevant information.
- (c) Remember that, in a situation involving criminal activity, not all who you are evacuating may be innocent. Some may be the suspects themselves.

413.4 WITHDRAW

413.4.1 ORDER TO WITHDRAW

- (a) A “Withdraw” order may be issued by the Incident Commander or any on-scene supervisor. The order will specify the units which are to withdraw, and/or the structure or area affected by the order, in which case all units in the affected area will withdraw.
- (b) If police personnel are on scene with fire personnel, and a fire commander issues a “Withdraw” order for fire personnel, the fire dispatcher will apprise the appropriate police dispatcher of that fact. The police dispatcher will advise an on-scene police supervisor, who will determine whether to order the withdrawal of police personnel.

413.4.2 WITHDRAW PROCEDURES

- (a) The “Withdraw” order will be issued via the radio over all talkgroups/channels in use by affected personnel. If the order is initially broadcast by a supervisor, dispatch will repeat the order.
- (b) All affected individuals will acknowledge the “Withdraw” order.
- (c) After the withdrawal has been completed, affected personnel will be accounted for by a radio roll call or other means.

413.5 ABANDON

413.5.1 ORDER TO ABANDON

- (a) An “Abandon” order may be issued by the Incident Commander or Safety Officer. The order will specify the units which are to abandon, and/or the structure or area affected by the order, in which case all units in the affected area will comply.
- (b) When fire personnel are on scene, the abandon signal used by them will be a verbal command, indicating that a building or area is to be immediately abandoned by firefighters, accompanied by a fire company on scene activating their apparatus air horn for one long continuous blast of fifteen (15) to twenty (20) seconds.

- (c) If police personnel are on scene with fire personnel, and a fire commander issues an “Abandon” order for fire personnel, the fire dispatcher will immediately apprise the appropriate police dispatcher of that fact. The police dispatcher will immediately advise on-scene police personnel via radio over all talkgroups/channels in use by affected personnel, utilizing the warble tone to precede the broadcast. The abandon order should also be broadcast on other active operational talkgroups/channels in case an affected person is on a different talkgroup/channel.

413.5.2 ABANDON PROCEDURES

- (a) Any police personnel are on-scene with fire personnel and in or near any building which is the subject of fire suppression or other activity, and who hear the “abandon” signal, will immediately leave the building and its immediate vicinity unless otherwise instructed.
- (b) Affected personnel will immediately comply with an “Abandon” order broadcast via police radio talkgroups/frequencies.
- (c) All affected individuals will acknowledge the “Abandon” order. Radio traffic should be limited in order to ensure that all affected personnel are able to acknowledge the order.
- (d) After personnel have abandoned the involved building or area, affected personnel will be accounted for by a radio roll call or other means.