

# Tactical planning

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Tactics are the method of deploying police resources in order to meet specific objectives.

Depending on the circumstances, the police response may consist of a single tactic or a series of individual and/or combined tactics.

The proportionality of any specific tactic varies in accordance with the scenario to which it is applied. There is, therefore, no set grading pattern that can be applied to individual police tactics.

The outcome of a planned response should be a series of police actions that demonstrates clarity of command, structured processes and the deployment of tactics which are proportionate to the circumstances.

In incidents, spontaneous or otherwise, involving a multi-agency response, [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#) should be followed when devising tactical plans in line with a Joint Dynamic Hazards Assessment using the [joint decision model](#).

## Tactical planning principles

All police actions must have a legal basis and should not interfere unnecessarily with an individual's human rights and freedoms. The mnemonic PLAN is a useful tool for those involved in the tactical planning process:

- proportionate
- legal
- accountable
- necessary

## Working with tactical advisers

The silver commander should consult an appropriately trained and accredited tactical adviser where necessary. The tactical adviser provides guidance on a wide range of issues relating to the deployment of police tactics and their potential outcomes. Examples of tactical advisers include the:

- **tactical firearms adviser**
- **public order tactical adviser**
- CBRN operational adviser

The tactical adviser's log should never be used to document command decisions. It should be maintained as a separate log from the silver commander's decision-making audit trail.

Although decision making rests with the commander, tactical advisers are responsible for providing appropriate, valid and reasonable advice. The decision not to consult a tactical adviser should be documented as part of the silver commander's decision-making audit trail.

## Assessing tactical options

Commanders may find it useful to record tactical decision making in a log which is kept separate from the tactical plan. This ensures that an audit trail for command decision making is readily available, and provides documented rationale for tactical options that were considered but did not form part of the tactical plan.

The silver commander, in consultation with the tactical planning group (where applicable), should consider the following:

- tactical parameters as set by the gold strategy
- officer training, accreditation and competency
- equipment
- feasibility within available timescales
- potential impact
- results of risk, environmental and **community impact assessments**
- impact on force resilience and capability
- impact of any changes in circumstances (for example, re-evaluation, contingency)

All tactical options used by the police must have a legal basis, and must be proportionate and reasonably believed to be necessary in the circumstances. Police forces, along with individual

officers and those involved in the planning and decision-making process, are fully accountable for the authorisation for use of police tactics and their deployment.

## Contingency planning

This is necessary so that the police may respond to a range of potential outcomes, not just the one they hope for. Operational planning should involve identifying contingencies at an early stage. The development of contingency or emergency plans is vital and can enhance the resilience and flexibility of the overall tactical plan if there are sudden or significant changes during an incident. Contingency plans for some activities or locations may already exist as part of normal police business. However, it may be necessary to develop new plans in direct response to a particular operation or incident.

A contingency plan should be a simple, concise and flexible document that is easily understood and can be revised and updated as circumstances change. It should be subject to the same decision-making rationale as any other police action.

The contingency plan should be accessible to those who require it before, during and after an incident.

Forces should consider testing their contingency and emergency plans through training and exercising, as appropriate.

## Identifying contingencies

It is both impossible and impractical to identify every possible outcome of a given situation. Commanders should identify a range of reasonably foreseeable scenarios and their impact on the policing operation. They should also expect the unexpected by asking themselves questions such as, 'What will I do if things do not turn out the way I anticipate?' or, 'What will I do if A happens instead of B?'

While it is impractical to identify every possible outcome to a given situation, commanders should identify appropriate contingencies based on the:

- probability of the outcome occurring
- potential impact of the outcome on the strategy and tactical plan
- potential risks to individuals involved in the incident and the response

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