

# Command structure

The role of the counter terrorism security coordinator within the wider command structure.

First published 1 June 2026

Working within the standard national command structure set out in the [Operations APP](#), the counter terrorism (CT) security coordinator reports directly to the strategic commander, while supporting tactical and operational levels of command.

Figure 1 outlines the relationship between the CT security coordinator and the command structure.



## Strategic commander (gold)

The strategic commander is responsible for the overall policing of the event or operation. The strategic commander should:

- set out the strategic objectives for the operation
- provide strategic direction to the CT security coordinator including additional event context
- endorse the [CT protective security plan](#)

The objectives of the strategic commander should focus on:

- setting the strategic direction and tactical parameters for the operation
- ensuring that the policing activity is proportionate with the relevant threat and risk assessments
- identifying the level of support needed to resource the police response

- the health, safety, diversity, equality and human rights considerations on individuals involved or likely to be affected during the policing of an event and/or operation

## Tactical commander (silver)

The **tactical commander** is responsible for implementing the strategic objectives and managing tactical decision-making. This will include implementing the CT protective security plan and working with the CT security coordinator.

During the security event or operation, the tactical commander will be in charge of all the available resources. They should decide how to use these resources to achieve the strategic objectives of the strategic commander.

## Tactical planning group

If a **tactical planning group** is established by the tactical commander, the CT security coordinators should be members of this group to inform and support the tactical commander's tactical decision-making from a CT protective security perspective.

Other policing roles that may contribute to the tactical planning and be a member of the tactical planning and coordination group could include:

- relevant **operational commanders** (for example, roads policing)
- uniformed operations
- specialist advisors
- planning coordinator
- relevant basic command unit or division commanders
- communications
- media and press office
- logistics
- intelligence
- support services
- welfare and staff association representatives
- legal services
- finance

- partner agency representatives (as appropriate)

## Security tasking group

The tactical commander may establish a security tasking group. The purpose of this group is to support the effective delivery of the CT protective security plan. There is no standard membership or format for this group, but it should include a CT security coordinator if one is appointed to the event or operation.

The tactical commander may task members of this group directly or, more commonly, delegate the function to the CT security coordinator. Where tasking is delegated, the group should meet immediately after the tactical planning and coordination meeting, as relevant units will already be present.

The meeting provides an opportunity to:

- ensure understanding and agreement of the respective roles, needs and requirements of all participants
- provide consistency from a protective security angle
- ensure the CT protective security plan can be delivered coherently in accordance with the overarching strategy and the tactical plan
- task units with specific actions
- ensure responsibility for action is clearly understood
- develop relevant contingencies to support the CT protective security plan

## Operational commander (bronze)

Operational commanders are responsible for the command of resources and implementing functional or geographical responsibilities related to the tactical plan. Tasks may be delegated from the tactical commander to the operational commander.

Operational commanders must have a clear understanding of:

- the tactical commander's plan
- what they are required to implement
- any timescales

- available resources

The level of collaboration between these commanders and the CT security coordinator will differ for each event or operation. For further information go to the [Operations APP](#).

## Tags

Counter terrorism