

Marshalling areas

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Marshalling areas hold resources not immediately needed at the scene. They are staffed by liaison officers. The location should be a joint agency decision made by the incident commanders. It should be able to hold large numbers of vehicles. Any vehicles that are no longer required should be removed from the site.

The incident commanders should consider dedicating a safe space, ideally adjacent to a marshalling area for helicopters, where applicable.

In a police national public order mobilisation plan (PNPOMP), predesignated tactical holding areas and strategic holding areas can be used as marshalling areas. These are for larger-scale, major incidents.

Tactical holding area

Resources assigned to a tactical commander that are not needed immediately are held in the tactical holding area (THA). This is also where staff receive tactical briefings and wait on standby.

A tactical commander should appoint a THA bronze. The THA bronze should:

- supervise the THA
- maintain a log of incoming police resources
- brief incoming officers attending the scene
- direct resources to a marshalling area until required at the scene

Strategic holding area

An incident commander should decide whether a strategic holding area (SHA) is required. To make this decision, consider the:

- nature, size and complexity of the incident
- time required to return to normality

- location of the incident, including whether the incident is made up of a number of smaller incidents
- quantity and size of likely resources to deal with the incident

The reception and coordination of mutual aid and other supporting resources for major incidents happens in the SHA. This comprises four areas:

- communications
- capabilities and resources
- logistical support
- welfare

In large and complex incidents, this can include all three emergency services and partner agencies. The space for these staff and facilities should be considered when deciding on the location.

If terrorism is suspected, the incident commander should ensure that the SHA is searched for any secondary incidents, prior to use.

In the SHA, staff should be given a strategic overview of the event. If required, police public order resources may be combined into larger units, such as a basic mobilisation unit (BMU).

For further information, go to APP on [Mobilisation](#).

Counter terrorism policing

In-force emergency and contingency planners should integrate counter terrorism command and control protocols, such as Operation Plato, into their major incident plans. These should be rehearsed through exercising with other responding agencies.

In suspected terrorist incidents, appropriate command arrangements should be implemented to ensure an effective policing response. As the response to the incident builds, forces should consider deploying additional ground-assigned police commanders to undertake outward-facing command roles related to major incidents. These roles include outer cordons, rendezvous points (RVPs), survivor reception centres and escorts. This will allow the ground assigned tactical firearms commander (or commanders) to be inward-facing, working with other emergency services commanders to save life and neutralise any ongoing threat. Where appropriate, a command protocol should identify respective command responsibilities.

Planners should discuss contingency plans related to counter terrorism, as well as their alignment with force major incident plans, with their regional protect and prepare lead within the [counter terrorism \(CT\) policing network](#).

The CT policing network can also provide specialist capabilities at a national and regional level to support the response and investigation of an incident. However, it should be recognised that establishing a fully functioning CT police operations room (CTPOR) and mustering the required operational resources may take several hours. It is unlikely that a CT commander will assume active command of a terrorist attack in the early stages. In the meantime, it is anticipated that the existing local force command structure will retain command until the CT commander is in a position to assume command for the resolution of the CT incident. A transfer of command from the local force should not take place until the CT commander is in a position to perform their command function effectively. The transfer of command should be agreed between the relevant commanders and documented as per the [Armed policing APP](#).

While a CT commander may assume responsibility for the resolution of the incident, the local force gold commander will retain responsibility for the consequence management aspects of the operation and any other related policing activity.

It will be important for the CT commander to establish formal command protocols with the local force gold commander and their SFC to ensure that their operational contributions are complementary and aligned.

When terrorism is suspected, officers and staff should implement their learning from prior completion of the [Stay Safe](#) e-learning (you will need to log in to College Learn). This training covers any incident involving firearms, lethal weapons and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In the event of a terrorist incident affecting British citizens at home or overseas, the [victims of terrorism unit \(VTU\)](#) coordinates action at a government level, to support them. The strategic coordinating group (SCG) should initiate this process via the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Group (HASG).

Once notified, the VTU immediately sets up a website with incident information and support contacts. For any website used by the police or partner agencies to provide details pertaining to the incident, the strategic (gold) commander's media plan should ensure that this is clearly linked to the VTU website.

Tags

APP Critical incidents Major incidents