

CHAPTER 20

PROTECTIVE ACTION GUIDELINES

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PROTECTIVE ACTION GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

This section provides guidelines and procedures for protective actions when hazardous conditions develop to the degree that emergency responders must take action to protect the public at risk. Threatened or hazardous areas may be created by, but are not limited to: fires, hazardous materials, transportation accidents, floods, WMD incidents, civil disturbances, etc. Ideally, protective actions are progressive, usually initiated by alerting the public in the affected area, controlling access, sheltering in-place and finally by evacuation. However, these actions may be implemented simultaneously based on the hazard, complexity of the emergency, and the type and size of the affected area. The key to successfully conducting protective action operations is sound planning.

AUTHORITY

The decision to alert the public of a hazardous incident, restriction or closed access corridor and/or to evacuate an affected area is often made by the fire department Incident Commander. However, the authority necessary to carry out these actions usually rest with law enforcement. For example, the California Penal Code 409.5 provides law enforcement and health officers the legal authority to “close and/or evacuate” an area. Other states, counties or city jurisdictions may vary.

California 409.5 P.C. states:

- a “Whenever a menace to the public health or safety is created by a calamity such as flood, storm, fire, earthquake, explosion, accident, or other disasters, police officers, lifeguards, publicly employed full-time marine safety officers or local health officers may close the area where the menace exists for the duration thereof by means of ropes, markers or guards to any and all persons not authorized by the lifeguard or officers to enter or remain within the enclosed area.”
- b “Law enforcement may close the immediate area surrounding any emergency field command post activated for the purpose of abating any calamity enumerated in this section or any riot or other civil disturbance to any and all unauthorized persons pursuant to the conditions which are set forth in this section whether or not the field command post or other command post is located near to the actual calamity or riot or other civil disturbance.”
- c “Any unauthorized person who willfully and knowingly enters an area closed pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b) and who willfully remains within the area after receiving notice to evacuate or leave shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”
- d “Nothing in this section shall prevent a duly authorized representative of any news service, newspaper or radio or television station or network from entering the areas closed pursuant to this section.”

Simply stated, whenever law enforcement/health officials feel that an area must be closed and/or evacuated to protect the public, 409.5 P.C. provides the legal authority to do so. If residents refuse to comply, that refusal should be noted and the Incident Commander advised of a non-compliance of the evacuation order.

ORGANIZATION

In emergency operations, there may be several lead and support agencies involved. In an incident where one agency has a preponderance of responsibility for abating the problem, a single Incident Commander from that agency shall be appointed.

In an incident where law enforcement and the fire department both have substantial responsibilities, a 'Unified' Command organizational structure should be formed. Incident Commanders from both departments will be named. Establishing a Unified Incident Command structure better integrates incident objectives and the development of Incident Action Plans. This results in a more efficient coordination process of incident operations thereby enhancing the safety of responders and the public.

Initial Assessment And Notifications:

1. Identify hazard and risk to the public; determine the affected area and plot on a map the identified page, alphanumeric grid and quadrant of grid. Example: TB Page 689 A4 Northeast quadrant.
2. Notify jurisdictional law enforcement agency of emergency situation and recommended protective action.
3. Insure the appropriate local Emergency Services Agency is notified with regard to recommended protective actions. Ensure if evacuation is planned that evacuation centers are identified in safe areas. Note: The management of Evacuation Centers is often delegated to the local Red Cross or other non-government organizations:
 - a. **Evacuation warning** – The alerting of people in an affected area(s) of potential threat to life and property. An Evacuation Warning considers the probability that an area will be affected and prepares people for a potential evacuation order.
 - b. **Evacuation Order** – Requires the immediate movement of people out of an affected area due to an imminent threat to life (one to two hours or less).
 - c. **Shelter-in-place** – Advises people to stay secure at their current location. Note: Use this tactic only if the safety of citizens can be assured by remaining in place as evacuation will cause a higher potential for loss of life.
 - d. **Rescue** – Emergency actions taken within the affected area to recover and remove injured or trapped citizens. Responders have specific training and personal protective equipment necessary to accomplish the mission, i.e., hazardous material spill, swift-water rescue, etc. Boundaries of the areas where rescue is planned should be identified on the incident map with notation that entry is restricted to rescue workers only.

Note: Depending on the size, type and complexity of the emergency, all of the above protection actions could be employed on the same incident.

Immediate Evacuation Checklist:

- a. Establish and co-locate the Incident Command Post to include all cooperating agencies, i.e., law enforcement, fire, health department, local emergency management agency, etc.
- b. Establish Unified Command when appropriate. Unified Incident Commanders should jointly assess and report incident potential and request adequate resources to accomplish agreed upon objectives.
- c. Jointly develop the incident Evacuation Plan; ensure that the planning process is conducted under the unified command process with input from lead and support agencies as required. Keep in mind that many local jurisdictions have developed emergency evacuation plans for high hazard areas.
- d. Clearly identify on a map the area(s) that are under an immediate threat and/or an evacuation order (recommend using Thomas Brothers Grids).
- e. Clearly identify on a map the potential areas of risk based on spread of the incident. These areas may be identified as under an evacuation warning.
- f. Identify evacuation routes to nearest safe location. This information will be critical for shelter locations and should be shared with the local emergency services agency, Red Cross or NGO responsible for shelter identification and management.
- g. For planning purposes, approximately 2,500 autos per lane per hour can be accommodated on most roads with an average occupancy of four persons per vehicle.
- h. Planning evacuations for special facility and populations will require additional time and attention to detail. These may include hospitals, elder care facilities, and the like.
- i. Evacuation planning should also consider timelines, transportation needs and contacts required for large animal evacuations.
- j. Identify on a map area/locations where shelter-in-place locations are designated. These areas may require verification by the Operations Section Chief and concurrence from the Incident Commander(s).
- k. Determine traffic control points. Control points should be located on all sides of the incident and outside the threat area. The perimeter established for traffic control will depend on both the affected population and traffic density.

- I. Traffic closure levels - Display on incident and public information maps:
- Level 4 – closed to all traffic, potential life hazard
 - Level 3 – closed to all traffic except emergency responders
 - Level 2 – closed to all traffic except emergency responders and critical resources, i.e., public works, electrical service, animal rescue
 - Level 1 – open to above resources and residents only
- m. The completed Evacuation Plan should be distributed to all command and general staff members and their subordinates. Additionally, copies should be distributed to all lead and support agencies, local elected officials and the respective county or city emergency operations centers.

Re-Entry Planning Checklist:

- a. Identify re-entry date and time
- b. Identify area(s) to be re-entered
- c. Type of re-entry, homeowner/landowner only with identification or general public
- d. Considerations:
 - Is the threat mitigated?
 - Are power lines secured?
 - Are transportation systems hazards mitigated, i.e., roads cleared, bridges inspected, hazard trees removed, etc.?
 - Incident Commanders' approval granted
 - Local law enforcement agencies' approval granted
 - Other local emergency service agencies' approval granted (911 service)
 - Utility agency informed and supports decision
 - Local EOC notified and approves