



*Maryland-National Capital Park Police
Prince George's County Division*



DIVISION DIRECTIVE

TITLE EVACUATION		PROCEDURE NUMBER PG405.1	
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I. PURPOSE

To clearly define operational procedures, duties, and techniques to be used by Park Police personnel to effect any evacuation that may result from hazardous material incidents, natural disasters or any other emergency.

II. POLICY

Evacuation of nonessential personnel from the scene of an emergency is a police responsibility. The senior Fire/Rescue officer, or in some cases the senior police official, on the scene will determine the need to evacuate or rescue persons who are in danger from an emergency situation. Fire & Rescue personnel will normally perform the rescues, while the police will conduct evacuations. Timely evacuations may save lives and preclude the need for rescue at a later time.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Evacuate:** To remove all nonessential or unauthorized persons from the area.
- B. **Incident Commander:** The police or fire/rescue official responsible for the efficient management of the available resources at an emergency incident.
- C. **Incident Management Team:** The group of personnel in direct control of

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an emergency incident, including the Incident Commander, assistants to the Incident Commander and any other individuals deemed necessary to carry out the evacuation.

- D. **Operations Officer:** The officer responsible for the implementation of the strategic decisions of the Incident Commander, including evacuations.
- E. **Staging Officer:** The officer responsible for the orderly assembly and control of all personnel and equipment needed to complete the evacuation.
- F. **Security Officer:** The officer responsible for security on the scene, maintaining public order, and the screening of individuals to ensure that only authorized entries are made to the incident area.
- G. **Resource Officer:** The officer responsible for acquiring any personnel, equipment, or supplies needed for the successful completion of the evacuation.
- H. **Staging Area:** The geographical location, removed from the incident scene, away from any danger zone, but still close enough for rapid deployment; and where personnel and equipment are assembled prior to deployment into the incident area.
- I. **Isolate:** To keep all nonessential personnel and civilians away from the incident or hazardous area. (The isolation step is taken even if the evacuation is to follow)

IV. AUTHORITY TO EVACUATE

Authority for police and fire/rescue personnel to deny access and to conduct evacuations lies in the Prince George's County Fire Code Subtitle 11, "Fire Safety", Section 11-104, "Prohibited acts; interfering with or obstructing officials during fire or other emergency", Subsection (a)- which permits the fire official in charge of an emergency and the assisting police officers to control and prohibit the approach to the scene of an emergency and prohibits obstruction of fire department operations and requires obedience to the lawful orders of police officers and fire officials. Fire Code Subtitle 11, "Fire Safety", Section 11-103, "Procedures in case of fire", Subsection (b) "Evacuation of buildings"- which prohibits interference with an evacuation and makes refusal to obey an evacuation order a misdemeanor enforceable by either a police officer and/or a fire investigator as so stated in Fire Code Subtitle 11, "Fire Safety", Section 11-154, "Arrest Powers". The decision to forcibly remove someone who refuses to evacuate or to simply bypass that person must be made by the Fire Incident Commander.

Fire Code Subtitle 11, "Fire Safety", Section 11-150 Authority of Fire Chief, Subsection (c) – "Enforcement assistance. All county agencies, offices and departments shall render

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necessary assistance in the enforcement of this Subtitle when requested to do so by the Fire Chief or his authorized representative.”

Maryland Code Public Safety Article 7-402– Interference, Obstruction, False Representation also deals with the obstruction of firefighters while in the performance of their duties and may be used to charge a violator. This section is a misdemeanor that carries a three (3) year sentence if convicted and found guilty.

V. COMMAND CONTROL

The decision to evacuate must be a joint one between the ranking Fire & Rescue Official and the senior ranking officer from the Maryland-National Capital Park Police. In the event of an evacuation the senior ranking officer will be in command of the evacuation. The senior ranking officer’s position may change depending on the size and length of the incident, and as higher-ranking police officials arrive on the scene. When the higher-ranking officer arrives, he/she will notify the current senior ranking officer that he/she is taking command. The current senior ranking officer will then brief the arriving higher ranking officer as to what has been accomplished, what still needs to be accomplished and any other pertinent information. The transition of senior ranking officer’s will be according to the departmental chain of command.

VI. HAZARDOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM (H.I.R.T.)

The Hazardous Incident Response Team (H.I.R.T.) may be requested by the Fire Incident Commander at the scene of a hazardous material spill incident or accident. It is important to cooperate and seek advice from this team and the Fire Incident Commander at an early stage in the incident for the protection of both police and civilian personnel when hazardous materials are potentially involved.

VII. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Initial Officer on Scene – The first officer on the scene of the emergency incident that has the potential for possible evacuation should:
1. Rescue – If an officer can quickly move endangered persons to safety without undue personal hazard, he/she should immediately do so. Once Fire & Rescue personnel are on the scene, any rescue will be their responsibility.
 2. Isolate – The first arriving officer(s) should close all of the approaches to the incident so that more civilians do not enter the area and become endangered.
 3. Report – Prior to the arrival of Fire & Rescue personnel, the initial officers should report any presence of hazardous materials, any Department of

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Transportation (DOT) hazardous material placards visible, any fire involved or any other information that may prove useful to Fire & Rescue.

4. Personal Safety – In emergencies involving traffic accidents or other incidents where hazardous materials have been spilled or are leaking, quite frequently it is better to observe the incident from a distance. Many hazardous materials that appear quite harmless and are colorless and odorless are lethal or at least will incapacitate persons in the immediate area. Officers should be ready to assist whenever required, but should refrain from becoming part of the rescue problem.
- B. Police Incident Commander – At the scene of an incident with the potential for evacuation, the Police Incident Commander should:
1. Determine the need to evacuate – By consultation with the senior ranking fire official, the Police Incident Commander needs to learn:
 - a. Geographic area to be evacuated.
 - b. A worst case situation in which the incident could grow.
 - c. Lead time available to accomplish an evacuation before unprotected police officers become endangered.
 - d. If the process of evacuation itself could actually endanger more people.
 2. Make an early assessment of staffing needs – Evacuation along with perimeter control may consume great numbers of personnel. Sufficient personnel for all tasks must be determined early and requested as soon as possible. In time of a disaster or other emergency, arrival of needed personnel and equipment may be delayed because of traffic, weather or other factors. If some resource may be required on the scene in the future, it is better to call for it immediately than to delay the request and not have it arrive for two or three hours.
 3. Appoint Assistants – The span of control dictates that one person can handle or supervise no more than six or seven duties or subordinates. Therefore, the Incident Commander must appoint assistants. Key appointments are: Operations Officer, Staging Officer, Security Officer, Resource Officer, Shelter Control Officer and Media Officer. Other appointments should be made as needed and as time permits.
 4. Shelter Control – The Incident Commander when faced with an immediate need to evacuate, shall contact the Prince George’s County Office of Emergency Preparedness via the Emergency Operations Center and request that appropriate shelter(s) from the County Shelter list be opened. Once the Office of Emergency Preparedness selects the shelter site(s), the Incident Commander will:

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- a. Inform the Operations Officer of the site(s) selected.
 - b. Assign at least one officer to each shelter for communications purposes and to help keep order.
 5. Prepare Evacuation Message – Before beginning the evacuation, an evacuation message should be formulated by the Operations Officer and communicated to all officers assigned to evacuation duties for their use. The message should be concise, informative, calming and include the location of designated shelters.
- C. Evacuation Officer
1. Report to Staging Officer for assignment.
 2. Note the official evacuation message and shelter area assigned.
 3. Proceed door to door to announce the evacuation.
 4. Re-check all houses and businesses in assigned area to ensure that none were missed.
 5. Return to staging area and give list of addresses and names of advised persons and businesses to the Staging Officer, which will then be given to the Operations Officer.
 6. Use the Prince George’s County Police reverse 9-11 telephonic messaging system, this will save valuable time and effort.
- D. Traffic Control Officers
1. If assigned by the Communications Section as perimeter traffic control unit proceed directly to the assigned position. If not assigned to a specific traffic control area, all officers will report directly to the Staging Area.
 2. Allow only the following persons to pass the traffic control points:
 - a. People leaving the evacuation area.
 - b. Fire & Rescue personnel actually on apparatus or operating emergency vehicles.
 - c. Police personnel/Command Staff
 - d. Properly identified H.I.R.T. members.
 3. All other persons attempting to enter the area shall be denied entrance.
 4. Persons claiming to have official reasons or need to be in the area will be referred to the staging area for verification of their claim or need.
 5. Media representation will be referred to the media area for briefing by the Public Information Officer of this department.
- E. Shelter Control Officer

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If sufficient Park Police personnel are available, Shelter Control Officer will be assigned. If the Park Police Officers are not available, officers from other law enforcement agencies will be assigned. Their duties will be:

1. Report to the shelter area assigned.
2. Establish contact with the facility representative (minister, school principal, community center director, and so on).
3. Provide phone numbers, if available, to Command Post.
4. Assist Red Cross and other officials by maintaining order and providing a communications link with the Incident Commander.

F. Communication

In addition to notifying the Fire Board, the Communications Section will enter the placard numbers from the hazardous material containers into the KLETS system (NLE./Z) and upon receiving a response, will provide the Incident Commander with all pertinent information concerning the hazardous materials and chemicals involved.

VIII. RESOURCES AND REMINDERS

A. Mobile Command Post – The Prince George’s County Police Department’s resources are available on a twenty-four (24) hour basis. If a major police incident is likely to last several hours, consideration should be given to requesting assistance from them as soon as possible. Along with the Park Police Command Post the Prince George’s County Police have a mobile command post capable of delivering the following resources:

1. Radio capabilities including Fire/Rescue, Maryland-National Capital Park Police, Maryland State Police, United States Park Police, Civil Defense, and Prince George’s County Police.
2. Telephone capability.
3. Heat, lighting, shelter and air-conditioning.

NOTE: When choosing a place for locating Mobile Command Posts’ consider a paved level surface with power and phone hook-ups nearby and sufficient parking spaces for numerous vehicles.

B. Mutual Aid – Major evacuations require large numbers of police officers to handle the various tasks involved. Prince George’s County Police utilize a similar evacuation system as the Park Police and therefore should require little or no briefing prior to implementation. Officers from other police agencies will probably require some briefing, but should be able to carry out assigned tasks with little trouble. Incident Commander should not hesitate to call for assistance from other agencies.

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