





## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

	<b>CRITICAL INCIDENTS</b>	
	<b>POLICY NUMBER: 46-1</b>	ISSUING AUTHORITY 
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: June 12, 2025</b>	Christine A. Elow Police Commissioner

### **I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

A critical incident is one of an emergent nature that can result, for example, from disasters both natural and man-made, pandemics, and civil disturbances. Disasters include floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, explosions, and severe weather. Pandemics are infectious disease outbreaks that can affect the world population. Civil disturbances include riots, disorders, and violence arising from protests, marches, public events, political conventions, and labor disputes. The above examples are not all inclusive, other kinds of critical incidents may occur.

Critical incident management should follow the NIMS structure with the Incident Command System as a component. The principles outlined in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) are best practices and can be adapted for response to different types of critical incidents and of varying magnitudes.

### **II. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Cambridge Police Department to:

- A. work with the Cambridge Fire Department, other City agencies, and private ambulance services, to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from any critical incident that may affect the City;
- B. prepare emergency response plans, conduct training exercises, and provide for community outreach;
- C. perform life-saving measures, incident stabilization, property preservation, evacuation, and mass care in response to a critical incident;
- D. conduct an economic impact analysis and perform recovery measures post incident; and
- E. conduct public education, hazard assessments, and infrastructure improvements as part of mitigation efforts.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *All Hazard Plan*: A documented emergency operations plan to aid in the identification of methods to achieve desirable goals or conditions when a critical incident occurs.
- B. *ICS*: Incident Command System.
- C. *NIMS*: National Incident Management System.

### IV. PROCEDURES

- A. 46.1.1 (M) Planning Responsibility
  - 1. The deputy superintendent in charge of tactical operations is tasked with planning the police department's response to a critical incident. The deputy superintendent in charge of tactical operations will communicate with and coordinate efforts with the Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Management, both of whom also play a role in citywide critical incident planning.
    - a. The City of Cambridge assigns the duties of Emergency Management to the Fire Department. The position responsible for the Emergency Management function is delegated to a Deputy Fire Chief who is the point of contact for the City and who is the liaison to various City agencies as well as state and federal agencies and the private sector.
- B. 46.1.2 (M) All Hazard Plan
  - 1. The department will maintain a written All Hazard Plan for responding to critical incidents. The plan will follow standard Incident Command System (ICS) protocols, which include functional provisions for: command; operations; planning; logistics; and finance and administration.
- C. 46.1.3 (M) Command Function
  - 1. At a minimum, the command function will address:
    - a. activating the incident command system;
      - (1) The Incident Command System is designed to produce effective and efficient incident management through the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organized structure.
      - (i) Generally, the ICS organization is comprised of the following functions and/or positions:
        - 1. Incident Commander
        - 2. Command Staff
        - 3. General Staff/Sections

- (ii) At smaller incidents, the Incident Commander may perform all of the needed functions. At complex incidents, the Incident Commander will appoint personnel to General Staff and Command Staff positions as necessary.
- b. establishing a command post;
  - (1) The Command Section will establish a Command Post. Initially, the Command Post may be a cruiser or other emergency vehicle, or a designated location within or adjacent to the incident site.
  - (2) Once a Command Post is established, its location should be communicated to all appropriate personnel.
  - (3) The Command Post should:
    - (i) Be established away from the general noise and confusion associated with the incident. When appropriate, it may be located within view of the incident scene.
    - (ii) Be positioned outside of the inner perimeter, but within the outer perimeter to provide security and controlled access.
    - (iii) Have the ability to expand as necessary.
    - (iv) Be easily identifiable.
  - (4) In cases where there are joint operations with other agencies, a consolidated command post will be established with all responding agencies.
  - (5) The Command Post will be deactivated when all operations phases cease and/or the incident is terminated.
- c. initiating the notification and mobilization of additional agency personnel;
  - (1) If on-duty department personnel and resources are inadequate to meet the incident's operational needs, the Command Section is responsible for the mobilization of additional Department personnel.
  - (2) The Incident Commander may designate the Shift Commander or other supervisor to begin mobilizing additional Department personnel through such means as radio transmissions, CodeRed messaging, phone calls, and emails.
- d. obtaining support from other agencies;
  - (1) In the event that there are insufficient department resources to properly handle an incident, the appropriate agencies should be contacted for assistance.
  - (2) The Incident Commander may authorize obtaining mutual aid from neighboring law enforcement agencies and/or the Massachusetts State Police.
  - (3) For large-scale incidents, the Police Commissioner or their designee may request assistance from other state agencies and/or the federal government.

- (4) During certain types of incidents, including, but not limited to, acts of terrorism, the Police Commissioner or their designee may also request federal law enforcement assistance.
- e. establishing a unified command, if necessary;
  - (1) The command function may be conducted by a single Incident Command or Unified Command.
  - (2) When an incident does not involve jurisdictional or functional overlap, a single Incident Commander will be designated with overall management responsibility.
  - (3) Incidents that become multi-jurisdictional or involve numerous agencies within the same jurisdiction, Unified Command may be required to replace the Incident Command.
  - (4) The purpose of Unified Command is to manage a multi-agency incident under a single, collaborative approach, which includes:
    - (i) a common organizational structure;
    - (ii) a single incident command post;
    - (iii) a unified planning process; and
    - (iv) unified resource management.
  - (5) Under Unified Command, all agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for any or all aspects of an incident, and those able to provide specific resource support, participate in the Unified Command structure. The composition of the Unified Command team will depend on the location and type of the incident.
  - (6) Individuals designated by their organization to the Unified Command jointly determine objectives, strategies, plans and priorities, and work together to execute integrated incident operations.
  - (7) Department members who are performing Incident Commander duties at an incident that meets the above criteria should consider the creation of a Unified Command when appropriate.
- f. establishing a staging area, if necessary;
  - (1) The Command Section will identify locations for the staging of incoming personnel and/or equipment. Locations should be large enough to contain personnel and equipment awaiting assignment.
- g. providing public information and maintaining media relations;
  - (1) The release of information relative to ongoing emergencies is particularly sensitive and important. The ultimate responsibility for the dissemination of public information rests with the Incident Commander. Depending on the size of the

incident, whenever practical, the Incident Commander will coordinate the release and distribution of information with the Director of Communications and Media Relations.

- (2) The public should be provided with timely updates as often as possible to minimize the opportunity for rumors or misinformation to develop.

h. maintaining the safety of all affected personnel; and

- (1) The Command Section is responsible for supervising the safety of all involved personnel. In incidents where the Incident Commander cannot personally oversee safety issues, they will designate a Safety Officer.

i. preparing a documented after-action report.

- (1) As soon as practical after a major incident, the Incident Commander shall coordinate the preparation of an after-action report concerning all Department activities. The report will address any strengths, weaknesses, and challenges that the department can learn from. The after-action report will also provide analysis for lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for future planning, training, and exercise development.
- (2) The Deputy Superintendent in charge of Tactical Operations will review the after-action report and forward it the Police Commissioner.

D. 46.1.4 (M) Operations Function

1. At a minimum, the operations function will address:

a. establishing perimeters;

- (1) Controlling access to an incident scene is a key function and must be based on the unique aspects associated with each incident. When necessary, the Operations Section shall establish and maintain working perimeters to contain an incident. Perimeters must be placed at a distance that ensures personnel safety and allows for the appropriate deployment of resources.
- (2) During critical incidents, it is essential that the free flow of necessary personnel and equipment be maintained and that unnecessary personnel and vehicles be kept out of the immediate area of operations. The outer perimeter establishes a zone of exclusion for members of the public and must be kept secure until the Incident Commander declares the incident has concluded.
- (3) Unless directed otherwise, officers assigned to perimeter control should adhere to the following guidelines:
  - (i) The Incident Commander will specify what emergency personnel and/or equipment should be allowed to pass through the perimeter lines.

- (ii) Other emergency equipment arriving at the outer perimeter will be directed to an appropriate staging area to await orders.
  - (iii) Privately owned vehicles will not be permitted access through the outer perimeter unless carrying required personnel/equipment and has received authorization from the Incident Commander.
- b. conducting evacuations;
  - (1) The evacuation of an area may be necessary if conditions create a safety threat to local residents or property.
  - (2) When an evacuation is deemed necessary, the Operations Section will be responsible for carrying out this task. Particular attention should be given to evacuating civilian personnel from inside the perimeter area. The Operations Section may enlist the assistance of the media through the Information Officer during large-scale evacuations.
  - (3) In some instances, such as when a dangerous subject is at-large, it may be safer to advise civilians to remain in their homes and shelter in place rather than evacuate the area.
- c. maintaining command post and scene security;
  - (1) Security of the command post and scene are functions of the Incident Commander or Operations Section. Perimeter security should be maintained at all times and access to the command post must be strictly controlled.
  - (2) A command post security detail should verify the identification of persons requesting access to the Command Post, allowing entry only to essential and authorized personnel.
  - (3) During incidents with potentially dangerous subjects, officers assigned to perimeter control should be notified of the presence of plainclothes officers to avoid their being mistaken for a suspect.
- d. providing for detainee transportation, processing, and confinement;
  - (1) The threat of imminent violence or violations of the law by members of an unruly or volatile crowd may require the restraint of persons, including arrests.
  - (2) If an arrest is made in a situation involving an unruly or large crowd:
    - (i) Arrestees should be removed from the scene of the disturbance as soon as possible.
    - (ii) Documentation indicating the name of the arresting officer and the criminal charges should be placed somewhere on the arrestee's person.
    - (iii) If possible, a photograph of the arresting officer with their detainee should be taken for accurate identification.

(iv) Personnel should adhere to the procedures outlined in Policy 46-3 (Crowd Management) regarding mass arrests.

- e. directing and controlling traffic; and
- f. conducting post-incident investigation.

(1) The Incident Commander, or Operations Section if activated, is responsible for ensuring that any post-incident investigations are conducted.

(2) Such investigations may be required to identify the cause/responsibility for the incident and enable the filing of criminal charge, when appropriate.

E. 46.1.5 (M) Planning Function

- 1. At a minimum, the planning function will address:
  - a. preparing a documented incident action plan;
  - b. gathering and disseminating information and intelligence;
  - c. participating in a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)/Continuity of Government Plan (COG); and
  - d. planning post-incident demobilization.

F. 46.1.6 (M) Logistics Function

- 1. At a minimum, the logistics function will address:
  - a. communications;
  - b. transportation;
  - c. medical support;
  - d. supplies; and
  - e. specialized team and equipment needs.

G. 46.1.7 (M) Finance/Administration Function

- 1. At a minimum, the finance/administration function will address:
  - a. recording personnel time and attendance;
  - b. procuring additional resources;
  - c. recording expenses;
  - d. documenting injuries and liability issues; and
  - e. preparing appropriate reimbursement documents, if applicable.

H. 46.1.8 (M) Equipment Inspection

1. The deputy superintendent in charge of tactical operations shall coordinate a documented quarterly inspection of equipment that may be used in support of the All Hazards Plan. The inspection should include an assessment of the department's inventory of firearms, radios, crowd control equipment, personal protective equipment, and other gear identified by the deputy superintendent in charge of tactical operations.
  2. The department will confer with the Cambridge Office of Emergency Management to conduct a documented quarterly inspection for operational readiness of equipment designated for use in support of its critical incident plan. The equipment and supplies include:
    - a. cots and ample supplies of blankets and pillows to support the cots;
    - b. personal hygiene kits to support the affected people; and
    - c. a trailer with the above-mentioned equipment.
- I. 46.1.9 (M) All Hazards Plan Training
1. The department's Training and Certification Unit and Operations Division Commander will partner with pertinent City agencies to provide for:
    - a. documented annual training on the department's All Hazard Plan, to include the Incident Command System (ICS) for affected agency personnel; and
    - b. documented biennial training consisting of a tabletop or full-scale exercise to assess the agency's capabilities with the All-Hazard Plan and the Incident Command System.
- J. 46.1.10 (M) Active Threats (See policy 46-2 Active Threats.)
- K. 46.1.11 (O) Personnel Identification
1. During any response to riotous/civil disturbance situations, department personnel shall carry their regular identification and shall display a badge on the uniform to facilitate movement into the perimeter of an incident, if necessary.
  2. Outer wear that covers the uniform will be clearly marked as Cambridge Police and will display an identifying number, with the exception of officers working in an undercover capacity in plain clothes in the performance of their duties.
- L. 46.1.12 (M) Crowd Control Response Training (See policy 46-3 Crowd Management.)