



Armed Policing Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1139/2024)

Abstract

This policy outlines the commitment and articulates the principles by which Operations Command (OC) Tactical Firearms Unit (TFU) will discharge its functions in relation to the selection, training, management, and deployment of armed officers in support of organisational objectives.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the commitment and articulates the principles by which Operations Command (OC) Tactical Firearms Unit (TFU) will discharge its functions in relation to the selection, training, management, and deployment of armed officers.

1.2 It complies with Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Armed Policing including our obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

2. Scope

2.1 This overarching policy and associated procedures and appendices clearly outline the approach of the OC TFU in relation to how it discharges the following functions in relation to:

- Criteria for the deployment of Authorised Firearms Officers (AFO) and Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs).
- The command structure in response to spontaneous and planned firearms incidents.
- Selection, training, and de-selection of AFOs and Firearm Commanders.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the OC TFU effectively discharges its responsibilities on behalf of both Surrey Police and Sussex Police (hereafter referred to as the Forces) in ensuring that appropriate levels of suitably trained officers are available and effectively deployed to respond to firearms incidents in order to fulfil our fundamental role to keep the public safe from harm as identified within the Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA). This document is 'OFFICIAL' under the Government Security Classification Policy (GSCP). It is available within the Joint Command Data folder for those authorised to access it.

Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 An intelligence led approach will be employed to all incidents or information, in respect of criminal use of firearms, persons who present threat to public safety through being 'otherwise so dangerous', acts of terrorism or the destruction of animals that are dangerous or suffering unnecessarily. The process to be followed in response to firearms intelligence, and specifically the role of the Tactical Firearms Commanders (TFCs) and Strategic Firearms Commanders (SFCs) can be found in Firearms Intelligence and Operation Chrysler Process.

1.2 Operations Command (OC) will act at all times in a moral, legal and ethical manner, in accordance with the expectations and requirements laid down in the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for Armed Policing utilising the National Decision Model (NDM).

2. Distribution and Purpose

2.1 This document has been produced for, and is available to, all Firearms Commanders and Firearms Tactical Advisors (FTA) in order that a consistent and appropriate response can be made to incidents involving the deployment of armed officers in line with the APP for Armed Policing.

2.2 The documentation should be read in conjunction with the APP for Armed Policing and sets out how the Forces will deploy firearms officers and discharge command functions in response to spontaneous and planned firearms incidents.

3. Definitions

3.1 A spontaneous incident is defined as:

Where the police have not had prior warning to develop strategies, tactics and contingency plans.

3.2 A planned operation is defined as:

An operation where the police service has had the opportunity and time to develop strategies, tactics and contingency plans before an anticipated operation takes place.

3.3 Cross boundary / multi agency operations:

These are planned operations where the TFU work closely with agencies from outside of the Forces.

3.4 Unplanned deployment across Force boundaries

Where AFOs deploy across a policing boundary in circumstances that are not expected or planned for.

3.5 Armed Response Vehicle - (ARV)

An ARV is a patrolling vehicle of suitable make and model which contains an armoury. The vehicle is crewed by at least two police officers, trained in the use of the weapons and equipment carried in the vehicle and in all tactics applicable to ARV status.

3.6 Refer to A glossary of Armed Policing for terms referred to within this policy and procedure.

4. Deployment Profile

4.1 Firearms officers patrol on a 24 hour basis in ARVs.

4.2 redacted text

4.3 redacted text

5. Criteria for Deployment of Armed Officers

5.1 The deployment of AFOs should only be authorised where the officer authorising the deployment has reason to suppose that officers may have to protect themselves or others from a person who:

- Is in possession of, or has immediate access to, a firearm or other potentially lethal weapon or
- Is otherwise so dangerous that the deployment of armed officers is considered to be appropriate or
- As an operational contingency in a specific operation based on the threat assessment or
- For the destruction of animals which are dangerous or are suffering unnecessarily.

5.2 Level of authority required for deployment of specialist munitions:

The authority for the deployment of specialist munitions is the responsibility of the SFC.

6. Command Model

6.1 The Forces will maintain a Cadre of Strategic, initial Tactical, cadre Tactical and Operational Firearms Commanders together with Firearms Tactical Advisors (FTAs), occupationally and operationally accredited as SFC, TFC, OFC and FTA respectively, together with the provision of an on-duty TFC trained Force Command Inspector within the Force Control Room (FCR) in Surrey and the Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) in Sussex.

Longer shifts and being on call is likely to impact on those with particular caring, disability, faith needs. The Force understands this and will make workplace adjustments to support individual and reasonable adjustments. Such adjustments provide and support a diverse cadre. Individuals who are on call are entitled to claim on call allowance.

All such officers will be accredited in line with the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum (NPFTC) and requirements of the College of Policing (CoP).

6.2 Strategic Firearms Commanders

- Surrey 1 x 12 hour responsibility 0600 - 1800, 1800 - 0600. On call or on duty.
- Sussex 1 x 12 hour responsibility 0630 -1830, 1830 - 0630. On call or on duty.

6.3 Tactical Firearms Commanders

- Surrey 1 x 12 hour responsibility 0600 - 1800, 1800 - 0600. On call or on duty.
- Sussex 1 x 12 hour responsibility 0700 - 1900, 1900 - 0700. On call or on duty.

6.4 Force Control Room Inspectors

The FCR / FCCCD Inspector or Oscar 1 will be on-duty throughout the 24 hour period. This officer will be required to be an occupationally and operationally accredited TFC, capable of commanding spontaneous firearms incidents.

6.5 Operational Firearms Commanders

Each base, including Gatwick, will ensure that an OFC is on duty throughout the 24 hour period.

6.6 Firearms Tactical Advisors

The OC TFU will ensure that an FTA is on duty or on call at all times.

6.7 Gatwick will also ensure that a Duty Inspector is available and on duty at all times. The Gatwick Inspectors are expected to become initial Tactical Firearms Commanders (iTFCs) and perform that function in relation to Counter Terrorism (CT) tactics at the Airport.

In the event of an attack on the Airport (Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) or other) the Gatwick Inspectors have a particular Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) role to play and will not be the TFC.

7. Spontaneous Firearms Incidents

7.1 The Forces will act in compliance with the APP Armed Policing.

7.2 Initial Command

This will normally sit with the FCR / FCCCD inspector and will remain so until a transfer of command has taken place, as outlined in APP Armed Policing.

7.3 Once a Spontaneous Firearms Incident (SFI) has been declared, the iTFC will be responsible for ensuring that an appropriate command structure is instigated as soon as practicable.

7.4 The iTFC will remain in command of the deployment until any transfer of command takes place.

7.5 As soon as practicable, the Force Duty SFC should be contacted and assume overall strategic command and confirm or rescind the authority in accordance with APP.

7.6 Where incidents become protracted, command should be passed from the iTFC to a dedicated Cadre TFC.

8. Transfer of Command

8.1 Any transfer of command will be in accordance with APP Armed Policing Transfer of Command.

8.2 It is expected that any officer on call in either function would be effective as detailed below and

- Must be able to speak to the person calling them out within 10 minutes of that person first calling them; and
- Must be at the required place of duty within one hour of the initial call-out, or within reasonable preparation and travelling time from their home address, whichever is the longer.

8.3 These factors include:

- Knowledge of the circumstances and available intelligence.
- The ability to communicate.
- Appropriate tactical advice available.
- A suitable environment from which to exercise the command function.

9. Planned Firearms Incidents

9.1 For planned incidents a command structure must be in place prior to officers being deployed. This includes Close Protection Operations. The procedure for the deployment of Close Protection is available at.

10. Cross Boundary Operations

10.1 APP sets out the requirements for cross boundary deployments.

10.2 For planned deployments outside Surrey and Sussex this will require a memorandum of understanding between the relevant forces.

10.3 For planned deployments within Surrey and Sussex there will be no requirement to seek cross border authority, however the SFC should be notified during the planning stage that the relevant force is planning an operation that may cross the boundary between forces.

The presumption will be that the TFC and the SFC from the originating force will remain in command throughout the operation, unless the SFCs agree it is more appropriate to transfer the command at an appropriate time. In such circumstances a specific command protocol will be put in place.

10.4 Before the operation commences the TFC will be responsible for notifying both force control rooms that it is taking place. The control rooms will be kept updated when the armed officers move from one force area to the other.

10.5 Unplanned Deployments across Force Boundaries

APP sets out the options to be considered in relation to unplanned deployment of firearms assets across a policing boundary and this will be used for cross boundary deployments beyond Surrey and Sussex.

For spontaneous cross boundary deployments between Surrey and Sussex the presumption will be that the command structure for the originating force will remain in

command of the assets, unless the SFC deems it would be more appropriate to transfer command.

11. Eligibility, Recruitment and Training Process for Firearms Officers

11.1 The eligibility criteria, recruitment process and training requirements to become a firearms officer at Gatwick, Burpham, and Lewes or firearms commander are detailed in document Eligibility Criteria, Recruitment Process and Training Requirements.

12. Armed Response Vehicles (ARV) - Non-Firearms Deployment

12.1 The appropriate deployment of Armed Response Vehicles (ARV) to non-firearm incidents is detailed in document Deployment of ARVs to Non-Firearms Incidents.

NB: Gatwick ARV is not covered by this document instead falling under the command of the Gatwick Duty Inspector.

12.2 For operational procedures regarding ARV officers in a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Environment refer to document Armed Response Vehicle Officers in CBRN Environment.

13. National Requirement to Report Incidents Involving Automatic Weaponry

13.1 There is a national requirement to ensure all Forces record and disseminate recoveries of automatic weapons and ammunition; this is known nationally as the "Process for Sharing Information on Recovered Automatic Weaponry".

13.2 The overall purpose is to ensure that any potential incidents involving automatic weapons are identified and reported so that the National Crime Agency (NCA) have assurance that:

- 1. Threat harm and risk is being assessed and managed appropriately
- 2. The intelligence opportunities are being effectively prioritised and exploited and
- 3. The strategic significance of the incident is considered and assessed.

NCA Reporting Proforma

14. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

14.1 Threat and Risk Assessment (APSTRA) meeting chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) of Operations Command and are available within the splash site for all Commanders and Advisors to assist the operational delivery of firearms policing. Their purpose is to reflect the learning from operational firearms policing and assist Commanders and Advisors with issues that are not documented within APP. For those who have access the SOPs folder can be found within OC Firearms.

14.2 The SOPs currently cover:

- Firearms Command Accreditation
- Firearms Incidents Debriefs
- Mobile Armed Support to Surveillance (MASTS) Deployments

- Recording of Firearms Operations Decision Making
- Specialist Munitions
- Kidnap
- Spontaneous Firearms Incident
- Close Protection
- Tactical Silos

Team: Operations Command