

UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES

STANDARD NO(S)

NYSLEAP 58.1-2, & 58.4

DATE:

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REFER TO:

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I. OBJECTIVE:

To provide guidelines for the response to and handling of unusual occurrences, such as natural disasters or civil disturbances.

II. POLICY:

It shall be the policy of the SCSO to plan for and to provide high quality law enforcement services whenever required, even during unusual emergencies. Such emergencies, which by their very nature tend to disrupt the public order, include natural or man-made disasters, and civil disturbances affecting, or having the potential to affect, adversely, the safety of the people of Seneca County.

III. DETAILS:

For the immediate purpose, an unusual occurrence is any situation that threatens the safety of numerous persons; that involves extensive property damage; that presents a serious hazard to public health; that requires the protracted services of a majority of on-duty personnel (to the extent that normal law enforcement activities would be impaired); or that requires field supervision by a Lieutenant or above. Such situations could include major fires or explosions, chemical spills, nuclear or radiological accidents, aircraft accidents, civil disorders, weather related emergencies, or other incidents requiring full implementation of SCSO's resources in the public interest.

The responsibility of government to provide order in the protection of life, public health, and property is not diminished in time of crisis. Rather, the public is entitled to expect that their police agencies will set an example for prompt and decisive action in returning to normalcy, regardless of any impediments to such accomplishment.

Unlike an occupying military force, the SCSO must handle any emergency and restore the public order without resorting to martial law and in full compliance with established procedures affecting legality of arrests, processing of prisoners and juveniles, and the collection and preservation of evidence. This responsibility can only be met after careful and thoughtful planning.

A. Authority for Emergency Action -In any incident or disaster within the unincorporated areas of Seneca County, governmental responsibility for the overall control of such situation is vested in the Seneca County Director of Emergency Management, until such time that the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors assumes command and/or responsibility for decisions. Procedures governing such action are set forth in the "**Seneca County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**," a copy of which is maintained in the Administration Division of the Seneca County Sheriff's Office & Law Enforcement Center.

The Sheriff retains responsibility for planning, organizing, and directing all law enforcement activity during an emergency in Seneca County. Authority for such responsibility is found in New York State Executive Law Section 29-b (2)(g) and in New York State General Municipal Law Section 209-f.

1. Plans shall be reviewed and updated annually by the Director of Emergency Management in consultation with the Sheriff and other key stake holders. Plans for natural and/or man-made disasters are developed in accordance with the "**Seneca County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**." Coordination with the Seneca County Office of Emergency Management (Fire Coordinator) will be maintained as appropriate for the circumstances. Such coordination shall consist of, but not limited to, planning, paper and field exercises, risk assessment, and analysis.
2. Intelligence gathering operations may contribute information that could impact on such plans. The management of a crisis situation often begins prior to an event by evaluating an existing problem that has the potential for developing into an unusual occurrence. This appraisal requires an appreciation of the physical, environmental, cultural, as well as the socio-economic characteristics of the SCSO's service area.
3. The need for assistance from other law enforcement agencies or other outside agencies should be determined as soon as possible and the request made immediately. Any unusual occurrence may develop into an emergency situation when time is of the essence, and all members of SCSO shall be cognizant of the need for immediate and decisive action.

B. Support Functions -Dependent upon the extent and severity of the emergency, the SCSO will have exclusive or concurrent responsibilities for the following tasks:

1. **Communications** - The Seneca County Emergency Communications Center (E-911), an independent County Department, has the capability to act as the central dispatch point for all emergency communications in Seneca County. This includes police, fire ambulance and disaster communications. All SCSO vehicles and portable radios are similarly equipped. See "**Seneca County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**."
2. **Field Command Posts** - If required a temporary location will be used as the on-scene command center to coordinate the activities of all operational personnel.

The Field Command Post will be placed outside the inner perimeter, preferably inside the outer perimeter, and will include the actual command post and a controlled area for the staging of personnel and equipment. See "**Bomb Threats & Disposal**" and "**Hazardous Materials Incidents**," in the LEMOI.

3. **Casualty Information and Public Information** - Information on casualties will be dependent upon the scale of the occurrence. Procedures for public information are contained in "**Public Information and Community Relations**," this manual and in the "**Seneca County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**."
4. **Inter-agency Support** -If the nature of the unusual occurrence necessitates the utilization of resources outside of SCSO, such as other law enforcement agencies, federal assistance, or military support, procedures are contained in "**Liaison with Other Agencies**" and "**Jurisdiction**," in the LEMOI.
5. **Traffic Control** - Control of traffic in a disaster situation is a primary responsibility of SCSO. The orderly flow in and around a disaster site will help to lessen the severity of problems with evacuations, notifications, security, and emergency assistance. See "**Traffic Administration, Enforcement, and Control**," in the LEMOI, "**Seneca County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**" and "**Seneca County Hazardous Material/WMD Response Plan**."
6. **Public facilities** -In an unusual occurrence where vital public facilities are threatened, an assessment of security needs shall be made and implemented as soon as practical.
7. **Equipment and transportation** -It is important that all equipment and supplies intended for use in emergencies be serviceable, well-maintained and readily accessible. If necessary to protect life and property, the Sheriff may hire any equipment or apparatus together with an operator, including means of transportation for responding personnel or for evacuation of the general public. Authority for such action is contained in New York State County Law, Article 17, Section 656.
8. **De-escalation** -As soon as the situation will allow, de-escalation procedures should begin. Manpower and equipment resources should be released when no longer needed; however, command personnel must be alert for any indication that the situation might worsen and be prepared to recall resources. In the event of a civil disturbance, emphasis should be placed on communication with the community and organization leaders in an effort to defuse the situation.
9. **Rumor Control** -Rumors and inaccurate information can exacerbate a situation. Efforts should be made to counteract all rumors as soon as possible.
10. **10. Post-occurrence action** -Dependent upon the circumstances of the unusual occurrence, the Sheriff or a designee shall request post occurrence reports from command personnel and commence preparation of a critical assessment within two weeks.

11. The performance of individual members, their components, equipment, the organization as a whole, as well as the effectiveness of interaction with any cooperating agencies shall be reviewed. Steps to initiate needed corrective measures, new or revised procedures shall be taken as soon as practical.

12. **After Action Reports** - After an incident has required the deployment of significant SCSO resources an after action report shall be filed with the Sheriff. The form of the report may be a written memorandum, or, if a brief account will suffice, through the computerized message system.

C. Initial Response - In the event an SCSO member is first at the scene of an unusual occurrence that member will be the Incident Commander until relieved by competent authority. It is incumbent upon responding personnel to bear in mind the tenets of contain, control, and communicate in dealing with the situation. Upon arrival, the first member will notify the E-911 Center of the following:

1. Nature of the occurrence.
2. Exact location and extent of damage or potential danger.
3. Immediate assistance required.
4. Necessary Command Staff to be notified.
5. Advisability of initiating one of the emergency levels of response.

D. Manpower Mobilization Plan -The following guidelines are established to provide SCSO personnel with procedures for an organized, timely, and appropriate response to situations that exceed response capabilities of on-duty personnel, either in expertise or manpower requirements.

1. **Level I Response** -

- a. A Level I Response is the primary stage of mobilization for unusual occurrences. It is implemented whenever an incident generates response demands that exceed the capabilities of on-duty personnel. This response is appropriate when a specialized operation, such as K-9, Emergency Response Team (ERT), Navigation, CID, etc., is needed, rather than additional personnel.
- b. A level I Response may be initiated by the on- duty Sergeant or above, who will notify the E-911 Center of the requirements. Command personnel will be notified as outlined in “**Administrative Notification**”, this Manual.

2. **Level II Response** -

- a. A Level II Response is an extension of a Level I Response where there is a need for additional manpower, not necessarily specialized personnel. Implementation of a Level II Response may include activation of off-duty personnel.

- b. A Level II Response will be initiated by a Lieutenant or above, and may commence without issuing a Level I Response.

3. **Level III Response** -

- a. A Level III Response is an extension of a Level II and would normally be preceded by a Level II Response. Level III utilizes personnel and expertise from outside agencies when demands exceed the capabilities of SCSO.
- b. The Sheriff or a designee may request assistance of other county, municipal, State, or Federal agencies, pursuant to mutual aid legislation. See "**Jurisdiction**" in the LEMOI and "**Administrative Notifications**," this Manual.

4. **Implementation** - To implement a Level I, II, or III Response, or any other situation that exceeds the capability of on-duty personnel, a commanding officer may take emergency action to provide manpower to cope with the situation. Under such circumstances, the commanding officer may:

- a. Order on-duty personnel to remain on duty beyond their normal shift;
- b. Stand-by/mobilize off-duty personnel;
- c. Request additional resources in the form of specialized teams or individuals; or,
- d. Request a higher level of mobilization.

E. Mobilization exercises -At the direction of the Sheriff, periodic rehearsals of mobilization plans will take place, including distribution of manpower and equipment resources, and may also include other agencies that might be utilized in an unusual occurrence.

F. Departmental Responsibilities -The responsibilities of the SCSO during a disaster or emergency situation shall be as follows:

- 1. Protection of life and property, to include:
 - a. Safeguarding scene against further injury or loss of life;
 - b. Providing service and first aid until others arrive; and,
 - c. Assisting in the evacuation of unsafe buildings, when appropriate.
- 2. Take immediate charge of the scene by insuring:
 - a. Maintenance of order in and around the emergency area;

- b. Prevention of unauthorized entry into the area;
 - c. Control of traffic in and around the area; and,
 - d. Unimpeded access to and egress from the area by authorized personnel.
- 3. Care of the deceased victims, to include:
 - a. Safeguarding the scene;
 - b. Arranging for photographic record of event;
 - c. Arranging for removal of bodies; and,
 - d. Notification of next-of-kin (see "**Notifications**,") this manual.
- 4. Safeguard property:
 - a. Of the dead and injured;
 - b. In evacuated buildings;
 - c. Abandoned at the scene;
 - d. By prevention of vandalism and looting; and,
 - e. By protection of public buildings and facilities.
- 5. Investigation of crimes, to include:
 - a. Arrest and detention of violators;
 - b. Collection and preservation of evidence;
 - c. Interviewing witnesses; and,
 - d. Interrogating suspects.
- 6. Aiding and assisting civilians by:
 - a. Rendering aid to persons protecting their own property;
 - b. Assisting persons in locating lost relatives; and,
 - c. Referring persons to appropriate agencies.
- 7. Cooperation and liaison with other agencies:

- a. Assess need for outside assistance;
 - b. Assess need for special equipment and/or specially trained personnel; and,
 - c. Request assistance from and maintain contact with other agencies.
8. As a function of de-escalation:
- a. Insure that all participating department and outside personnel are aware of incident status;
 - b. Account for all department equipment;
 - c. Release department personnel to normal duties; and,
 - d. Debrief personnel involved.

G. Field Command - If an emergency level of response is requested, the ranking on-duty supervisor will immediately respond to the scene and assume command as the Incident Commander. This person will direct the performance of all necessary law enforcement functions, including rescues, first aid, evacuations, traffic control, arrests, etc., until the situation is resolved or until relieved by competent authority.

1. When a Level I response is activated and a tactical situation exists, an officer of the rank of Lieutenant (or designee) or above will respond to the scene and assume command as Incident Commander.

If a situation other than a tactical situation exists, such as a natural disaster, the Seneca County Office of Emergency Management will be alerted as necessary. The Incident Commander will retain such status throughout the duration of the incident until relieved by competent authority.

2. It shall be the responsibility of the ranking on- duty supervisor to:
- a. Make a rapid survey of the scene and estimate the seriousness of the occurrence;
 - b. Request additional personnel for assignment to the scene:
 - 1) from on-duty personnel,
 - 2) through initiation of Level I, II, or III Response levels, and
 - 3) specify a protected area adjacent to the scene for use as a staging area. A secondary staging area should be identified if needed. The ranking on duty supervisor will also;
 - c. Establish a Command Post at the scene.
 - d. Notify the E-911 Center of:

- 1) The location of the staging area and the Command Post;
 - 2) The availability of communication facilities, including telephones;
 - 3) The current status of the situation; and,
 - 4) The specific type of equipment needed, if known at the time.
- e. Establish security lines isolating the area.
 - f. Establish an emergency response route and specify connecting routes from the scene to such route.
 - g. In cooperation with other agencies at the scene, appropriately provide for the following, if necessary:
 - 1) Casualty clearing area;
 - 2) Prisoner processing and detention center;
 - 3) Temporary shelter area;
 - 4) Press information area;
 - 5) Evacuations; and,
 - 6) Any other contingency as the situation develops.

H. Mass Arrests - The necessity to execute mass arrests is usually associated with civil disturbances, such as riots, protests, demonstrations, or even labor disputes; however, a need for this technique could also arise in a natural disaster, where, for instance, looters try to take advantage of police diversion. In the former cases, such as concerts, demonstrations, and the like, significant lead time of the event will often allow for preparation, including defusing the situation.

In other situations, the need for processing of mass arrests will probably not be identified until the illegal activity is underway. Members of the SCSO are required to be familiar with procedures, so that processing of mass arrests may be done efficiently and without unnecessary delay.

I. Preparation of Detention Site - Dependent upon lead time and expected workload, the following locations may be considered for use as detention sites:

1. Seneca County Correctional Facility.
2. Other indoor or outdoor locations where a reasonable degree of security can be maintained.

J. Booking facilities - Booking facilities shall be located at each detention site and be manned by both Corrections Officers and Road Patrol Officers. If necessary, requests for assistance from other agencies may be made pursuant to mutual aid legislation. See "**Jurisdiction**," in the LEMOI.

- K. Security** - Detention and security services at any detention site shall be provided by certified Corrections Officers; however, other certified police officers may be used to provide security.
- L. Judicial Process** - When mass arrests are undertaken, the Sheriff or a designee shall notify the Seventh Judicial District and request that additional magistrates be assigned, if necessary. The District Attorney and the Assigned Counsel Administrator will also be notified.
- M.** The Corrections Chief Administrative Officer will arrange facilities for secure defense counsel visits which will provide the privacy to which defendants are entitled.
- N. Services** - It shall be the responsibility of the Corrections Chief Administrative Officer or designee to insure that proper food, water, sanitation, and medical facilities are provided at the site.
- O. Media relations** - Information on the mass arrests will be released to the media according to the procedures contained in "**Public Information and Community Relations**," this manual.
- P. Transportation of arrestees** -If the capacity of the SCSO is exceeded by the number of prisoners that must be detained, and their transportation to other facilities becomes necessary, arrangements for prisoner removal and detention shall be handled in accordance with the procedures set out in "**Jurisdiction**" in the LEMOI.