

Police Service of Northern Ireland

For Internal Use Only

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Part I

COMMAND STRUCTURES - POLICE OPERATIONS/EVENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the normal sphere of police operations, situations involving public order, firearms incidents and major incidents (as per Major Incident Plan), are likely to occur. Notwithstanding the difference in the nature of the incidents, specific command structures have been approved or are recommended for handling same. Each of the disciplines tend to have a preference or preponderance towards different command titles. These command structures are described as Strategic/Gold, Tactical/Silver and Operational/Bronze. The variation in the police service generally is such that the titles should be considered interchangeable. This General Order seeks to provide common definitions with regard to the command functions, irrespective of the incident.

2. COMMAND STRUCTURE

The Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure is described as a role orientated system of command. It focuses on the role of individual officers in command positions. Although there are perceptions of what is an appropriate rank to take charge of certain incidents or events the structure is not rank orientated. In the early stages of a spontaneous event the ranks of those in command are likely to change as a fuller appreciation of the particular situation is obtained and as additional resources become available.

3. STRATEGIC/GOLD COMMAND

This is the highest level of command. Gold command determines the policy, framework and strategy for an event/incident. It also maintains a top level overview of intelligence, resources and other factors which are likely to impact on the event taking place. Gold Command should not normally be located at the scene of any incident/event. A Gold commander may assume responsibility for more than one event.

4. GOLD CONTROL

Gold control provides a resource and communications mechanism through which the Strategic/Gold commander can exercise command and will, in normal circumstances, be located with the Strategic/Gold command.

5. TACTICAL/SILVER COMMAND

This is the second level of command. The Tactical/Silver commander deals with the immediacy of the event/incident and will work within the policy and strategy determined by the Strategic/Gold commander. A Silver commander should be designated for a specific policing operation normally within a discrete geographical area. The role of this commander is to determine the tactics for policing the incident/event and to manage and co-ordinate the input of Operational/Bronze personnel and other non police resources who may be involved. This is particularly relevant in a major incident which entails a multi agency response. Tactical/Silver commanders will normally work from a control room. If for any reason the Silver commander deploys elsewhere, this officer must ensure that adequate arrangements exist whereby Silver Control can effect executive decisions on behalf of the Silver commander.

6. **TACTICAL/SILVER CONTROL**

Silver Control provides the resource and communications mechanism through which the Tactical/Silver commander exercises his command function.

7. **OPERATIONAL/BRONZE COMMANDER**

Operational/Bronze commanders have functional or geographical responsibilities and are responsible for 'making things happen'. They have some discretion in how they undertake the allotted tasks but must always seek to achieve the set objectives and advise the Tactical/Silver commander of their plans and progress.

8. **OPERATIONAL/BRONZE CONTROL**

In the majority of events/incidents there will seldom be the need for the establishment of a Bronze Control. It is normally associated with specialist functions such as Firearms Response Teams.

9. **GENERAL**

Appendix 'A' provides an aide memoir of the functions of each command level while Appendices 'B' and 'D' provide an outline of the structure within each of the three incident types identified.

10. **CANCELLATION**

General Order Part I, No 55/94, File Box D(a) is hereby cancelled.

Distribution/

**All chief officers, superintendents, departments,
stations and offices**

General Order Part I, No 11/98, File Box D(a)

Index Entries/

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