

**Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures**  
**Response to Incidents Involving Violence**  
**209.07**  
**Rev 4-15-93**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for the response of Fire Department companies to incidents involving violence. Violent incidents are defined as shootings, stabbings, cuttings, assaults, or any other type of incident in which fire department members may be exposed to harm as a result of a violent act.

**PROCEDURE**

For calls where Alarm knows or suspects that violence has been involved in the call, the call will be dispatched with instructions to "proceed with caution."

The first-in unit should proceed with caution as they respond into the area of the incident. If the first-in unit is not comfortable with conditions at the scene upon approach, they have the option to stage in accordance with this procedure. They will determine and announce to other responding units whether they should continue into the scene.

For calls where Alarm knows or suspects that the potential for further violence exists, such as a sniper, fight in progress, or shooter in the area, the call will be dispatched with instructions to "stage for PD". Companies are strongly encouraged, but not required, to stage in these situations. Conditions at the scene and company officer discretion will determine whether or not to proceed to the scene.

Alarm will collect and provide as much information as possible and rapidly communicate that information to responding companies as soon as possible by radio and MDT when responding to, staged, or operating at incidents that involve violence.

In all cases, the decision to stage or to go into the scene will be made by the responding unit. The decision is up to the person in charge of the company whether it be engine, ladder, or ambulance, etc. The decision should be based on experience, what can be seen, what can be heard, what can be learned from the radio or the MDT, what can be heard by listening to PD radio traffic, prior experience in the area, and other factors.

If the decision to stage is made, the person in charge of the unit shall inform the Alarm Room that they are staged.

This notification to Alarm, of staging, is in addition to any other communications to the Police Department that the company officer may initiate.

When the decision to stage is made:

1. All responding units will Level II stage. The company officer of the first unit to stage will advise other units of that location.
2. Members should consider the hazards at hand and stage far enough away to avoid becoming a part of the incident - out of line of sight and out of the line of fire for gunshots.
3. Members should remember that the crowd may be a hazard.
4. Units should stage up to 1/4 mile away and out of sight and hearing range of the scene.

5. Companies may stage in the fire station, on the apparatus and ready to respond, if the call is within 1/4 mile of the station.
6. Units should turn off warning lights when staged and then turn them back on when completing the response to the scene. Turning off warning lights at the scene may reduce crowd attraction to the incident.
7. The best plan may be to retreat if necessary to insure the safety of the crew members.

If fire department companies respond to an incident of an unknown nature and find themselves in a violent situation, they will immediately retreat to a safe location. Emergency traffic should be used as necessary, and Alarm should be advised of the need for rapid police response.

When the Police Department advises the scene is secure, the first unit may proceed back to the scene, report when the scene is safe for other units to enter, and begin operations.

If an actual assault on fire personnel is imminent or in progress, the law allows for the use of reasonable force and physical restraint to the extent necessary to control the potential or actual assailant until the Police Department takes control of the situation.

During violent situations where fire crews are at risk of injury and need police assistance immediately, they may use the radio code "906." Alarm will immediately advise the police dispatcher that a fire company is in trouble, has transmitted a "906" code, and needs police assistance immediately. Company officers should provide details of the situation when able to do so. Under a "906" code, Alarm will not ask the company for details or why the police are needed.

In some unsecured violent incidents, with patients, it may be necessary for the Police Department to deliver the patient(s) to fire companies at the perimeter (the police become the Extrication Sector).