



PRACTICE NOTE

Incident Management: The Pima County, Arizona, Sheriff's Department's Use of the Incident Command System During Post-Response Phase Operations After the January 8, 2011, Shootings

PRACTICE

The Pima County, Arizona, Sheriff's Department (PCSD) employed the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage post-response phase operations after the January 8, 2011, mass shootings. ICS helped PCSD manage the demand for information from the public, and domestic and international media outlets. The use of ICS also allowed PCSD to effectively manage high-profile events and dignitary visits in partnership with Federal, State, and local agencies.

DESCRIPTION

The January 8, 2011, Mass Shootings

On Saturday, January 8, 2011, at 10:10 a.m. Mountain Standard Time, a gunman opened fire on U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and a group of citizens attending her "Congress on Your Corner" event in front of a Safeway supermarket in Tucson, AZ. The gunman fired 31 rounds, killing 6 people and wounding Representative Giffords and 12 others. U.S. District Judge John Roll and Gabriel Zimmerman, a staff member for Representative Giffords, were among those killed. Citizens acted immediately to detain the gunman while congressional staff and two doctors, who were shopping at the Safeway, provided first aid to the victims. Pima County 911 operators received the first call from the incident scene at 10:11 a.m. A PCSD deputy arrived on site at 10:15 a.m. and detained the suspect. A second deputy arrived soon after and secured the shooter's weapon. Throughout the response, PCSD utilized ICS to manage operations, which included securing the incident area, triaging and transporting victims, and initiating an investigation.



Mass Shootings Incident Site

Post-Response Phase Operations

PCSD recognized that the post-incident events, such as victims' funerals and memorial services, would present a number of challenges for the county. The department would need to provide security for high-profile events and dignitary visits. These would require

integrated operations with Federal, state, and local agencies. Further, the high interest in the mass shootings and subsequent events would draw a heavy media presence as well as spectators at the post-incident events. As a result, PCSD decided to use ICS to plan for and manage these post-response phase operations. ICS enabled PCSD to successfully manage multiple, simultaneous events in partnership with Federal, state, and local agencies in an effective manner.

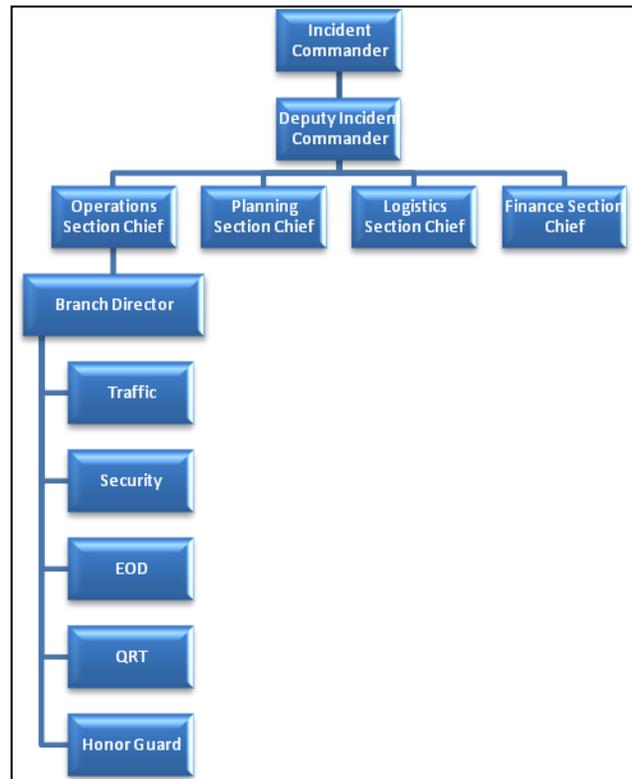
Managing Media Operations

The mass shootings attracted extensive media coverage from local, national, and international media outlets, including CNN, Al Jazeera, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Media outlets deployed a large number of reporters, camera operators, and other support staff to Pima County shortly after the shootings. PCSD established a joint information center to manage requests and engage the media in a proactive manner. Activities that the department conducted in an effort to address media requests included:



Media Coverage of the Mass Shootings

- **PCSD Operations Center Visit:** On January 13, 2011, the department invited news media outlets to view the PCSD Operations Center between 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. The department allowed media personnel to interview staff from different agencies as well as to record and photograph activities at the Operations Center. This visit helped media personnel understand how the department was conducting post-event response operations as well as to further improve the relationship between the department and the media.
- **Development of Press Releases:** PCSD drafted press releases throughout post-event operations to provide information about the conditions of victims and clarify incident details. Further, these press releases included the location of media staging areas and road closures during memorial services.



PCSD Incident Organization Chart for Post-Response Event Management

Employment of Incident Action Plans to Manage High-Visibility Events

PCSD personnel developed [incident action plans](#) (IAPs) to plan for and manage approximately 11 events in the weeks following the shootings. The use of IAPs allowed PCSD to manage events that were attended by dignitaries and attracted hundreds of spectators. These events included the funerals and rosaries of some of the victims, a presidential visit, and escorting Representative Giffords from the University Medical Center to Davis-Monthan Air Force

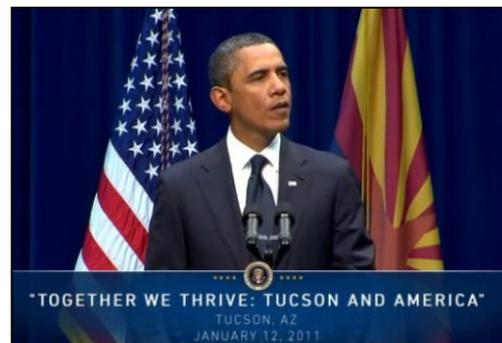
Base. During each event, PCSD provided site security, traffic control, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), quick response team (QRT) deployment, and honor guard operations.

Prior to each event, the department formed an incident management team (IMT) and assigned a lieutenant to serve as the IMT branch director. Each branch director and IMT then assisted the PCSD Operations Center Planning Section with the development of an IAP tailored to the event. The branch director helped Planning Section personnel identify specific requirements and plan for critical activities such as:

- Conducting an EOD sweep immediately prior to the event;
- Establishing a command post;
- Deploying a sufficient number of uniformed deputies to provide a safe environment;
- Providing a response team to address any security/breach of peace/law enforcement response at the event; and
- Providing safe ingress and egress of all vehicles and traffic control on the surrounding roadway.

Presidential Visit

On January 12, 2011, U. S. President Barack Obama held a memorial service for the shooting victims at the McKale Memorial Center on the University of Arizona campus. More than 26,000 people attended the event with 13,172 at the McKale Memorial Center and 13,000 at the Arizona Stadium. Many other senior government officials participated in the memorial service, including Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Attorney General Eric Holder, Senator John McCain, and Arizona Governor Jan Brewer. PCSD coordinated with Federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies, such as the U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and U.S. Marshals Service to manage this event. These Federal agencies deployed liaison officers to integrate with PCSD command staff. The use of ICS enabled PCSD and Federal agency personnel to provide security and support to the presidential detail effectively and efficiently.



U.S. President Barack Obama Speaks at the McKale Memorial Center

Memorial Protests

PCSD recognized that the memorials held the potential for conflict between groups with different views. It was reported that the Westboro Baptist Church planned to protest the funeral of Christina-Taylor Green and the rosary of Hon. John Roll, while counter-protestor groups planned to block the group's efforts. Prior to the funeral, PCSD also received intelligence reports that improvised explosive devices targeting government assets had been discovered on the East Coast and that several



PCSD Incident Commander During Post-Event Operations

event attendees had received death threats. To address these security challenges, the branch director and IMT developed and included the Recommended Facility Security section into the IAPs for these specific events. These sections detailed threats and challenges and identified security procedures that department personnel would employ to manage these challenges.

Benefits of Utilizing ICS during Post-Event Operations

According to PCSD Captain Frank Duarte, using ICS and the IAPs “relieved the stress of having one person plan each event over the course of a week.” Each branch director and IMT managed all operations related to his or her assigned event. Further, the branch director shared information with PCSD command personnel during the planning and operations phases.



PCSD Incident Command Staff

At the height of post-response phase operations, PCSD’s Operations Center Planning Section developed IAPs for four different events taking place in a single day. The use of IAPs and ICS enabled the department to maintain situational awareness while managing multiple, simultaneous events effectively and efficiently. PCSD plans to employ ICS during future post-response phase operations. It also plans to assign additional personnel to the PCSD’s Operations Center Planning Section to improve the use of ICS during post-response phase operations.

CITATIONS

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