

Major Case Squad Organization and Operation

Sheriff Bill Puett

Objectives

- **Objective 1** – Identify and define the factors and need for a major case squad
- **Objective 2** – Discuss the need for major case squad activation and established operational protocols
- **Objective 3** – Identify and define investigative resources utilized by a major case squad

Introduction

- Critical incidents are complex, challenging, and extremely taxing on the resources of and Sheriff's Office
- At the same time the SO is required to professionally fulfill all of their normal duties and responsibilities.

Introduction – Continued

- The purpose of a major case squad is to provide a Sheriff with additional investigative resources, from investigators who have specific expertise, specialized training, and experienced skills and abilities.

Introduction – Continued

- These additional resources will allow the host Sheriff to serve their citizens both by handling the critical incident, as well as, responding and performing to all of their normal duties and responsibilities in a complete, timely, and professional manner.

Introduction – Continued

- Concerns are; organization, activation, operational issues, costs, policies & procedures, and operational MOUs.
- Additionally, the host Sheriff will maintaining complete control and responsibility of the criminal investigation.

Introduction – Continued

- Proper Major Case Squad pre-planning and preparation will give the host Sheriff the highest likelihood of success, and will ensure the greatest operational effectiveness, which reduces frustrations of investigators and citizens, while increasing effectiveness by reducing redundancy of tasks or assignments.

Squad and Teamwork



RSMO 44.090 – Mutual Aid

- 3. At the time of significant emergency such as ... or public safety need anywhere within the state or bordering states, the highest ranking official of any ... public safety agency may render aid to or request aid from any jurisdiction, agency, or organization even without written agreement ...

RSMO 44.090 – Mutual Aid

- ...as long as he or she is in accordance with the policies and procedures set forth by the governing boards of those jurisdictions, agencies, or organizations.
- A public safety need, as used in this section, shall include any event or incident necessitating mutual-aid assistance from another public safety agency.

RSMO 44.090 – Mutual Aid – Cont.

- 7. For the purpose of this section, public safety agencies shall include... law enforcement agencies ... and specialized emergency response teams that have personnel with special skills or training that are needed to provide services during an emergency, public safety need, or disaster, declared or undeclared.

RSMO 44.090 – Mutual Aid – Cont.

- 9. In the event of a disaster or other public safety need that is beyond the capability of local political subdivisions, the local governing authority or public safety agency having jurisdiction may request assistance under this section.

RSMO 44.090 – Mutual Aid – Cont.

- 13. For the purposes of liability, ... public safety agency responding under operational control of ... a public safety agency are deemed employees of such responding ... public safety agency and are subject to the liability and workers' compensation provisions provided to them as employees of their respective ... public safety agency

RSMO 44.091 – Mutual Aid

- 2. Whenever any law enforcement agency enters into a mutual-aid arrangement or agreement with another entity as provided in section [44.090](#), any law enforcement officer assisting the requesting entity shall have the same powers of arrest as he or she has in his or her own jurisdiction and the same powers of arrest as officers of the requesting entity...

RSMO 44.091 – Mutual Aid – Cont.

- 2. ... Such powers shall be limited to the location where such services are requested to be provided, for the duration of the specific event, and while acting under the direction of the requesting entity's chief law enforcement officer or his or her designee.

RSMO 44.091 – Mutual Aid – Cont.

- 3. Any law enforcement officer assisting a requesting entity under a mutual-aid arrangement or agreement under section [44.090](#) shall be deemed an employee of the sending agency and shall be subject to the workers' compensation, overtime, and expense reimbursement provisions provided to him or her as an employee of the sending agency.

RSMO 44.091 – Mutual Aid – Cont.

- 4. Any law enforcement officer assisting a requesting entity under a mutual-aid arrangement or agreement under section [44.090](#) shall enjoy the same legal immunities as an officer of the requesting entity, including sovereign immunity, official immunity, and the public duty doctrine.

Why a Major Case Squad?

- Lack of resources and expertise
 - Every agency
- Complex demands with critical incident investigations
- Greater expectations by citizens – driven with instant media reporting

Why a Major Case Squad – Cont.

- Large number of tasks that need to be accomplished quickly
- 2 Teams
 - Investigative
 - Crime scene(s)
- Greater likelihood of success

Squad Consideration Musts – Cont.

- Requirements for squad membership
- Are specific roles/assignments identified on the team
- Do squad members have specific roles pre-assigned
- Are investigation and crime scene assignments separated

Team – Membership

- Team membership and structure
 - Cannot just “show up”
- Who will “lead” the team during the investigation?
 - Selected Squad Investigator
 - Host SO Lead Investigator
 - DDCC
 - VCU

Squad Consideration Musts – Cont.

- Organization of team – activation process and permissions in place
- Specialty personnel and investigators identified
- Current contact information for all personnel
- MOUs in place

Squad Consideration Musts – Cont.

- Squads must have working agreements established with agencies – that use the team
- Squads must have protocols for how they operate
- Commitment of resources and personnel from squad member agencies

Squad Consideration – Musts

- Who provides general oversight of the squad?
 - Board
 - Agency
 - Group – Association
- Who prepares and maintains policies and MOUs
 - Do all participating agencies sign

Squad Consideration Musts – Cont.

- Who pays for investigative expenditures:
 - Personnel OT
 - Replacement of damaged equipment
 - Expendables
 - Necessities
 - Food, Lodging, etc.

Squad Consideration Musts – Cont.

- Resource lists established
 - Difficult to locate resources in the middle of an incident
- Established rules for how the squad will function
 - 1 lead/complete report
- Processes for how leads and reports will be recorded and managed

Identification of Squad Members

- Squad members should have some Squad Credentials/ID
- Squad members need some legitimacy/credibility while working outside of their jurisdictions
 - Identifiable Shirt/Jacket
 - ID Cards

Early Squad Involvement and Protocols



Squad – Early Involvement

- Early notification is **essential**
- The earlier a squad arrives the better
 - Things not done correctly the first time could be compromised or lost
 - Evidence – same
 - Things don't have to be redone
- Dramatically increases the likelihood of success

Squad – Early Involvement – Cont.

- Extremely difficult for successful results when:
 - Squad is not activated for 24-48 hours, or more, after the incident
 - Crime scene has been worked and released
 - Interviews occur without direction or planning
 - Autopsy performed

Squad Activation and Assignments

- How is the squad activated?
- Who is authorized to activate?
- Standing permission for members?
- OIC – who?
 - Will it be DDCC?
 - Why?
- Investigator check-in and briefing
 - Current information is critical

Squad Operational Protocols

The cops came to my house and asked where I was between 5 and 6...

Apparently "Kindergarten" was NOT the right answer!

Operational Protocol

- The quicker you can get everyone on the same page and going in the same direction the better off you will be
 - You may have to slow down before you can speed up
- Who and how are things handled – originals :
 - Reports
 - Evidence
 - Photographs

Operational Protocol Text and Email

- Missouri Supreme Court Rule 25.03, the state is required to disclose, among other things, “all electronic communications that relate to the case”.
- This includes emails and text messages.
 - For clarification, written communications of any kind are what need to be preserved.
- This includes communications on your personal devices, not just any department issued phone or computer.

Operational Protocol – Cont.

- Immediately start:
 - Developing lead cards
 - Lead Board
 - Time Line
- 1 lead per investigative team at a time
 - “Catch 1 – clean 1”
- DO NOT allow self assignment of leads

Operational Protocol – Cont.

- Only 1 interview per lead/subject – DO NOT conduct multiple interviews of same subject:
 - Avoid doubling and tripling work
 - People get angry and think you are **inept** when they are interviewed 3 times about the same things
 - Creates conflicts for PA when statements say 3 different things

Operational Protocol – Cont.

- Case numbers
 - Agency case number – if used
 - Host agency case number should be included on all reports, statements, evidence packages
- Media/Press release – who?
- Assignments to maximize the abilities of investigative personnel
 - Egos – lose them!!

Operational Protocol – Cont.

- Investigative personnel
 - Only investigative personnel or people with purpose need to be at the scene
- Command post concerns
 - CEOs or others that are not working do not need to be in the way drinking coffee
 - Media – not to close and not to far


Investigation Resources

Normal heartbeat

@savagetater


Deceased heartbeat

Almost shooting a mannequin while clearing a business




Investigative Resources

- Investigator resources
- Crimes Scene resources
- Technical Specialty resources
- Support Personnel resources
- Specialty “As Needed” Resources




Investigative Resources

- How many skilled investigators are available to run leads
 - Pairs
 - Host agency
- Are there enough crime scene investigators and resources
 - Skill level of crime scene investigator
 - Capabilities
 - Equipment and resources




Investigative Resources – Continued

- How many crime scenes
 - Crime Scene
 - Other Secondary Scenes
 - Ambulance
 - Hospital
- Scene Complexity – Special Resources and Equipment
 - Example – Clandestine Grave, skeletal remains etc.




Investigative Resources – Continued

- Specialty Equipment – Resource List
 - Scene Barriers
 - External lights
 - Drone
 - Access to difficult areas - ATV
 - K9
 - Heavy Equipment



Resources – Technical Specialist

- Cellular phone downloads and analysis
- Computer Forensics
- CAST – FBI
- Legal – SW, Subpoenas etc.
- Financial analysis
- Medical Examiner
- Forensic archeologist/anthropologists
- Dental



Resources – Support Personnel

- Computer intelligence and resource
- Incoming leads
 - People taking lead information must know how to gather information
- Report entry
 - Who’s system
 - VCU?


Investigative Resources – Specialty “As Needed” Resources

- Command Posts
- Relief areas of working personnel
- Other forensic/crime scene resources
 - FBI Evidence Response Team
- Heavy or specialty equipment
- Pumps
- Water?

Resources – Host Agency

- Knowledge of the area and people
- Knowledge of geography and complexities
- Do not forget this is the Host Agency’s case – you are assisting them!
 - Loose the egos if you have them

Concerns and Critical Issues



Concerns and critical issues

- Confidentiality
- Limit the release of investigative information by all personnel
 - Coordinated release of information by PIO
- Rumors – inaccurate information
- Connections between suspects and first responders

Our Team – IRT 1 Option



IRT

- Small group of highly skilled investigators
- 15 Investigators
- 1 – 8-10 member CSI unit
- LEOs from the host agency
- Other LEOs as needed

IRT – Continued

- Roles
 - *Case Agent*
 - *Lead Investigator*
 - *Investigator*
 - *Crime Scene Investigator*
 - *PIO?*
- Self-sufficient for 96 hours
- Host agency responsibilities

IRT – Continued

- Comprised of local, county, and state LEO
- 15 county area – other areas if requested
- Standing permission from CEO to squad member
 - Squad member notifies CEO
- Activation by any Sheriff or Chief

IRT – Continued

- Legal Advisor
- Confidentiality
- Media Information
- Specialty Personnel
 - Example – Fire
- Resource list
 - Example – ME/Coroner

Questions

**COP: DO YOU KNOW HOW FAST
YOU WERE GOING?**

**ME: I KINDA FEEL LIKE THAT'S
YOUR JOB.**
