

# Event Response Checklist

The following are some helpful tips, based on numerous law enforcement agencies' responses, to use when a hate event is scheduled to take place in your jurisdiction. Adapt these suggestions to fit your agency's specific needs and resources and consult your city's legal advisors as needed.

## PRE-EVENT PLANNING

### HATE GROUP

- Research the hate group holding the event** — its history and beliefs, and its leaders and key followers. Contact state and federal law enforcement and non-governmental watchdog groups for additional information.
- If there was a recent rally by the group in another city or state, be sure to contact officers there** for background and information. Did violence or other problems occur at the hate group's previous events? What were the immediate on-scene indicators of that violence? How did the responding law enforcement agency handle the situation?
- Identify if any counter protest groups have shown up at the hate group's events in the past.** If so, follow the same guidelines for gathering information on these groups.
- Ensure all officers and supervisors, especially ones on the street, are briefed** with all information gathered.
- Designate an officer to stay in contact with either the hate group leader** or an official representative before, during and after the event. Brief the leader or representative on the event rules and guidelines, as well as keep them updated with any changes to your plan.
- Consult with city officials, including legal counsel,** when deciding whether to approve the location the hate group has chosen for the event. Specific legal criteria must be met if your city decides to reject the group's desired location and choose an alternate site. Do the same when coordinating with the hate group to set starting and ending times. Once these times are established, make it clear to the hate group that they will be strictly enforced.
- Designate a specific time and location for the group to gather** so its members can be escorted to the rally location. Participants can be screened for weapons at this location if certain legal requirements are met. If possible, offer to bus the hate group members to the event location, which could reduce the possibility of violent confrontations between the hate group members and counter protesters.
- Hold more than one strategy session** to determine and assign areas of responsibility to your personnel and to let officers know what to expect. Warn them they may encounter verbal abuse from counter protesters as well as hate group members.
- Establish a command post** that can withstand time, weather and other disruptions. Do not place the command post in the epicenter of the event because if violence occurs the command post could be cut off from communication or otherwise compromised. Make sure on-scene commanders and all officers know where the command post is, how it will operate and how to stay in contact with those staffing the post. If possible, it should have telephone and radio links, a paramedic team and an officer representing each jurisdiction. Use all technical resources, including

**THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER'S INTELLIGENCE PROJECT** monitors the activities of domestic hate groups and other extremists — including the Ku Klux Klan, white nationalists, the neo-Nazi movement, antigovernment militias and others.

We track more than 1,600 extremist groups operating across the country and publish investigative reports, train law enforcement officers and share key intelligence.

those of partner agencies, and if possible supply live video feed from the rally to the command post. Test all your communications before the event. *Remember that activity and even violence can start days earlier than the scheduled event.*

- Keep state intelligence fusion centers informed** and make sure that jurisdictions from a wide and distant circle know of the upcoming rally and how to contact your command post directly. Incidents involving both hate group members and counter protesters have occurred before and after the scheduled event, sometimes many miles from the rally location.
- Brief city and county leaders and key elected officials.** If the rally is to take place at a courthouse ensure that judges and the clerk of the court are briefed as well. They may have people working on the weekends, or other security considerations. Make sure all key political leaders have a direct liaison contact for your command post.

## COUNTER PROTESTERS

- Keep opposing groups separated.** Remember that keeping the two opposing groups separated, at all time if possible, is crucial.
- If an opposing group plans a formal counterdemonstration, inform the group's officials of the guidelines for the event.** If possible, have an officer assigned to stay in contact with a designated representative for the counter protesters. Counter protesters can be denied or restricted from holding their own march or rally in the area of the hate group event if they were not the first group to apply for a permit in that area.
- In order to reduce face-to-face confrontations, restrict counter protesters to a specific area** as close to the event as legally required. If the event is a march, try not to march the hate group members past the counter protesters.
- Have an entry checkpoint for counter protesters** where they are screened for weapons.
- Recognize that the presence of anarchists and anti-fascist activists, or antifa, at the event is a growing possibility.** This movement is decentralized and often unorganized, making it harder for officers to handle. Antifa may purposely wear all-black clothing, which can make it difficult to identify specific individuals.

## COMMUNITY

- Meet with community leaders and other affected parties** to ensure they are not caught unaware or uninformed. Make sure they understand the event will take place under strict security guidelines and that law enforcement will be closely monitoring all participants' activities, both the hate group members and the counter protesters. Stress that any illegal activity, whether by the hate group or counter protesters, will result in arrests. Have a Special Relations desk at the command post where your officers assigned as liaisons to civic and religious leaders can keep everyone apprised of the event as it is happening.
- Civic and religious leaders can be important allies.** Encourage them to speak out publicly against bigotry, but also request them to ask citizens to stay home and ignore the event. Recommend organizers hold an alternative event at the same time and on the same day but in a location well away from the hate group's activities. If such an event is held, assign an official law enforcement liaison and any other officers as needed.
- Coordinate with local businesses** to see if they are going to close during the event, or if not, if they will maintain regular hours or take extra precautions.

## THE DAY OF THE EVENT

- Erect some type of buffer zone** or recognizable barrier to cordon off the event participants from counter protesters and spectators. If the event is a march, set up barricades and station traffic units along the designated route. Make sure you have enough barriers or barricades for the event by coordinating with your city's Public Works or Highway departments.
- Have two separate entry checkpoints** where participants and counter protesters are screened for weapons, if legally allowed.
- Consider if event participants should be bused in** to the rally site, then escorted to the main area.
- Don't allow anyone to join the event once it's begun**, or to leave and come back.
- Conduct a pre-check of the area.** Utilize all available department resources including K-9 units and bomb squads to do the pre-check.
- Assign officers to photograph and videotape the event.** Use helicopters for surveillance before and during the event.
- Block off a specific street or route for emergency vehicles** only to enter and exit the area if needed. If you need to get a fire truck into an area, have one road blocked by police vehicles so a quick entrance and exit can happen without the protestors using their vehicles to block the roads during the event.
- Give pocket-sized maps of the protest site to officers** who are not familiar with the area (for example a state officer being deployed to a city location.) That way they can have a reference guide if they are directed to specific streets or intersections.
- Establish a joint information center or area for interaction with the media.** Staff it with not only your public information officer, but also with those from partner agencies. Keep an eye out for any unauthorized people, such as counter protesters, who might try to blend in with the media in an attempt to gain closer access to the event participants.
- Set up a cyber desk at the command post** staffed with officers who can receive video feeds and photographs in real time so they are able to disseminate as needed to law enforcement and/or the media.

## POST-EVENT FOLLOW UP

- Keep one or two intelligence officers and the cyber team at the command post for a number of hours after the event** if possible. As hate group members or counter protesters leave they could be the subjects of inquiries from officers in other jurisdictions. Those officers may quickly need information, photos or videos from the event.
- Conduct a thorough debriefing** with representatives from all law enforcement agencies involved. Review the event footage to determine any unforeseen developments or deviations from your original plan. Note lessons learned and any changes that need to be made in planning, response and organization for future events.
- Prepare an after-action report** for your department and other law enforcement agencies if possible. If your agency permits, update your intelligence on all groups and individuals who participated in the event and share it with all agencies involved.