

MANAGEMENT OF CRISES

INMATE TAKEOVERS BY RIOT OR HOSTAGE CONTROL

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## MANAGEMENT OF CRISES

### Inmate Takeovers by Riot or Hostage Control

by Larry R. Meachum

Riots, disturbances, hostage takings and assaults are among the most critical events correctional administrators confront. Managing such crises puts the intellect, patience, knowledge and abilities of any administrator to the test. How the manager reacts will affect Departmental operations, the political climate and future career options.

It is essential the administrator plan response strategies, draft appropriate policies and train personnel in anticipation of such events. However, crises rarely go according to plan. Even research and debriefing of a prior event have limited benefits in addressing future crises. Circumstances are never duplicated but common dynamics are predictable. This is a business in which "If it works, you were right; if it doesn't work, you were wrong." Results alone determine the perception of success or failure. This paper is offered to assist crisis managers to understand and manage the environment during and following a critical incident.

Correctional personnel do not manage prisons because inmates allow them to and it has to be clear that staff are in charge. True, inmates can take control or a hostage at any time, but, in the history of corrections, they have never kept control. No crisis continues forever. Remember, "This too shall pass"; and, when it's over, the administration will be in

control.

No crisis or its management can be understood without an appreciation for organizational history and culture. All key issues - such as negotiation versus assault, negotiable items, use of deadly force, amnesty, participation of the media, and the role of politicians are matters that some may second-guess but for which there is no general Right Answer. The best approach to these issues can only be determined within the context of local history and culture.

### PREVENTING A CRISIS

Effective, proactive management will accomplish more to prevent crises than most correctional administrators normally recognize. Effective security, fair and consistent inmate management, and facility maintenance and repair are all effective prevention strategies. Also effective are complete crisis management plans and policies followed up by crisis management training for all staff. Inmates should know that such procedures and training are in place and that a Department can deploy its and other agencies' resources quickly and effectively to contain any crisis. Such knowledge may not instill fear, but it should reinforce the understanding that an agency is competently led.

#### Prevention and Security

Along with preventive measures that can be taken to prevent a crisis when tensions arise are those long-term measures that contribute to normal

institutional equilibrium. Foremost among these are effective policies and procedures that emphasize security in its broadest sense. Security consists of a well designed or renovated physical plant, a well trained and disciplined professional staff, a sound classification system, effective communication, and the managements willingness to listen to staff and inmate problems and to deal with them in a timely manner.

Institutional managers must ensure that fair and just practices are used in routine inmate management. Efforts must be made to be certain that the basics of inmate care are properly attended. Edible food, adequate and seasonally appropriate clothing, effective sanitation and medical care, prompt mail service, accessible commissary and fair inmate assignment practices should be the norm in correctional institutions.

Security also involves the effective use of traditional security procedures. Tool and key control, contraband control, population counts and searches are elements of effective security. However, security is as much a function of staff consciousness and dedication as any system or hardware. This must be emphasized in training programs for all staff, not just correctional officers. All institutional staff bear the responsibility for security and specific functional responsibilities must be delineated and reinforced.

Most correctional facilities have architectural features that can lead to dehumanization for both staff and inmates. Painting, repairs to showers and toilet facilities, lighting improvements, soundproofing, fireproofing and improvements to ventilation systems offer more for institutional morale than additional staff or new programs.

## Preparation for Crisis Management

The foundations of effective crisis management are sound, complete policies, emergency plans and training. It is difficult and may seem unnecessary to plan and train for an infrequent event; however, it will become clear just how important the planning is if lives are saved or property maintained because of staff's knowledge and performance of their roles.

Key suggestions:

- Have a written plan for crisis management and revise it periodically to maintain currency.
  
- Ensure that staff receive training in crisis management policies and plans. Role playing can be very helpful in preventing and resolving crises. (California, Massachusetts and Kentucky have model training programs.)
  
- Checklists should be attached to the policy, listing, in priority order, the names and telephone numbers of all essential staff and contact agencies. These lists should be reviewed and updated regularly.
  
- Other key ground rules that should be the basis of the plan and made known to both inmates and staff include:

- Rioters will be granted no illegal freedom;
- Neither immunity nor amnesty will be granted;
- Prosecution will be sought whenever possible;
- Hostages have no authority to give orders;
- Neither keys nor weapons will be surrendered;
- Neither illicit drugs nor liquor will be provided;
- No transportation will be provided to assist inmates in leaving the institution.

■ Train wardens and the hostage negotiators together in the skills they will use in a crisis to enhance their working relationship.

■ The facility should maintain a recent photograph of all employees, their telephone numbers and a list of next of kin with their telephone numbers. In a crisis situation, inmates frequently force hostages to dress in inmate garb and use the officers' uniforms for themselves. The warden cannot assume dress identifies either officer or inmate when contemplating the use of firepower or when allowing staff to exit the area. At egress, identification photos become critical.

■ Involve collateral agencies such as the State Police and the National Guard in planning and training. Training and planning scenarios that include these agencies build understanding and mutual knowledge of counterparts, and are invaluable during a crisis.

- Facility design plans should be available for immediate access.
  
- Boiler plants and warehouses should be located outside the facility's secure perimeter. If these are located inside the facility, the area must be secured. Electricity and water should be controlled to minimize facility destruction. Heat and air conditioning may be tools to use or issues to negotiate.

Being taken hostage can be the most frightening experience in anyone's life. But corrections staff can be trained to understand what may be endured and be better prepared if taken hostage. Such a training program should include the following components:

- Each employee should be trained in appropriate responses in the event he/she is taken hostage. At a minimum, the employee should be aware that time is the hostage's best friend and it is vital not to become impatient.
  
- A staff hostage should be friendly, engaging, alert, as objective as possible, cognizant of all details, and prepared to share these observations on release.
  
- The hostage should clearly understand the Stockholm syndrome (the emergence of a strong bond between captors and hostages).
  
- Assistance should be given to a weaker hostage, and a hostage should normally avoid playing "hero". Each hostage should attempt

to protect himself/herself and any other hostage should a staff assault occur. No hostage should take offense if handcuffed upon resolution because the rescue assault team likely to fail to recognize staff and must treat everyone alike until positive identification is assured.

### Crisis Warning Indicators

Riots and hostage situations rarely explode instantaneously and without warning. Signals of an impending crisis are always present, though they may not be obvious until after the crisis is over. Department managers should always be alert to these indicators; however, if trouble appears imminent, they should avoid overreaction. Obviously, staff need to be cognizant of the signs of impending problems but at the same time they must be wary of over interpreting data. Deducing patterns of behavior that portend an incident is difficult, but essential. Effective communication up and down the chain of command offers the best opportunity to intervene in hostile environments.

Common indicators of impending problems include:

- reduced communication between staff and inmates,
- increased incidents of vandalism that produce weapons,
- an upsurge in disciplinary offenses and assaults on staff,
- increasing numbers of inmates committing lesser infractions to assure temporary lockup,
- requests for placement in protective custody or transfer,
- inmates banding together in unusual groups but disbanding

- when staff approaches,
- diminished group activity/polarization along racial and ethnic lines,
  - reduced attendance at popular functions,
  - inmates making excessive and/or specific demands,
  - appearance of printed subversive or inflammatory materials,
  - reduced eye contact,
  - significantly diminished noise levels,
  - normally active or loud inmates becoming quiet,
  - reduced inmate visitors,
  - hoarding commissary items in cells,
  - inmates wearing several sets of clothing,
  - inmates seeking to talk to staff about trivial or insignificant issues,
  - reduced evidence of radios and personal property in the yard,
  - favorite staff being told not to come to work or to come in at a certain time,
  - short tempers and rising staff fear,
  - an upsurge of staff resignations or demands for safety from staff,
  - an increase in the number of sick calls.

Routinely gathered data that may also yield clues as to the institutional climate. Reclassification and protective custody requests, visitation patterns, increased disciplinary reports and increased commissary sales

may point to emerging problems.

At any sign of tension the Warden, Deputy Warden, ranking officer and/or "helping" staff should walk and talk more than usual. Studies have shown that there are fewer disturbances in institutions where high-level officials make themselves accessible in cell blocks for both staff and inmates. Direct supervisory staff (correctional officer, unit manager, case manager) are a good source of specific intelligence information and often help resolve problems. Prevention is the order of the day and usually works. Legitimate problems should be remedied at once.

If officers stay in control centers unnecessarily, problems may fester. In such a climate, staff may further retreat from the hassles of dealing directly with inmates. As positive inmate/staff relationships suffer, necessary intelligence gathering will be diminished and normal day-to-day problems will not be resolved. Fear and negative talk among staff or between staff and inmates will add to the negative climate and increase polarization.

Good information from both staff and inmates is critical at this juncture. Solid information gathering from staff should not only include snitches but also reach out to respected inmates to get their appraisal of the situation. Similarly, staff information sharing between shifts is essential. Relieving officers should receive a departing officer's assessment of the current situation as part of the shift change. Information gathered should be noted in logs and disseminated to all staff at roll call.

There will always be enough data after the fact to have alerted staff that a problem was imminent. If an administrator overreacted to all indicators before the fact, however, the environment would become a police state so hostile an explosion would be inevitable. "Monday morning quarterbacks" will use these indicators as the basis for "finger-pointing" and "scapegoating." Again, if it worked you were right; if it didn't work, you were wrong.

In truth, almost all crises occur because of staff failures and laxity; however, after an incident, healing is more important than accountability and blame. Valuable employees who did not perform well during the crisis will chastise themselves more than anyone else ever could. Peers know who did not perform well and their actions will also have a corrective impact. Only occasionally does an incident occur that has nothing to do with staff failure, such as an inmate altercation in the dining hall.

#### DYNAMICS OF A DISTURBANCE

Riots, disturbances and hostage takings are unique. As stated before, planning for the next crisis based simply on the last one may lead nowhere. Yet, various incidents do have common events and rhythms. Combining the understanding of the commonalities with the administrator's experience and judgment constitutes effective crisis management.

Resolution of crises means having the stamina, patience and understanding necessary to orchestrate a variety of organizations and individuals,

including the inmates, toward a common goal. That process, as explained later, will push an administrator's talents to the limit. While there may be self-doubt, there must also be an air of self-confidence. Complete trust and honesty must exist between an administrator and key advisors. In the end, teamwork, with the administrator making the decision, will have the greatest effect on the outcome.

There is something seductive about physically assaulting a problem area but rarely is an incident resolved in this fashion. It should be remembered that most incidents are resolved informally, quickly and quietly; but a correction administrator rarely takes adequate credit when a problem does not escalate. Instead, the focus is drawn to a situation where informal or quick resolution fails. The administrator may question wherever force should have been used, but assault should be considered only when loss of life, serious injury and/or extensive property loss are imminent. When inmates create an incident which is not conducive to quick resolution, there will always be regrets, "what ifs," and explanations.

### Incident Dynamics

In a hostage or riot situation "endless patience" is active management, though almost no one can tolerate this apparently passive approach. Like waves, crises follow predictable rhythmic patterns. On the upward swing of a wave, staff and those called in for assistance become excited, hopeful, and expectant. When the matter is not resolved, depression and disillusionment appear in direct proportion to the previous excitement and expectation. After several of these emotional waves, staff frequently

become fearful that the crisis will not be resolved successfully and they may press for the use of force.

Problem inmates rarely know why they create a crisis and thus have no immediate list of demands to present. They quickly band together however, to develop a list to justify the incident and later develop a more extensive and difficult list. The first and second lists always call for improvements in areas such as food, privileges, medical care, visitation. Each list and modification will be the cause for another decline in the wave that dashes expectations and causes disillusionment among staff.

Something unforeseen may happen such as a staff member who is unhappy with the lack of information issued from the command center may "sneak-a-peek" into the disturbance area and be seen by the inmates who, thinking staff are planning an assault, will refuse to follow through on an imminent agreement. Another wave crashes and so do the staff's expectations.

At a point when staff may be tired, even exhausted, the inmates may assume new leadership that will refuse to honor any prior agreements. The new leader will be "Crazy Louie," the biggest fool in the institution, the one with whom no one can reason. The wave crashes and staff demoralization escalates. (Note: When, and if, "Crazy Louie" takes over, hostage safety may be in jeopardy.)

There may be pressure on the Warden and/or Commissioner to allow the emergency response team or a rigid security officer to take over and "take care of business", in other words, to use force. Anxiety and impatience

may escalate to a fever pitch, followed by expressed anger.

After a series of such waves of heightened and thwarted expectations, the Warden and/or Commissioner may begin to question his/her own ability and decisions. Only the most secure and mature manager can withstand these pressures, but the knowledgeable administrator must remember "endless patience" is active management.

To understand the dynamics of such an event, the crisis administrator must remove himself/herself as the reference point and view the world from the inmates' eyes. From the inmates' perspective, the waves are taking an increasing toll on them, and they will likely think staff is not impacted at all. Staff is usually viewed as a disciplined force, while the inmates have no internal discipline -- just force and fear.

The inmates will question the administration's integrity at some point and declare a lack of trust, even though their trust in rational staff behavior serves as their "ace in the hole." As their fear increases, they may wonder if and how they will ever get out of this quandary. They eventually will realize that they can't win and will not prevail. Then the issue becomes how to save face.

At this point, whatever discipline they may have managed by force and fear begins to unravel. This structural breakdown is the reason "Crazy Louie" takes over. When staff see "Louie" take over, they may become paralyzed with fear and disillusionment. In reality, resolution may well be closer than ever because whatever is happening with staff is happening to an even

greater degree among the inmates.

When inmates start asking for concessions, such as speaking to the media, amnesty, or talking to a dignitary (Governor, Commissioner, legislator), resolution, more often than not, is on the way. Exercise cautious optimism but realize that resolution may not be imminent. Another wave may be preparing to crash.

Sometimes inmates make demands early, raising staff suspicions of a trick. Staff may insist that no concessions be made. In fact, these inmate demands may be the exact same conditions that bring resolution. If so, everyone, of course, will wonder why it was necessary to allow the incident to continue so long.

Amnesty is a costly concession, but talking with outside observers is not. The worst problem the administrator faces in making this decision is his/her own ego. The wise administrator always remembers that whoever understands also controls.

### Inmate Dynamics

During a crisis, inmate behavior is frequently predictable:

- Staff who are seen as friendly and are taken hostage will likely be treated fairly; the one who is disliked and become a hostage will be in jeopardy of physical harm.

- Any inmate who acts out and puts the rest of inmate population at risk, the hostage takers maybe killed or delivered up by the other inmates, frequently after a severe beating.
  
- Inmates will try to establish order/organization but they will lack discipline. Do not be surprised when their organizational structure mimics what they see within the facility's security force.
  
- Inmate leaders are necessary to resolve the crisis; but if they surface, they put themselves at personal risk of being viewed as ringleaders. Resolution leaders may not have been the original ringleaders. Usually, officers in close contact with inmates can help identify helpful or provocative inmates.
  
- Inmates are likely to destroy control areas (communication equipment, control centers) as well as expensive areas (law library, or school), but one area will likely be preserved in the middle of the carnage. This will be an area inmates care about or a service area they feel cares about them. Which area is left intact may come as quite a surprise to the administrator, but it may provide useful insight into inmates' values.
  
- There will always be inmates who want no part of an incident. Lock down the non-involved inmates as soon as possible and continuously encourage and accommodate defectors.

- Inmates frequently believe weapons are not loaded or are loaded with blanks. They may believe shots are for warning only. Generally, they believe officials will not shoot to kill.
- If an incident goes on for more than two hours, there is an increased possibility of sexually assaultive acts.

### Staff Dynamics

As a crisis proceeds, dynamics among staff become critical:

- As long as inmates are talking, personal injury and property damage are on hold; the administrator can talk forever. Talk is the administrator's best friend, though it may not feel powerful. At a time like this, exercise "endless patience." Keeping staff informed, exercising close and active supervision, and rotating assignments will diminish staff criticism of tactics.
- A crisis makes everyone feel impotent. Impotence leads to fear, depression and anger. In this climate, the feelings of everyone observing or participating in the process increases the pressure to act.
- Pressure to act with force will increase the longer an incident goes on, but, in truth, there will probably be less need to act with force.

- The longer an incident goes on, the more people in the command center will criticize the lack of action, press for a decisive show of force, and make inferences about an apparent lack of leadership.
  
- All groups placed on hold, such as the tactical squad, families and the media will also criticize the apparent lack of leadership. The more information they receive, the less pressure they will place on the decision makers.

## MANAGING THE RESPONSE

The method used to manage the process can produce the desired outcomes. There are so many tasks to be done and so many competing interests to be managed that the effort may seem overwhelming. The better organized the response, the more ability there is to concentrate on the main task: which defusing the crisis and returning to normal operations. To the extent possible, emergency plans should be implemented without command centers issuing direct orders; staff and collateral agencies should know their jobs and be reinforced in carrying out assigned duties.

### Command and Control Centers

Establishing two linked command centers is central to effective crisis management. Top departmental executives should assemble in one; the Warden and facility administrative staff should locate at the crisis site. The location of the executive command center must be determined by

the Commissioner. If there are questions of competence at the institutional level, if the dynamics of the local crisis center are volatile, or even for personal preference, the Commissioner may choose to locate the executive command center at the facility. If the inmates find out the Commissioner is on site, they will demand that they negotiate with the Commissioner. Should the Commissioner choose to locate the executive command center at the institution, it should remain separate from the local command center. If the Commissioner goes into the local command center, power will automatically shift to the Commissioner, who then is in charge of the incident. The major roles of the executive command center are balance, stability, objectivity and resource management. Therefore, the Commissioner should remain away from the emotionally charged climate and serve as a mentor and sounding board for the Warden.

During a crisis all staff want to be called in to help. If staff hear of the incident on the news, many will just show up. Administrators and supervisors will want to be in the command center. Management and supervisory staff who are not called in will take offense and view this omission as a statement of lack of importance to the organization. All collateral services supervisors -- police, fire, national guard, or elected officials -- who come to the facility will also seek to locate themselves in the command center. If the crisis administrator does not set firm ground rules concerning command center staffing and resolutely control access, he/she will wish he/she had. It is best to have guidelines on staffing and access in written policy before an incident. Then excluded staff will be less likely to take the exclusion personally.

Any outside collateral support person who allowed access to the command center will normally promise to be helpful and available. He/she will also promise not to get in the way. As an incident becomes protracted, however, this same collateral support person will begin to make comments that expose impatience, impotence and criticism.

Whoever takes charge will be in charge. The responsible administrator must take charge and maintain an atmosphere of order and control. As people get tired, they will sit or lie on the floor and as they slouch the command center will begin to look disorganized and unprofessional.

Some administrators have found that having a "think tank" available to them during the crisis assists in the decision making process. This group's sole task should be to assemble information and analyze it to offer alternative responses to the Commissioner or Warden.

Staff in the executive command center normally want to watch, learn and satisfy personal curiosity about the Commissioner's actions during a crisis. Therefore, a command center usually becomes a stage which the Commissioner must perform simultaneously for several audiences, while trying to resolve the incident at hand. It may be difficult to determine whether the crisis or the performance is of greater importance.

In a crisis no one knows exactly what to do, but observers always pass judgment on what should or should not be done. It is nearly impossible for the administrator to think or talk confidentially with key advisors in such a climate. Therefore, a small side room should be available for

private talk among key staff.

All the dynamics that occur at the executive command center will mirror those at the local command center. The audience in the institution command center will wonder why the facility administrator has to keep talking to the executive command center. Yet, the facility crisis administrator must talk regularly with the Commissioner to test assumptions, ask broader questions, moderate local pressure to act, and avoid emotional responses. When this retards the "plan of attack," the on site audience will wonder who is in charge and view such interference with covert or perhaps overt hostility.

All input from the executive control center to the local control center should be framed as supportive, not controlling. Input should only become controlling when necessary to prevent perceived disaster. The executive command center must be a check and balance for the field, but usually the final decision must be made by the facility administrator or any other commander appointed to be in charge on site

The chain of command usually becomes a hinderance during a crisis. One solution is to have a Deputy Commissioner go to the local command center to provide support and advice. This person can usually be on site and not disrupt the Warden's authority.

Each supervisor in the chain of command between the Commissioner and the on site crisis manager who do not have specific areas of responsibility will wonder why it is necessary to be there and whether he/she has a real

role in managing the crisis. The administrator will have similar misgivings when meeting staff needs inevitably becomes part of the agenda.

Middle managers will require attention and involvement but there will be more of them at the office than there are specific assignments for them. Something to do is better than nothing to do. Staff will accept menial tasks if allowed to do something that makes him/her feel involved and needed.

Even if early resolution seems possible, anticipate a protracted event. Arrange for three 10-hour shifts and overlap schedules. Each employee must get adequate physical and mental rest, even though he/she may have to be ordered to leave the crisis site.

Arrange for backup command centers and communication systems in case one or both become ineffective. Have stenographers at both command centers serve as historians by documenting every action with specific time notations. A tape recorder is desirable to supplement the written historical records. Inmates' telephones should normally be disconnected, but if this is neither possible nor desirable, each call should be tape recorded.

### Security

Once a riot or disturbance has begun the first objective is containment. The institution should be divided into zones. Since areas such as dining halls, gymnasiums and shop/factory areas are more problematic in this

regard, these areas should be designed or remodeled so that even each can be subdivided. Once accurate information is assembled concerning the nature, scale and location of the disturbance, it should be isolated by architectural and staff interventions.

The second step is to secure those areas that can sustain the riot. Areas containing drugs, kitchen and food storage areas, shops, factory and warehouse areas must be secured and controlled. Administrative areas, particularly where records are stored, should be secured and protected. The crisis management plan should specify entrance and exit procedures, safe areas within each zone and evacuation routes for each of these areas. Visual monitoring posts should be identified or television monitors established to observe access to these areas.

Among the primary tasks in this effort are to:

- Secure the external perimeter. Use collateral agency personnel, if possible, but be clear about the use of deadly force.
  
- Secure the rest of the facility as soon as possible and surround the troubled area to prevent movement or the spread of the problem.
  
- Place all other department facilities on standby status to have tactical teams, medical services, transportation and relief staff available for immediate deployment. As the seriousness of the incident dictates, these personnel should be brought to the site

and adequate accommodations provided for them.

- Place other facilities on alert to prevent the problem's spread. Facility managers should take steps to prevent similar "copycat" disruptions and to decompress tensions.
  
- Make necessary accommodations for staff. The tension and boredom caused by protracted waiting should be considered and plans developed to minimize them. If force becomes necessary, staff should be prepared mentally and physically prepared to take necessary action to save lives or property.

### Logistics

Implementation of all logistical activities should be detailed in the crisis management plan. No orders should have to be issued from the departmental administrator or the warden to launch the myriad activities required for successful crisis management. The rigorousness and thoroughness of the planning and training activities will be clearly demonstrated during the crisis. Otherwise, crisis managers will be forced to spend hours issuing orders to implement crisis management activities and may ignore an opportunity for crisis resolution. Similarly, staff must have latitude to go outside the plan when glitches occur, such as when too many family members appear on site or collateral agencies don't secure the exterior perimeter.

Important points to remember:

- Assign specific duties to individuals in the areas of facility security, command center security, external grounds security, media, family services, warehouse, staff deployment, administrative duties, food crisis center, tactical team accommodations, negotiations, interagency coordination, and historical record keeping.
  
- Assure there are adequate working keys for the entire complex in the armory or another secure area.
  
- Have aerial photos, maps and schematics of the facility in the command centers. Ensure tactical team commanders have similar materials and adequate space to plan.
  
- Put all medical staff on alert and prepare for triage.
  
- Keep all corrections officers (male and female) at assigned duty posts; otherwise, hurtful messages will be sent.
  
- Remove nonessential and/or noncustodial staff from inside the facility if indicated.
  
- Assure plant maintenance technicians are available during and immediately following an incident.
  
- Remove prescription medications from inside the facility, if

possible, and especially if there is threat of inmate access to these areas.

- Remove equipment from inside, such as radios, keys, and fire hoses, etc.
- Assure that responsible staff control the distribution and collection of weapons, equipment and supplies distribution and their return. Things get "lost" during a crisis.
- Issue specific orders regarding the distribution and use of weapons and chemical agents. Issue weapons only to the most skilled and stable trained staff.
- Ensure that incoming staff, collateral agency staff and civilian assistance who come to the facility armed with weapons follow procedures and obtain clearance.
- Monitor weather forecasts during a protracted crisis. The weather may affect your strategy and actions.
- Clearly define the roles of auxiliary non-correctional personnel.
- Fire is the great fear in a disturbance. Staff should be protected first and inmates should be protected.
- Use video equipment to record incidents. Have supervisors

monitor videotaping activities to ensure complete coverage. It is acceptable and even desirable that inmates know they are being videotaped. This can have a tremendously, calming affect on the environment. The roof of a building with a good line of sight is an ideal location for a camera.

- Plant microphones in key inmate areas for intelligence purposes. The FBI may have "spike" microphones that may assist in this.
  
- Keep pressure on the inmates. Shutting off utilities and telephones and the use of "fly overs" may effectively influence inmates. These may also be good issues to negotiate. Jam radio and television broadcasts if possible. (These have the potential for tremendous, usually helpful impact, but be careful with this, because they can also provoke the situation.)
  
- Assure that intelligence personnel understand cultural or gang-related issues. A list of gangs, characteristics and members should be reviewed.
  
- Determine who has credibility with the inmates and consider whether this person's assistance would be helpful. Such help may include trusted staff, ministers, politicians, media personalities and inmate family members.
  
- Have an attorney for the Department available at the crisis site to advise the administration regarding legal/constitutional

issues that may arise. This person should also assist in ensuring that disciplinary procedures are properly followed. There will be problems during the aftermath if offenders "beat" the charges for technical reasons.

- Consult the State Police and/or prosecutors early to assure adequate evidence and testimony are available to properly prosecute perpetrators.

Training officers and tactical team commanders from other facilities should tour each facility to gain familiarity and to aid in local training. All collateral personnel who go inside will be unfamiliar with the environment and circumstances; therefore, they will be apprehensive and tentative.

- Arrange for the feeding and attending of staff and inmates in unaffected facility areas.
- Provide for adequate temporary housing, including sleeping accommodations for local or temporarily staff.
- Provide facilities with refreshments, cots and showers for on-duty staff.
- Assure toiletries, clothing, underwear and socks are available for staff who work long periods and those who are called in from a distance.

- Arrange for the relocation of offenders. Alternate housing and adequate vehicles for transportation must be in place before an incident is resolved.
  
- Remove all non-involved inmates under supervisory control. All handling of property should be managed to prevent destruction.

### Communication

A private telephone hookup with a speaker phone capability between the executive and local command centers is essential. Someone should stay on the line at both locations to assure uninterrupted contact. Speaker-phone capability is desirable; but, if speakers are left on, listeners may be offended by remarks, judgment or inevitable "graveyard humor."

Assume that at some point contact may be lost between the two command centers or between the facility command center and the disturbance. It may be difficult or impossible to restore communication. A redundant system should be created for this event. Be cautious when using two-way radios. Staff should assume these communications are being monitored by everyone, especially the media. A secure backup radio frequency available through the State Police is desirable.

Field telephones are especially useful in hostage situations to provide communications with hostage takers. Portable radios should not be provided because inmates then gain monitoring capability of all other

activities. Consideration should be given to using a wireless microphone on the principal negotiator. However, if a wireless microphone is discovered, the negotiator and the hostage may be endangered. Eavesdropping devices should be considered to gather intelligence on inmate plans, morale and the location and condition of any hostages.

When people talk, things appear rational; when they don't talk, things appear irrational. It is essential that you keep all interested parties - staff families, offenders' families, tactical teams, the Governor, collateral agencies - informed regularly and periodically. One hour without information makes everyone uncomfortable. Those without information will pass judgment, and will be offended after an incident is resolved because they will equate their own importance to the amount of information they receive.

Keep one or more person(s) at the departmental and facility switchboards to take calls and give out available and appropriate information. Assure that the operators are kept properly informed. Assure that there are adequate phones in adjacent areas for use by specifically assigned staff and collateral agency representatives. A Telex or facsimile capability may also prove useful.

When the incident is over, notify everyone who has been on hold, including the Governor, all previously notified legislators, collateral agencies, hospitals, switchboard operators, tactical teams, families, other facilities, and anyone else previously involved. These notifications complete the crisis communications circuit.

## Hostages

A hostage situation poses an even greater emotional and logistical problem for the crisis manager. The goal is to extricate the hostage(s) and then resolve the crisis or do both simultaneously. The following are some basic ground rules about dealing with hostage situations:

- Follow the principle of "endless patience" as long as the hostage(s) is (are) unharmed.
- Garner intelligence from released hostages or defecting inmates.
- Obtain the name of each inmate holding a hostage(s) and develop a profile. Assign a psychologist to advise you regarding behaviors that may be expected.
- Obtain the name and develop a profile on each hostage as soon as possible, especially if a peculiar or problematic medical history exists. A hostage with a medical problem is usually the easiest to negotiate out early.
- To preserve the integrity of the negotiators tell them what tactical teams are going to do as the decisions are made. Never ask a negotiator to participate in a tactical assault.
- Any action that might inflame the inmates should be communicated

to the inmates beforehand, if possible. Lack of information only increases fear and the potential for inappropriate behavior. On the other hand announcement actions may also be used to deliberately keep inmates off balance or uneasy. Such acts may also be used as a negotiable issues.

### Families

Those who must only sit and wait have the cruelest burden of all. Plans must be made and implemented to keep affected families informed about the status of their loved ones. Keeping families informed reduces tension for staff, lowers the anxiety level for the families, and, most importantly, shows both that departmental administrators care about them.

The administrator should:

- Set up a location near the site of the crisis but not too close, to sequester and attend family members, including children. Make sure they are away from inmate family members. A location with a view of the facility but out of the range of sound will help reassure and calm the family.
- Appoint a high ranking person to accommodate and serve the families.
- Attend to affected family members early, throughout and after the incident.

- **Assure families are kept informed at least hourly. Nothing is more anxiety provoking than no information. Family members may be given assignments to assist other family members.**
  
- **Dispatch a personal representative immediately to inform the family of endangered or injured staff. Try to make sure they hear news from the Department first and not from the media. Make timely contact with the families of non-involved staff to allay their fears.**
  
- **Arrange for sleeping accommodations, meals, mental diversion, toilets and facilities to meet the hygiene and medical needs of family members. Keep their area clean and orderly.**
  
- **Have chaplains and psychologists in attendance.**
  
- **Attend to the family personally and periodically during the incident and upon resolution. Even a phone call is helpful.**
  
- **Prepare for aftermath services before the incident is over. This may include employee assistance staff and/or services. In a crises utilize all nonessential staff.**

### Collateral Support

Crises often require the mobilization of government resources beyond a

corrections department. Effective use of the skills and resources of other agencies is usually necessary. However, if such resources are allowed to become symbols of interagency competition for stature, turf or control, outside assistance can prove extremely problematic.

Local support will be available if a Warden notifies and requests such services. These agencies include the department, fire, local and state police, the sheriff's department, the national guard, civil defense and health care providers.

There are key points in utilizing their assistance:

- When notified, each agency will likely send a representative(s) to the site. Each agency's ranking officer will probably want to be present in the Command center.
- State leaders of these collateral agencies may choose to report to the executive command center. These helpers will provide needed assistance but will also become an additional agenda for the Commissioner and/or warden to manage.
- Each collateral agency with backup staff should have a separate staging area.
- Departments and facilities should know which agencies and

individuals have capabilities to assist in assaults. Forcing entry by using a mechanical claw or explosives may become necessary in some instances.

- The State Police will not go into a facility without their weapons and unless their Commissioner is in charge. At the very least, they will not respond to another agency's direct command. While on hold, they will need a staging area away from the scene, but close enough to respond quickly if needed.
- State and local police can be very helpful in providing traffic control at the facility and the executive command center. They can also help manage outside groups.
- State and local police can help control any disorderly behavior outside the facility.
- Police and military personnel can help provide on site perimeter control and security.
- The military and state police can provide transportation for the mass movement of personnel or offenders.
- Local police may be able to provide ambulance services or manage ambulance egress. Many local police departments provide ambulance services.

- The National Guard will generally want the Department of Correction to remain in charge.
  
- Civil defense and the military can provide a mobile kitchen, generators, communication equipment, medical services, weapons, hardware, lights, cots, tents, showers, toilets, potable water, fluoroscopes, rain gear, flashlights, heaters, fans, bull horns, paper supplies, dictation equipment, protective gear, a mobile crisis- control center, and air transportation to the site.
  
- Fire department staff may refuse to go in or provide service unless the safety of their staff can be assured.
  
- Local hospitals should be placed on alert to provide emergency medical care.
  
- The Red Cross can offer assistance to staff, their families and offenders' families.
  
- The community will want to help. They may provide shelter and food for staff and family members. A staff coordinator should be appointed to manage this.

### Politics

The time to start the politics of crisis management is before the incident. The Governor, legislators and agency heads are accountable to

each other and to the public. The administrator must assure other government officials who help resolve the crisis but also make receive public credit for their assistance. Positive relationships with these offices prior to the crisis will assure their support. However, problems in the relationships may cause the Corrections Commissioner to become the scapegoat regardless of who is culpable.

Critical issues regarding the political front are:

- Positive relationships with political office holders will buy mercy during and after an incident. A crisis may give fodder to the agency's adversaries if personal relationships are nonexistent or strained.
- When a hostage or riot situation is reported, it is best to wait for the second report, if possible, before making notifications. The second report will be more accurate.
- Make every attempt to learn which part of the facility is involved, the number of inmates involved, the number of hostages taken (if any), the location of the hostages and the inmate leaders' names.
- The contract between the corrections administrator and the Governor must be clearly defined early in the administrator's tenure. While the Governor may be much more reasonable than his/her staff, the he/she may show up at either command center.

If this happens, the crisis administrator will have a new variable to contend with in the command center. If a proper contract has been clearly established however, the Governor can be an asset rather than a liability.

- The Governor can assure that all collateral resources are unquestionably at the administrator's disposal and that the administrator is indeed in charge.
- The more the Governor is informed, the less intrusive his/her involvement will be.
- A staff member from the Governor's office or a legislator may show up to "just help out." This help may prove problematic. Expect the inmates to ask to meet with the Governor, the Commissioner or a legislator. Allowing such meetings is not advisable if it is a condition of resolution; but there is no reason for prohibiting contact after resolution, since it is possible under normal circumstances and is therefore not a negotiation "give away."
- If the Governor's staff show up at the command center, protection of the Governor will be his/her primary concern.
- Use of assault or fire power should be brought to the Governor's attention before employment, if possible.

- The chairman of Correction's legislative oversight committee should be notified by the Commissioner personally. The first communication should be early in the event and should be updated regularly.
  
- The warden should personally notify local legislators before they hear about the incident from the media, staff or families.
  
- Local legislators should be notified as soon as possible of major changes at the crisis scene and of resolution. Again, they should not get such information from the media, families or staff.
  
- All information given to friendly legislators should be shared with adversarial legislators. Resistance, defensiveness and too little information may cause suspicion and inflame legislators who are already angry.
  
- Inmates may indicate a desire to meet with a certain legislator. That person may not be a friend to the administrator but will usually act responsibly.
  
- If the inmates ask to meet with a media representative or a legislator and the administrator is inclined to allow this, the possible candidate identified.
  
- The chairmen of the Fiscal and Revenue committees and the

Commissioner of Public Works should receive the cost information related to the crisis from the Commissioner as soon as possible and as it is modified. The costs of repair will usually be less than quoted in the original estimate, which is advantageous because the legislature will likely resist allocating the full amount necessary to restore the facility to its original condition. While a crisis is unfortunate, it may become the catalyst for progress and resource allocation.

- If damage was done, the Governor and/or legislators will want to do a walk through after the incident is resolved. The media will be in attendance.
- Any legislator involved during the incident will be compelled to make a statement on resolution.
- An adversarial legislator or unfriendly Governor's office staffer may use the incident to attack the corrections administrator. All adversaries should be attended because avoiding them only adds fodder for future attacks.

### Media

How the actual events of a crisis are perceived by the public, interest groups, political leaders and others will be reflected through the prism of the media. That image may be at odds with your professional knowledge of the incident. Defensiveness and anger over the media's portrayal of

the incident should be avoided. The best approach will be a healthy relationship with the media before an incident and wise handling of them during the crisis. To this end:

- Have a public information officer (PIO) at the executive command center and the facility command center. The PIOs should give information to the media at regular intervals. Lack of information for more than one hour intervals is too long. The Commissioner or Warden should personally meet with the media at least twice each day.
- Have someone monitor media coverage to determine how it may help or harm the situation. The coverage will be a factor in responding to offenders, politicians and the public. Assume the inmates are monitoring as well. Provide as much damage control as possible.
- Be sure only designated persons are authorized to speak for the Department. Have something new, however slight, to give at each briefing. Avoid "no comment."
- Don't speculate or guess in response to questions because of a need to appear knowledgeable and in control.
- Provide all relevant information. The more information given, the less the pressure for more. What is obvious to a corrections professional is not to others. Speaking the obvious helps all

parties to work from the same assumption.

- Give written statements as much as possible.
- Give details of critical incidents such as stabbings and fires; avoid details that would aggravate the circumstances.
- Expect the media to distrust the information in substance and completeness. Accusations of lying, withholding information and covering up may be leveled. Any information glitch will convince them they were right.
- Anticipate the media's desire for sensational aspects of the crisis. They may exploit the victims and/or their families. Manage this as well as possible.
- Maintain a calm demeanor and don't alienate media representatives by demonstrating your anger if one or more are uncooperative. Be firm but controlled.
- Establish limits on media access. The media will want more access than you can allow. They may try intimidating tactics but will usually respect a firm and consistent posture. Never give special information to a favorite reporter. All must be treated alike.
- Establish a location for the media that is away from the command

centers or the scene of the incident. Help provide phone service. The better the conditions, the more likely media representatives will comply with their accommodations. Food and coffee help keep them happy, and the cost is minimal.

- Keep the cameras away from the crisis area. Air space over a prison is restricted space. You should assure that the media avoids intrusion into this space for planes and helicopters can incite the inmates. Don't expect total cooperation.
- Watch for unapproved intrusions by the media, such as casually moving into sensitive areas, attempts to eavesdrop, shotgun microphones and telescopic cameras. Clearly establish "off-limit" areas. Prevent dialogue with inmates, including talk through a fence and telephone calls.
- Make the Commissioner or Warden available for live interviews at both the executive command center and the facility.
- Give media a walk through as soon as possible after resolution, preferably the next morning if possible. This might be conducted in conjunction with the political walk through
- Anticipate that the inmates will likely ask for a news conference and media coverage of their departure or the signing of the agreement.

- Expect the media to focus on blame and the costs of repair.
  
- Expect the media to approach previous wardens, previous commissioners, or out-of-state experts to second-guess or criticize the crisis management.
  
- Watch for media coverage which portrays the inmates sympathetically. Inmates lose "criminal" status after a crisis and become experts in the eyes of the media.
  
- Anticipate that the media will seek out dissident staff and make them unnamed expert sources.
  
- Remember that time will diminish the impact. The story will eventually move off the front page and out of the press. Subsequent reminders will plague the Department in file footage that will likely be used out of context or as background for another television, radio or newspaper story.

#### AFTERMATH LEADERSHIP ISSUES

The end of the crisis is but the beginning of the return to normal operations. While the immediate crisis will be over, the post-trauma events, staff reactions and follow-up must be managed as rigorously as the crisis. The resultant recriminations, investigations, anger and allegations may make the crisis seem easier than its aftermath. The road to recovery may be long and arduous, but a stronger agency with the

resources needed to conduct its operations may be the result of good follow through.

### Returning to Normal

The calm in the aftermath is very transitory. At first, exhaustion rules. But as people recover, they feel the need to vent emotions, feelings, opinions and observations made during the crisis but suppressed in the effort to accomplish the mission. The unity posed by the common struggle appears illusory as the days pass. The transition from "We came through this," to "Why did it happen?" will occur quickly. The administrator must be prepared when the change comes to respond with the same leadership, patience and discipline exhibited during the crisis.

Among the main points to consider are:

- As an administrator, the greatest strength at this time is he/she humanity. Revealing that humanity and trusting one's instincts will see a person through what follows. The only instinct not to follow is the urge to run away.
  
- Avoid acting out of personal anger and pain. Also, resist public and staff pressure to overreact, adopting retaliatory policies that cover a once-in-a-lifetime circumstance that will likely never happen again. Also avoid policies that will hurt future operations and the institutional climate.
  
- Look for all pent up feelings that developed during the crisis to

seek release after the event. These feelings frequently begin with confusion, insecurity and fear. Eventually, they will turn to anger and criticism. The administrator must be prepared to be the target of that hostility.

- Part of an administrator's job will be to control damage, moderate animosities and irrational behavior, and reduce hurtful statements without being viewed as unrealistic or siding with the inmates and being against staff. This will require the art of balancing competing interests.
- It takes a long time to heal the wounds of an incident and to reduce the consequent polarization.

An event designed to recognize staff and restore dignity to the work place may speed the healing process.

- Say "Thank you" to staff, collateral service providers, and everyone the administrator kept informed, including the media. These will include the local hospitals, the police and fire departments. Anyone forgotten will take offense.
- What was done to serve families and staff during an incident will return to bless or curse an administrator during the aftermath. The key will be "Did you care about me/us?"
- People who were victims, staff and inmates, will need aftercare.

- Talk to the tactical squad. Explain what happened and why.
  
- Go to the hospital if there were injuries, even if it is very painful.
  
- Assure inmates are processed professionally on resolution. Prevent retaliation as much as possible. The "charge" to the officers is the best way to obligate staff at this point. The administrator must also assure that ranking officers are in attendance at all times and places when extracted inmates are moved and secured.
  
- Reactivate the facility quickly and return to normal operations as soon as possible.
  
- Conduct an investigation; have internal affairs ready to go but also consider a blue ribbon panel with members from outside the Department. Avoid promising to issue a report too early. Expect the report to disclose design flaws, blind spots and operational deficiencies. Anything the Department reveals, no one else can expose.
  
- Be prepared for the Governor, Attorney General, Board of Correction, legislators or local prosecutors to call for an independent investigation.

- Be assured the media will conduct their own investigation. Expect that the media's investigation will come up with valid and invalid information at the same time. Their investigative reporting may be the only source of some key information.
  
- The public, media, and especially the legislature will likely want to punish the remaining inmates by refusing to repair the facility or passing restrictive legislation even though the troublemakers will have been transferred and locked up. Consequently, those who stayed out of it will bear the penalty and repercussions. Life is not fair.
  
- The first report on repair costs will be higher than on the second. Things look better after the cleanup of the environment.
  
- It is good to have the inmates help repair and clean up the damage as much as possible. Invite the media to cover this.
  
- Staff will inevitably feel offended because of "what they did to us," and there will be demands and behaviors designed to "get even."
  
- Expect each person who was in the command center(s) to be a possible "unnamed source." Each will have opinions whether he/she go public or not. This is frequently the source of the unofficial version (rumors).

- Staff will be "offended" following resolution ("How could they do this to us?") and will likely retaliate against future populations even though they did not participate and may not have been at the facility at the time. This is a good topic for training and the healing process.
  
- Anticipate conflicting reports from staff regarding who reported what to whom before the incident occurred. There will be those who claim they knew ahead of time and swear they told the administration beforehand.

### Hostages and Families

The return to normal operations for the facility and the Department is a difficult, but manageable issue. Far more complex and subtle is returning the lives of staff, especially hostages, and their families to normal.

Everyone has just been through a once-in-a-lifetime experience. All the emotions, sensations, criticisms and reactions must be dealt with by those affected. The administration cannot do it for them, but can continue to demonstrate that someone cares, not merely to get them back as productive employees, but to permit them to return to their lives as whole people. People will view how they handled themselves as proof of their ability or worth and/or they may be ashamed and depressed.

To assist employees' adjustment following a crisis:

- Do not talk accountability and blame at a time like this.

Criticism will be deadly. Talk "hero" talk, if possible. At a minimum, let them know how pleased you are they are safe.

- The Commissioner and Warden should personally and privately talk to each hostage.
- Personally contact and attend any victims. Go to the hospital if necessary. Follow up as appropriate.
- Anticipate, direct or absorb post-crisis hostility. There has to be someone to blame.
- Debrief each traumatized employee after an incident is over: openly, sensitively and privately for an appropriate period of time (about an hour). This session should be mandatory to prevent the need to show strength. A second or subsequent session may be necessary.
- Let the hostage decide if a family member should be present during part of the debriefing. Volunteers may be helpful in debriefing if there are large numbers.
- Assign helpers/contact persons to each hostage/family. Make counseling mandatory to prevent hostages from trying to show their strength by declining assistance.
- Have prearranged accommodations for each hostage including

shower, sleeping arrangements, or a hotel room. These may be rejected.

- Understand that hostages and other staff will probably hold together during the crisis but frequently decompensate after the incident.
  - Expect hostages to suffer sleeping, flashback and body function problems after an incident is resolved. Attempt to mitigate these symptoms. If such symptoms are not immediate, expect delayed emotional problems to surface later, such as alcohol, drug, family problems.
  - Expect similar problems from family members. Attempt to mitigate these also.
  - Other staff, not taken hostage, may also develop symptoms.
  - Allow the hostage to decide whether to talk to the media - even if it will be negative. If he/she chooses not to go public, insulate them.
  - Coordinate and explain in detail (in writing if feasible) all aftercare plans with hostages and family.
- 17 ■ Provide mandatory employee counseling by an outside provider as soon as possible.

- A post-trauma team could be helpful in assisting all staff to work through their feelings and fear.
- Return hostages to their families as soon as possible.
- Anticipate questions and give the answers, in writing if possible, regarding financial support, schedules; whether, where and when to return to work; and workers compensation and benefits; etc. Even anticipate questions regarding personal security and employment: "Are we going to close this place?" Do I still have a job?"
- Decisions need to be made as to whether the incident is a proper issue for a workers compensation claim. You may agree that a stress related disability is proper for a claim; but, remember, this decision will set a precedent for other types of claims.
- Offer logistical support in filing for insurance, workers compensation and benefits, etc.
- Even if a victim/employee has no time on the books, you can find a way to allow time off.
- Be prepared to adjust schedules for hostage staff. Allow transfer if requested.

There is no good or right answer as to when and whether to bring a person

back onto the job after a crisis. Sometimes the employee needs to make that decision personally.

- Take your cues from the victim/employee as to how quickly he/she should return to the scene of the crisis. A noncommittal position may be helpful for a while. However, watch for unhealthy patterns that require wise counsel and encouragement.

### Critique of the Incident

The dynamics learned from debriefing may be valuable in future judgment, but it will not guarantee correct responses for the next incident. There is no cookbook.

A critique, however, will expose those areas and agencies that operated effectively and those that did not meet expectations. The critique should be thorough and comprehensive. It needs to be conducted as soon after the incident as possible in order to capture all the relevant information while memories are still fresh, but it should be conducted at the point when departmental administrators have had an opportunity to gather their thoughts to reflect on what happened and to analyze the issues.

The critique should be done as a round table. Managers, however, may want to prepare reports in advance and share them beforehand as a basis for discussion. The critique should be open, honest and frank. It is at this point that hurtful issues may surface and egos may be injured. Moderating such a session requires particular skills. An outside facilitator might

be necessary because the facilitator can be neutral and will permit staff to participate equally.

The results of the critique should be written. A secretary should be present for this purpose. The critique should be independent of any investigation but may be used by an investigatory committee as part of its considerations in a report. Staff should be asked to propose revisions in the final critique.

Among the areas the critique should cover are:

- Adequacy of plan, training and policies;
- Precursor information gathering and analysis;
- Effectiveness of first response containment strategies;
- Collateral agencies' participation;
- Negotiation strategy and negotiation process;
- Communications equipment;
- Information dissemination;
- Information gathering (including intelligence);
- Development of the historical record;
- Staffing, including numbers and performance;
- Debriefing processes;
- Housing and accommodations for staff, families and inmates;
- Media relations;
- Command center operations;
- Political figures' involvement;
- Security procedures;
- Physical plant design flaws and repairs; and,

■ Investigation's progress.

Set up Department of Correction policy to hold each facility accountable with regard to having simulations to practice crisis plans, hostage situations and fires.