

Media handling – spontaneous critical terrorist incident



WEST MIDLANDS COUNTER TERRORISM UNIT



CT Spontaneous Incident

Q: How would the media respond?

- Citizen journalist
- International news organisations with significant resources
- Agencies
- Freelancers
- Social media

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Cordons



Above: Edgware Road sealed off



Right: Fire fighters carry a colleague from the Twin Towers

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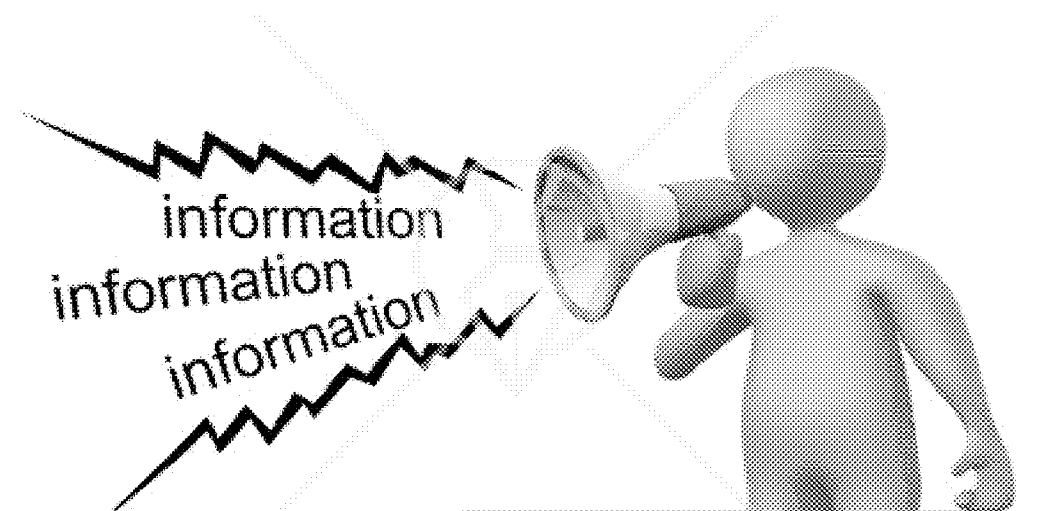


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Q: How should we respond?

A swift response could save lives

Trust & Confidence would be enhanced



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Easier said than done!

Getting accurate picture of what's happening

Number of agencies involved

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First priority for press office:

Implementation of the CT spontaneous major incident plan

First hour:

- Holding statement/safety advice – within **20 minutes**
- Staffing including spokesperson
- Appointing an inter-agency liaison officer
- Policy book
- Second statement



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Holding statement

To be released ASAP (within 20 mins)

- Police are responding to reports of shots (and possibly explosions) being fired in/at ?????
- Members of the public are urged not to approach the area until further notice
- More information will follow

Second message

The Gold commander will set the media strategy. Second statement should include:

- Confirmation of gunshots (explosions) & locations
- 'Reports' of casualties (no specific details of numbers or whether this includes fatalities – just flag up likelihood to prepare people)
- Critical incident declared – police coordinating with all emergency responders. Has not been declared a terrorist incident (assuming it hasn't at this stage) but this is not ruled out at this stage
- Details of cordon & traffic diversions
- Instructions being given to those inside cordon (evacuation or invacuation – ie stay where you are)
- Repeat appeal for public to stay away
- Updates to follow

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Q: What other agencies will be responding to the media?

- Fire
- Ambulance
- Local Authority
- BTP
- Network Rail
- Airport
- Highways Agency
- Hospitals
- Home Office (Security Service)
- Foreign Office
- Cabinet Office/Number 10
- FCO
- ACPO (CT media network)
- Ministry of Defence (Special Forces)
- Government News Co-ordination Centre



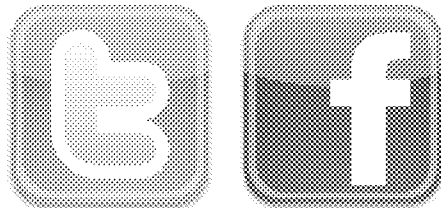
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Communication channels

- Mainstream media
- Force website (HPTO)
- Social media (SIO requirement?)
- BBC Connecting in a Crisis
- KIN lists – up and running ready for consequence management



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Internal liaison

Don't forget your nearest and dearest!



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Second/third hour priorities

- Locating suitable media rendezvous points at scene (CCTV?), and press conference/media centre location
- Share these with other emergency responders
- Third media statement



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Third press statement:

- We believe we are dealing with a terrorist incident **or** we have not yet declared this a terrorist incident but that remains a strong possibility.
- Indication of casualties/fatalities (what the potential extent is - not numbers)
- What we know and/or what we don't about number of gunmen/identity which terrorist group/motives/number and location(s) of explosions.
- If relevant...flag up number of people believed to be held hostage. Assessing situation/trying to make contact. No more details available at present.
- Priority is public safety. Force has put critical incident plans into action. Staff reinforcements and specialist officers arriving on duty.
- If applicable...flag up difficulties faced by emergency responders in getting to casualties – ie because they could be fired upon/could trigger explosives. *
- Repeat cordon details/appeal to stay away/advice for those inside cordon.
- Give details of no-fly zone if applicable.
- Advise emergency call centre (casualty bureau) being set up for relatives Number to follow.*
- Details of which hospital(s) are taking casualties.
- Military assistance is an option under constant review/military assistance on standby.
- Advise press conference will be arranged – details to follow .
- Does the SIO want to appeal for information from witnesses at this still early stage? Should the Casualty Bureau be used for this? CHECK.



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No fly zone?



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Media spokesperson

- Project the right image
- Keep media on side
- Timing
- Constantly caveat answers
- Explain what we know and what we don't. Empathise but refuse to speculate



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Role of the SNCCT

- Local incident with national and international implications
- Could be one of several incidents
- Sets the media strategy

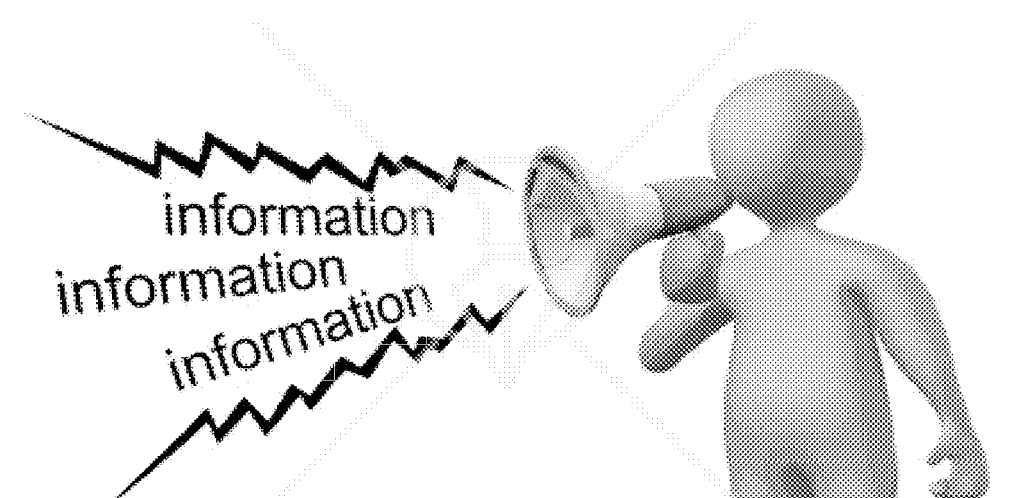
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The big issues

- Early warning and informing
- Shared messages rather than joint
- Casualty figures



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Last word



Gold strategy:

Save lives and bring offenders to justice

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Any Questions?

