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Command structure

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The generic command structure used in the UK police service operates at three levels: strategic/gold, tactical/silver and operational/bronze.

Firearms operations often form one part of a more complex, multifaceted operation that will already be using gold, silver, bronze command descriptors. It is, therefore, important to define the command of the firearms element through the use of functional descriptors. The descriptors used throughout this module are:

Strategic firearms commander

Determines the strategic objectives and sets any tactical parameters. Retains strategic oversight and overall command and responsibility.

Tactical firearms commander

Develops, commands and coordinates the overall tactical response in accordance with strategic objectives.

Operational firearms commander(s)

Commands a group of officers carrying out functional or territorial responsibilities related to a tactical plan.

In an operation where the sole purpose is to use armed officers to carry out a specific action at a single location, the roles performed by commanders will be as outlined in command roles and functions.

Command roles and functions

The command structure offers flexibility in response to a varied and developing range of circumstances and is functional rather than based on rank. The structure must be clearly articulated to all those involved in the operation. Where time permits and it is appropriate