

- >APP content
- >Armed policing
- >[Armed deployment](#)

• <a href="#">Armed policing</a>
○ <a href="#">Legal framework</a>
○ <a href="#">Use of force, firearms and less lethal weapons</a>
○ <a href="#">Weapons and equipment</a>
○ <a href="#">Issue and carriage of firearms</a>
○ <a href="#">Command</a>
○ <a href="#">Armed deployment</a>
▪ <a href="#">Discharge of firearms</a>
○ <a href="#">Post-deployment</a>
○ <a href="#">Conducted energy devices (Taser)</a>
○ <a href="#">Attenuating energy projectiles</a>
○ <a href="#">National Police Firearms Training Curriculum</a>
○ <a href="#">Strategic threat and risk assessment (STRA)</a>
○ <a href="#">Reference material</a>

## Armed policing

# Armed deployment

### Further information

APP on [deployment of AFOs](#)

APP on [discharge of firearms](#)

In situations requiring the deployment of authorised firearms officers (AFOs), police decision making and response is directed by available information and the assessment of threat.

The [National Decision Model \(NDM\)](#) assists with this decision-making process and provides a structure for documenting decisions and their rationale.

Police officers have a positive duty to protect the public from harm – a duty of care to all involved must be the overriding consideration. The nature and urgency of police action will take account of any time imperative related to public safety as well as the skills and capability of officers available.

### Contents

- [1 National Decision Model](#)
- [2 NDM phases](#)
- [2.1 Gather information and intelligence](#)
- [2.1.1 Gathering information](#)
- [2.1.1.1 Assessment of the current situation](#)
- [2.2 Assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy](#)
- [2.2.1 Threat assessment: definition](#)
- [2.2.1.1 Accuracy](#)

- [2.2.1.2 Analysis](#)
- [2.2.2 Working strategy](#)
- [2.3 Consider powers and policy](#)
- [2.4 Identify options and contingencies](#)
- [2.4.1 Options](#)
- [2.4.1.1 Feasible specific tactics](#)
- [2.4.2 Contingencies](#)
- [2.5 Take action and review what happened](#)
- [2.5.1 Health and safety risk assessment](#)
- [2.5.2 Briefing](#)
- [2.5.3 Operational deployment](#)
- [2.5.4 Medical assistance](#)
- [2.5.5 Community impact assessment](#)
- [2.5.5.1 The impact of armed police deployment on a community](#)
- [2.5.6 Explanation and apology](#)
- [3 Record keeping](#)
- [4 Dealing with people](#)
- [4.1 Handling subjects](#)
- [4.1.1 Hostage situations](#)
- [4.2 Environmental and behavioural influencers](#)
- [4.2.1 Communication issues](#)
- [4.2.2 Children and young people](#)
- [4.2.3 Intelligence relating to subject behaviour and/or condition](#)
- [4.2.4 Defusing the situation](#)
- [4.3 Dealing with individuals who are emotionally or mentally distressed](#)
- [4.3.1 Indicators of emotional or mental distress](#)
- [4.3.2 Indicators of a severe medical condition](#)
- [4.4 Provoked shootings](#)
- [4.5 Other persons involved](#)
- [5 Police responders](#)

## National Decision Model

The [National Decision Model \(NDM\)](#) is a decision-making model used throughout the police service. It is designed to assist operational officers, planners, advisers and commanders to manage their response to a situation in a reasonable and proportionate way.

The NDM is a scalable model that can be applied before, during and after an incident requiring the [deployment of AFOs](#). It provides a framework for recording command decisions and the rationale behind them and can also be used to brief officers involved in the response.

The NDM is driven by information and intelligence. It is a continuous cycle, constantly reviewed in light of new information and assessment that will, ultimately, affect the response to the incident. The model prompts the decision maker to take action on the basis of the most up-to-date information and intelligence available at that time.

Each element of the model may be worked through and reviewed consciously or subconsciously. Decisions and the rationale behind them, can be recorded against each element.

## NDM phases

### Further information

Guidance on the questions and considerations that should be applied to each stage of the NDM from a firearms perspective are detailed in the National Policing Firearms Training Curriculum (NDM model areas: C1, C2, C3 and F2).

#### [General policing guidance relating to use of the NDM.](#)

The NDM has a number of [phases or components](#). Each provides the user with an area for focus and consideration:

- gather information and intelligence
- assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy
- consider powers and policy
- identify options and contingencies
- take action and review what happened.

In a dynamically evolving incident it will not always be possible to segregate thinking or response according to each phase of the model.

It may not be practical or possible, given the speed at which an incident may evolve, to articulate each decision and rationale when the overriding requirement is for immediate decision making and action.

In such circumstances it will be necessary and appropriate for officers undertaking both command and tactical response to use the professional knowledge, skills and experience which they have developed across their police service and life experience.

### Gather information and intelligence

In firearms related situations, information and intelligence, combined with the experience of those responsible for directing the police response, will assist in determining the most appropriate response to a given situation. The assessment of information is a dynamic and continuing process throughout the life of an incident or operation. All involved have a responsibility for updating information and ensuring that, as far as possible, a full intelligence picture is maintained and that this is conveyed as appropriate to those involved.

When gathering information, the tactical firearms commander must ensure that, as far as time permits, information and intelligence is appropriately assessed, graded and where possible verified.

Information and intelligence should be passed to officers as necessary for the roles that they are performing, see APP on dissemination of intelligence. It is important that commanders are regularly updated on changes to information and intelligence in a timely and appropriate manner. These updates will enable the review of strategic objectives, tactical objectives and any tactical parameters set to take place.

Commanders should seek verification of intelligence and information, be aware of the potential for reported information to be wrong and be aware that there may be intelligence gaps or failures.

## **Gathering information**

Where only limited information is available, it is important to establish and maintain an effective information gathering process at an early stage. In protracted or more complex incidents there may be a need to establish a dedicated intelligence function in support of the tactical firearms commander.

The initial response to a situation requiring the deployment of AFOs depends on the intelligence available, the quality of the information received and the resources available for deployment.

Considerations should include:

- assessment of the current situation, including any threat being posed and to whom
- persons already subjected to harm and requiring medical attention
- reported existence of weapons
- situational information including location and any associated hazards or risks
- information available about the subject
- information available about the subject's associates
- any community impact factors associated with the event or location.

Assessment of the current situation

An assessment of the situation should take account of:

- the subject's physical capacity
- the subject's emotional or mental state
- the subject's capacity to understand what is happening
- any cultural, religious and ethnic considerations relevant to the individual or group
- the locality in which the incident is taking place.

The availability of such information will be subject to the circumstances, time available and level of risk. Consideration may be given to obtaining information from sources such as a friend or family member, locally based police officer, a health professional or a representative from a community group.

## **Assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy**

## Analysis

Once the threat has been identified, it will enable a specific individual threat assessment in relation to all identified parties to be formulated. The assessment should determine whether the likelihood for harm is high, medium, low or unknown in each individual case. The identification of an unknown level of risk usually indicates a gap in information/intelligence which will need to be addressed.

Where one or more groups or individuals are identified as being at the same level of risk, evaluating their proximity to the threat may assist to prioritise actions or reduce or mitigate that risk.

## Working strategy

### Further information

[Strategic planning](#)

[Transfer of command](#)

A working strategy may start to be developed once information is received and can be formalised when a threat assessment has taken place.

The strategy and the rationale behind it as well as any revisions or amendments should be recorded and will form an audit trail.

The strategy should be regularly reviewed, particularly when a change or handover of command takes place.

## Consider powers and policy

In determining the action that should be taken, consideration should be given to which powers and policies are applicable and necessary in the circumstances to achieve the objectives set out within the tactical plan.

Considerations should include:

- under which common law or statutory provision the proposed action is being taken, (eg. stopping, searching or detaining an individual, stopping a vehicle or entering a building or structure)
- implications of any action under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and potential infringement of the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR) articles – are the powers to be actioned proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary?
- whether a warrant is required
- whether the criteria for the deployment of AFOs are met
- whether the desired objective could be met in a less intrusive manner
- whether the operation involves surveillance, and what level of authority is required under the [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000](#) (RIPA) or the [Regulation of Investigatory Powers \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#) (RIP(S)A)
- how closely the proposed action meets the strategic firearms commander's strategy.

Consideration should also be given to whether there is APP or force policies, guidance or procedure relating to the proposed actions.

## Identify options and contingencies

As soon as the first information is received, generic tactical options may be considered and selected. This may include the deployment of AFOs as a contingency, or to carry out an investigative assessment and take whatever action is deemed appropriate. As more information becomes available, tactical options should be further considered in the light of evaluated intelligence and the relevant powers and policy.

Generic tactical options set out the different ways in which a particular objective can be undertaken in a manner which minimises risk and harm. They are broad descriptions of the options the police may have available to them when dealing with an incident which requires the deployment of armed officers. Along with the primary aim of securing public safety, consideration should be given to whether it is possible to identify, locate and contain the subject and take appropriate action to neutralise the threat posed.

### Options

Generic tactical options to consider include:

#### 1. Wait

Before selecting any other option, consideration should be given to whether it is appropriate or necessary in the circumstances to take immediate action.

It may be, for example, more appropriate to record information and allow further time to gather additional information or intelligence that will enable other options to be considered.

The key issue to be determined is whether a delay in the police response would create additional risks to the public or expose any persons to harm.

#### 2. Take mitigating action

Mitigating action is designed to minimise harm and can include:

- high-visibility police presence
- provision of protection
- action to minimise the subject's capability.

#### 3. Keep the subject under observation

The potential for intelligence failures or gaps in the information known should also be considered.

While it is impractical to identify every possible outcome to a given situation, commanders should identify appropriate contingencies based on the:

- probability of the outcome occurring
- potential impact of the outcome on the strategy and tactical plan
- potential risks to individuals involved in the incident and the response.

## **Take action and review what happened**

When a course of action has been decided on, commanders should direct resources and ensure that those involved are appropriately briefed. Actions to be taken include:

- briefing (including contingencies)
- health and safety risk assessment
- operational deployment or activation of a tactical option
- consideration of post-deployment issues
- medical assistance
- community impact assessment
- explanation and apology.

Officers need to be clear on which tactical option they are required to carry out and the tactical objective they are to accomplish. Where activation of a particular tactical option is time critical, there should, where practicable, be clearly agreed procedures for communicating any decision to defer, abort or initiate a specific tactic.

Reviewing the effect of the action taken is a distinct and crucial part of this stage of the NDM. The result of the action taken is new information which may necessitate a further application of the model.

Considerations could include such things as whether the identified threats have been reduced or eliminated and whether the action taken achieved all or any of the objectives of the working strategy.

### **Health and safety risk assessment**

A risk assessment gauging the risk to staff of working in a particular location or manner is a legal requirement of all employers, including the police service.

ACPO firmly acknowledges that those involved in armed deployments are required to make critical judgements in the most difficult of situations and often in life-threatening circumstances. Their contribution in helping to resolve these situations and in providing protection to the public and other police officers is highly valued by the Police Service. It is, therefore, important that the safety, welfare and rights of these officers are appropriately addressed by ACPO.