



THE FLYNT GROUP INC.

*ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE*®

■ **Preventing Blue on Blue:**  
Anti-Fratricide Measures During an Active Shooter Response



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## **Flynt Group White Paper**

### **Preventing Blue on Blue: Anti-Fratricide Measures During an Active Shooter Response**

This White Paper provides an overview of Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures concerning anti-fratricide measures for friendly forces responding to an active shooter.

Increasingly, armed security officers employed by private sector firms, banks, universities, and other institutions will be the first to respond to an active shooter crisis. The subsequent law enforcement response creates a potential situation in which multiple friendly armed forces are responding to an active shooter simultaneously and without coordination.

It is important that friendly forces exercise extreme control and tactical discipline when attempting to neutralize an active shooter to prevent Blue-on-Blue fratricide. Linkup, handoff, and mutual support are among the most dangerous tasks facing armed private security officers and sworn law enforcement officers. This requires that techniques be developed, trained, and validated by multi-organizational exercises to prevent Blue-on-Blue fratricide.

We hope that this Flynt Group White Paper informs planning, training and exercise of these challenging tactical tasks, and aids in preventing fratricide.

Flynt Group's mission is to equip our clients with *Actionable Knowledge*® to wisely manage their risk positions and achieve their goals across a broad spectrum of hazards and threats. Should we be able to provide any further information, please contact us at 816.243.0044, or via email at [Info@FlyntGroup.com](mailto:Info@FlyntGroup.com).

Sincerely,

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President  
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**“Actionable Knowledge”**



## Blue-on-Blue

Fratricide results in unacceptable losses, increases the risk of mission failure, and affects an organization's ability to function effectively. Consequences of fratricide include:

- Death or serious injury
- Loss of confidence in leadership
- Increased self-doubt
- Hesitancy to apply deadly force
- Over supervision
- Loss of aggressiveness
- Loss of initiative
- Disrupted operations
- Degradation of cohesiveness, morale, and effectiveness

## Causes of Fratricide

**Target Identification Failures:** The primary cause of fratricide is lack of positive target identification. Officers must positively identify targets prior to engaging.

**Situational Awareness and Understanding Failures:** Officers responding to active shooter events without situational awareness and understanding, especially in large buildings, can become disoriented and unexpectedly encounter another friendly force, with tragic results. Responding officers must know the location of all friendly units and understand the tactical plan to neutralize the threat.

**Reporting and Communications Failures:** Responding officers and units that fail to generate timely, accurate, and complete reports concerning changes to locations and the tactical situation create a distorted common operational picture that can result in the convergence of friendly elements. To achieve and maintain tactical control, reports must be timely, accurate, and complete.

**Negligent Discharge:** Failure to maintain positive control of individual weapons (e.g. undisciplined muzzle control, bypassing the mechanical safety, and failure to index the trigger finger on the weapon's frame) caused by lapses in individual discipline can have devastating consequences. While an individual Officer responsibility, leaders must enforce individual weapons discipline across the team.

**IEDs:** Improvised explosive devices (IED) may be employed by an active shooter. Failure to identify, mark, and record the location of known and suspected IEDs can result in casualties to follow-on elements, medical personnel, and evacuating civilians. Suspected IEDs should be marked and reported immediately.



## **Fratricide Avoidance**

The probability of fratricide increases when multiple agencies are involved. During a response to an active shooter, private security organizations and law enforcement should consider the following:

### **Mission:**

- Design a simple, tactically sound operations plan
- Issue complete and concise orders; repeat your orders twice
- Emphasize the protocol on clearing fire; deconflict and assign sectors to your teams
- Demand accuracy from tactical leaders in tracking the fight; push timely updates and demand clear, calm reports
- Maintain situational understanding two levels down
- “Push Coordinate” with adjacent organizations; track adjacent organizations
- Only allow trained team members to operate with your teams; no “straphangers”
- Anticipate and continually assess fratricide risk
- Officers must know contingency plans perfectly

### **Threat:**

- Brief your team on threat characteristics, appearance, and equipment
- Know threat tactics, techniques, and procedures
- Anticipate potential threat courses of action

### **Troops and Equipment:**

- Rehearse plans and test equipment. Do not accept excuses
- Consider a limited visibility rehearsal, if a standing contingency plan
- Maintain situational understanding of teams, threat, civilians, and hazards
- Strictly enforce perfect muzzle discipline; conditioned indexing of trigger finger on the weapon’s frame
- Leaders should tightly coordinate and control all movement
- Anticipate where Officer and weapon system density will be highest – put leadership there
- Officers must be mentally prepared for contact and be observant for known friendly identification features such as uniforms, body armor, helmets, and specific long gun types
- Recognize stress in your team; watch your officers for signs of strong anxiety or panic
- Use validated SOPs to simplify operations
- Know the rules for use of force and escalation of force procedures
- Push accurate and timely spot reports
- Ensure positive target identification; do not shoot first and ask questions later. Every shot is a deliberate decision
- Know weapons and material effects; train worst-case operations in buildings (e.g. flimsy or high-fragmentation materials)
- In the event of friendly fire, officers must seek cover and use voice and radio communications to stop the blue-on-blue engagement



**Time:**

- Maximize planning time, if available
- Adjust pace and tempo; be sure of the threat and that everyone understands the next move
- Exercises before an event create time during an event

**Tactics:**

- There are two phases to the ground tactical operation: neutralize the active shooter, and secure the terrain. If possible, these phases should be executed in parallel; however, the priority is to neutralizing the active shooter
- The focus of the lead tactical team(s) during the first phase should be to maintain 3-dimensional security as they move and rapidly find and neutralize the active shooter, and to “push coordinate” with other teams. After neutralizing the active shooter, the larger follow-on forces should be tasked with the more deliberate phase of clearing the building. In a large building, these phases should be executed in parallel, if possible

**Terrain:**

- Navigate accurately; know your exact location at all times, especially in buildings
- Designate inter-team fire control measures and boundaries on identifiable terrain or features
- Conduct rapid tactical analysis to identify fratricide risk
- Use redundant navigation aids and checks; train your teams / officers to “push coordinate” their location
- Dominate the lines of movement (i.e., in a building: corridors, stairways, doors, windows, elevators)
- Cleared rooms cannot be considered clear if not kept secured

**Training and Exercises:**

- All organizations that will respond to an active shooter should frequently train together to reinforce tactics, techniques, and procedures to be used
- Regularly scheduled training exercises, to include Table Top Exercises and Blue Gun Exercises, validate existing plans; identify gaps and redundancies; assess training proficiency; and familiarize different team members with each other

It is important that friendly forces attempting to neutralize an active shooter prevent Blue-on-Blue fratricide by exercising extreme control and tactical discipline. Linkup, handoff, and mutual support are among the most dangerous tasks facing armed private security officers and sworn law enforcement officers. Prior planning, training, and exercises involving multiple organizations should be a priority.

