



HRCJTA TB 2020-2

DATE: June 15, 2020
TO: Hampton Roads Criminal Justice Training Academy Member Agencies
FROM: Scott Barlow, Executive Director
SUBJECT: HRCJTA Training Bulletin 2020-2(Multiple Officer Subject Control Utilizing Contact/Cover Principles)

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We believe that it is always safer to effect an arrest with a minimum of two officers, whenever possible to do so. Keeping in mind that additional officers/deputies may be arriving at different times during the arrest it is important to have a plan in advance. Having a plan in advance involves training in the proper method of multiple officer subject control techniques.

Contact and Cover Basic Principles (Tactical "L" or Triangulation):

The first officer to "contact" the subject(s) or scene is the Contact Officer. A secondary officer or backup officer would assume the Cover Role. The Contact Officer will conduct all of the business of the stop or encounter, while the Cover Officer provides protection for the Contact Officer. From a position of surveillance and control, the Cover Officer prevents assault, escape, and the destruction of evidence. Officers may decide to switch roles due to expertise or previous suspect contact or knowledge. However, both must be aware of their changing roles.

Multiple Officer Subject Control:

If established that the subject is non-compliant accepted practice is all **non-compliant** subjects go to the ground. In the real world forcing a resisting subject to the ground is quite difficult and seldom accomplished by a single officer. A minimum of two officers should be utilized for proper subject control of resisting subject. ***Multiple officer take downs, when done properly, are far safer for the officer and the subject.***

Contact Officer Duties:

The Contact Officer continues in a safety/supervisory role as multiple Cover Officers attempt to gain control of the subject. The Contact Officer acts as the control and safety and does not go hands on unless it becomes apparent that the officer(s), or the subject will sustain unnecessary injuries caused by such failure to act. The Contact Officer watches the “big picture” to ensure the suspect is properly secured (handcuffed and/or other appropriate restraints) and placed in an “upright” position, not kept “proned out” for an unsafe period of time (Refer to HRCJTA TB 2020-1).

Cover Officers Duties:

Each Cover Officer is responsible for applying a proper technique to their assigned area on the subject. In a perfect world we would have (4) Cover Officers. Two controlling the arms, one controlling the head, and one controlling the legs. We recognize that this may seldom happen, but multiple officer control is utilized with two or more officers most of the time!

Two Officers: One Contact and one Cover Officer. Each officer will control one arm with the Contact Officer assuming dual roles still being responsible for the “big picture”.

Three Officers: Two Cover and one Contact Officer. The two Cover Officers control an arm with the Contact Officer acting as safety and supervisor watching the “big picture”. The Contact Officer may step in and assume handcuffing duties if needed and safe to do so.

Four Officers: Three Cover and one Contact Officer. Two Cover Officers control the arms, the third Cover Officer controls the head and assists in a **controlled fall to the ground** for the subject.

Five Officers: Four Cover and one Contact officer. Two Cover Officers control the arms, the third Cover Officer controls the head and assists in a controlled fall to the ground for the subject, the fourth Cover Officer controls the feet if required or assists with handcuffing duties.

Notes of Critical Importance: When the Cover Officers are controlling both arms the subject has no way of controlling their fall to the ground. Whenever possible the Cover Officers should bring the subject to the ground in stages. Whenever possible a third Cover Officer should be used to control the head which controls the subjects fall to the ground.

Although multiple officer takedowns are used often by L.E. this philosophy is seldom discussed or trained. Without training we end up with the “pile on” of officers with no one assuming the supervisory/big picture role. If Cover Officers arrive during the arrest and are not needed to control the suspect they should assume the role of perimeter security and assist with supervisory and safety duties. Do not feel the need to just “pile on”. Not only does this have horrible “optics” but it is unsafe for officers and the suspect.

This type training does not take long to accomplish and provides much needed guidance in the controlling of resisting suspects.