The Critical Decision-Making Model

ICAT: Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics
The Critical Decision-Making Model

Decision Making in Action?
The Critical Decision-Making Model

1. Collect Information
2. Assess Situation, Threats, and Risks
3. Consider Police Powers and Agency Policy
4. Ethos
5. Sanctity of Life
6. Proportionality
7. Act, Review, and Re-Assess
8. Identify Options and Determine Best Course of Action

Remember Who You Are and What You Represent.
The Critical Decision-Making Model

CDM Core

Ideals that define the agency

- Ethics, values, mission statement, guiding principles and priorities
- Core informs.guides each step in the model
Step 1: Collect Information

Ask yourself …

- What do I know so far about this incident?
- What else do I need to know?
- What do my training and experience tell me about this type of incident?
Step 1: Collect Information

Ask others (esp. Dispatch) …

- What more can you tell me about this incident?
- What more can you tell me about previous incidents involving this location or subjects?
Step 1: Collect Information

- Information collection is an ongoing process throughout the CDM ... it doesn’t stop at Step 1
- If you’re not getting the information you need ... keep asking!
The Critical Decision-Making Model

Coeur d’Alene, ID
Step 2: Assess Situation, Threats & Risks

Ask yourself …

- *Do I need to take immediate action?*
- What more information do I need?
- Am I trained and equipped to handle this situation myself
- *What is the threat/risk?*
Accurately assess person, object or environmental factor that could put officer/public at risk

Two risk categories at this stage:
- High risk
- Unknown risk

Guard against officer complacency
Threat Assessment

Assess the subject’s:

- Means
- Ability
- Opportunity
- Intent

Watch out for “transfer of malice” (or aggression)
Begin developing a working strategy

- Minimize risk to victim and public
- Maximize officer safety
- Minimize risk to subject
- Allow for safe detention of subject
- Allow for recovery, preservation of evidence
The Critical Decision-Making Model

Step 3: Consider Police Powers & Agency Policy

Ask yourself …

- What legal powers do I have to take action?
- What agency policies control my response?
- Are there other issues I should think about (jurisdictional matters, mutual aid, etc.)?
Ask yourself …

- What am I trying to achieve?
- What options do I have?
- What contingencies must I consider if I choose a particular option?
- Do I need to act now, or can I wait?

Step 4: Identify Options, Determine Best Course of Action
Possible Options and Contingencies

- Wait and collect more information
- Keep subject under observation
- Continue communicating with subject
- Tactically reposition and contain the area
- Take decisive action
Select Best Course of Action

Keeping in mind …

- Greatest likelihood of success against least harm
- How proportional the response will be (given threat/risks)
- Safety of the public, your own safety and the sanctity of all life
- Agency mission and values (CDM core)
Step 5: Act, Review and Re-assess

Execute the plan, then ask yourself …

- Did I achieve the desired outcome?
- Is there anything more I need to consider?
- What lessons did I learn?

If the incident is not resolved, then “spin the model”
“Spinning the Model”

- Information collection is ongoing
- As new information comes in ... threats, risks and options can change
- “Spinning the model” means re-assessing, fine-tuning your decision-making
You expect me to do this?
And in tense and dynamic situations?

- Nothing prevents officers from taking immediate action
- When there is time, CDM provides a useful structure for weighing options, making decisions
- Very similar to what SWAT teams already do
- Over time, it becomes second nature ... like driving a car
Benefits of the CDM

Better decisions up front
- “I didn’t have time to think” – very few situations where that is really the case
- CDM helps you gather information, assess threats, weigh options

Helps to explain your actions after the fact
- Enhances officer credibility
- Protects officers in court
The Critical Decision-Making Model

Do we have a realistic plan?
Looking at the CDM in Action
The Critical Decision-Making Model

- Collect Information
- Act, Review, and Re-Assess
- Assess Situation, Threats, and Risks
- Identify Options and Determine Best Course of Action
- Consider Police Powers and Agency Policy
- Ethics
- Values
- Proportionality
- Sanctity of Life

Remember who you are and what you represent.
Thoughts?

Questions?

Observations?