

PARTICULARITIES OF THE POLICE TACTICS IN SECURITY ACCIDENTS

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Abstract: With its elementary form and content, police tactics is placed in the field of organizational sciences and management, but due to the police meaning, this tactics also creates a new discipline that can be placed in the context of police sciences.

Police tactics in security accidents are strongly determined by a *double imperative* in realization of two key tactical goals: *rescue and protection* of people and property, as well as the *prevention of the spread of threats and harmful consequences* and *criminal investigation and processing of case*.

Since the goal of this research is an empirically based *questioning of the adequacy and particulars of police tactics* in security accidents, the method of content analysis (case study) created a basis for the description and testing of individual tactical phases, measures, and actions. The description of the selected (5) cases, structured according to about 10 variables, related to, and carried out on about *fifty positions* in the created *analysis matrix - instrument*. These positions represent measurable *indicators* of the particularities of the applied tactical measures, considering the development and course of the intervention, but also the outcomes and achieved tactical goals.

The key findings generated in the research, as tactical particularities, in the initial phase of the event, confirm the necessary *rapidity* in creation of a “situational picture” or a criminal differential diagnosis, but also point to the most common *aggravating circumstances*. Implementation *legislative gaps* emphasizes the importance of informal relations between the police and other intervention forces, which certainly affects the expected synergistic effects. Criminal investigation, which always exceeds the duration of the intervention, is a significant determination of police tactics. High level of general competences of the police manager, along with the emphasized *promptness of making the exact decisions*, but also and especially the *experience of leadership* in similar events, were confirmed as the *conditio sine qua non* of successful tactics.

Keywords: police tactics, accidents, organization of intervention, tactical goals and measures

1. INTRODUCTION

The tactics of police action is a complex and very important aspect of the scope, function and security role of police organizations and services. This is a *sui generis* tactics that is most often inherent exclusively to the police scope, but due to the heterogeneity of assumed and real situations to which this scope refers, this tactics assumes an *inter* and *multi* disciplinary approach, both in the creation of its material meaning and even more so in the cataloguing of the implementation spectrum of procedures, measures and instruments that make up this tactics. With its elementary form and content, police tactics is placed in the field of organizational sciences and management, but due to its police meaning, this tactics also creates a new discipline that can be placed in the context of police sciences as category pre-scientific police knowledge (Butorac, Solomun, 2013).

Regular or expected and extraordinary or unusual security events, almost always and necessarily require situational adaptation of the technology of police action.

Exactly this need of organizational, tactical adaptation of the police to the certain security event represent a specific, which deserves the privacy of treatment in practice and science, and it is justified to call it the particularities of police tactics (Grigoleit et al., 2020a).

Security events such as accidents in industrial infrastructures, due to their characteristics, especially due to the potential threat to the security situation in the immediate or distant environment, assume the urgent action of numerous and different services with the primary goal of protecting and saving people's lives and property. However, police tactics (Modly, Korajlić, 2022, College of Policing, 2024a) in such events are strongly determined by a double function, which is imperative to achieve two important tactical goals.

The primary goal is the rescue and protection of people and property, as well as the prevention of the spread of threats and harmful consequences, while the second is related to crime investigation and *processing of events*.

A certain number of accidents in industrial plants are caused by technical-technological errors as a result of technical failure or unprofessional handling as the cause (Toth et al., 2011), which makes particularities of criminal investigation of the event and knowledge of the basics of the technological process in the event of an accident, but also indicates the complexity of the function of managing of police forces and through timely decision making and assumes expressed competencies in the procedures of creating a situational picture and based on it the assessment of the situation.

Police intervention is aimed on taking operational tactical measures and actions on such security events through the determination of *tactical goals* and the implementation of *tactical measures* (Grigoleit et al., 2020a), and they are for properly and legally undertaking activities at the scene and prevented disorganization and ineffectiveness of police operations in mastering the intervention. An important feature of any tactical action is that it is a legally permissible and logically justified use of forces and resources in a specific intervention.

In this work, based on the created matrix (events and variables), there were analysis of selected, different accident events (*case study*) and the tactical measures and actions in them, which identifies and questions the peculiarities and adequacy of police tactics.

At the same time, the goal of the research is to identify critical points as common denominators, and to indicate good practice, but also the most common possible omissions with the ultimate purpose of improving and more efficiently organizing the work of the police, but also emphasizing the importance of relationships and influence with other services in the coordinated resolution of such security events.

2. ANALYSIS OF SOME INTERVENTION ELEMENTS IN ACCIDENTS

Police action during interventions in the event of accidents is determined in relation to the nature of the security event and the purpose of the space where the event takes place, as well as its distribution and the number of persons who are under its immediate harmful effect. This means whether it is a fire, explosion, emission or leakage of harmful ingredients, and what kind of production plant and space it is. The subject of this analysis is the externally visible activities of the police, from receiving a report of an accident to control the situation during the intervention, through the analysis of the implementation of tactical activities.

Table 1. Elements of security event analysis

VARIABLES	FIRE				EXPLOSION
	"Drava Int" Osijek 04.10.2023.	"Eco-flor" Mokrice 09.10.2023.	„River“ Pehlin 15.09.2023.	"Slavonija" Slavonski Brod 10.07.2023.	"INA" Urinj 17.08.2014.
Event notification-intervention (from-to)	00.43-00.50	23.30-23.50	17.05-17.30	20:00-20:13	22.30-22.35
Alerted by	Fire Dept. Osijek	employee	employee	NA	Centre 112
Intervention (from - to)	00.50/4.10.	23.55/9.10.	17.30/15.9.	20.13/10.7.	22.35/17.8.
	17.00/13.10.	11.17/10.10.	15.00/19.9.	10.30/11.7.	09.15/18.8.
Coordination and intervention management	Head of Police Station	Head of Police Station	Patrol Leader	Shift Chief	Head of Police Station
Coordination with other services	Civil protection, Fire Dept., Emergency, Inspectorate, State Att. Office	Fire Dept., Inspectorate	Civil protection, Fire Dept., Inspectorate	Fire Dept. Inspectorate	Fire Dept., Emergency, Inspectorate
Tactical measures	Inspection, blockade, traffic measures, control, event securing				
Conducting inspections/ crime investigation	YES				
The outcome of the crime investigation	Criminal Charges	Report	Report	Report	Report

Source: MoI, IS

2.1. Description of variables - elements of the security event

The elements of the analysis of the interventions of police forces at specific security events, aimed at questioning and evaluating the tactics of police action, are presented below descriptively and grouped according to several logically related components: operational response of police forces; tactical goals and tactical measures; synergy with other participants of security event; criminal investigation activities and the role of managers in directing activities and making decisions on intervention.

2.1.1. Operational response of police forces

Responding to security events generally begins with receiving a notification in police Operational Communication Centre (MoI, 2014a), which presupposes the possession of specialized knowledge of a police officer on duty, communication skills, detection of the psychological profile of the reporter, noticing details in his verbal presentation, but also experience in operational work. The content of reports received from citizens are subject to greater credibility review, unlike reports received from emergency services such as Fire Department or the 112 Center, because they were forwarded by professionally trained persons. After that, the Head of police directs the forces to intervention, and the specialty of this procedure is the speed of gaining knowledge about the nature and scope of the security event and the comparison between the report and the established factual situation. All of knowledge that can be used for the purpose of acquiring a *situational picture* (Grigoleit et al., 2020a) is forwarded by means of communication to the Shift Chief at the police station and the county Operational Communication Center (MoI, 2014b).

Based on the dynamics of acquiring knowledge about the event, the police manager successively *assesses the situation* (Grigoleit et al., 2020a), as a thought analytical procedure aimed at evaluating the security elements of the event, but also the content of the activities that should be undertaken in order to manage the intervention. Sudden changes in the situational picture as well as the dynamics of the threat to people and property, and therefore to the police force, represent a particularity conditioned by the necessity of proper operational response in the use of tactical forces, but also concern for own safety during the intervention. The particularity of the tactics in this reaction is correlated and determined by the dynamics of the actions of other emergency rescue services to reduce the consequences of an accident.

Limiting circumstances that determine the speed of response, refer to the number and availability of police forces at a certain moment, due to objective circumstances such as busyness with another task or spatial distance from the scene of the incident. Limitation can also be a wrong assessment of the situation based on an incorrect situational picture with the consequence of late or insufficient action. In the same way, the absence of clear and unambiguous management guidelines of work mode and behavior of the police forces at the intervention can cause disorganization, confusion, wrong action, or direct threat to the security of the forces at the intervention.

By analyzing events it has been found that the local competent police station or police county forces to the scene of the incident and started the procedure (from the arrival and initial

situational picture to the implementation of tactical measures and the organization of the intervention), in an optimal time 5 to 25 minutes.

2.1.2. Tactical goals and measures

Every security event for the police represents a certain challenge in terms of achieving the situation we want to achieve through police intervention. *Tactical goals* generally represent the expected and planned overall state of security, which the intervention aims to achieve. The particularity of tactical goals is the absence of their external visibility or transparency because they are internal reflections of managers and basic ideas of the activity plan in the decision-making process. The tactical goals that can be determined in accident situations are at the beginning of the intervention the rescue of people and property and prevention of the spread of harmful consequences. Procedures aimed at determining the circumstances of the event and individual responsibility as a tactical goal represent criminal investigation. The priority of action is through the urgent implementation of tactical measures create conditions for the safe and undisturbed operation of emergency services such as Fire Department, Emergency or Civil Protection. (Kešetović et al., 2013). That is why it is important that the forces are familiar with tactical ideas and ways how to realize them by implementing tactical measures. Tactical measures represent the externally visible activity of the police. By consistently implementing tactical measures in the way they were conceived and planned by the manager, they guarantee the achievement of tactical goals, and the decision to change them at the scene due to significantly changed circumstances is made exclusively by the competent manager in accordance with the assessment of the situation. Tactical measures that will be implemented in such interventions can be *traffic measures, blockade, control, evacuation, public relations, and documentation* (Grigoleit et. al., 2020b). The particularities of the implementation of tactical measures are the evaluation of priorities and the order of their application. The assessment of the situation is conditioned by the scope and dynamics of the development of the security event in relation to the threat that threatens, and the availability of forces is conditioned by the determination of priorities at the beginning of the intervention and the successive development of measures with the arrival of additional police forces.

The analysis of selected events illustrates that tactical measures were taken in accordance with the development of the intervention and expediency in fulfilling tactical goals, as indicated by the fact of time documentation and timely action of emergency services.

2.1.3. Synergy with other security event stakeholders

An accidental security event with its characteristics and possible consequences for people and property presupposes the action of several services and institutions directed to the general common goal which is the rescue of people and the protection of property. Respecting the particularities of each individual service, the achievement of a common goal is not possible without cooperation and dependence. This means mutual interaction in the exchange of facts and data relevant to a specific activity, teamwork of responsible managers, coordination of actions based on the principles of respect for other opinions and suggestions and coordinated implementation of activities (Toth et al., 2011, College of Policing, 2024b).

Particularity is the affirmation of partner relations and the creation of awareness of the fact that success at a security event depends on the created atmosphere of respect for the efforts of others in the context of reaching the goals of the intervention.

From the data presented in the table on intervention actions, it follows that the synergy of the police with other services such as Fire Department, Emergency, Civil Protection, Inspectorate, and the State Attorney's Office is immediately present, which clearly indicates proper handling in terms of action at the scene of a security event.

2.1.4. Criminal investigation activities

Criminal investigation (The Police Duties and Powers Act, Modly, Korajlić, 2002) of a security event is a set of measures and actions undertaken with the aim of determining the cause of the event, consequences, and the individual responsibility for the event. The State Attorney's Office (Criminal Procedure Act) as well as inspection services are directly participating in the investigation. Particularity of these activities is that they are carried out simultaneously with the activities of other services, but also in synergy with tactical measures taken by the police which represents a kind of dualism in tactical action. Certain criminal investigation activities can only be carried out after the removal of the risk to the personal safety of the forces, which can make it difficult to establish certain facts, and further complicate the criminal investigation. A further particularity is that because of the action of disaster, such as fire, explosive impact, emissions of gases or solutions, etc., there may be partial or complete contamination, destruction, or damage of traces, important for establishing the facts about the event. Equally, the action of rescue forces and equipment can't be ignored on changing the crime scene or in relation to equipment and devices, as well as technological infrastructure, which will be subjected to a later inspection or expert examination, (Pačelat, Zorić, 2003). Notation, withholding and collection of information and ensuring the availability of potential witnesses or perpetrators (Modly, Popović, Mršić, 2014) can be complicated due to the possibility that they are unavailable or cannot be contacted due to injuries. Due to the mentioned particularities, it is important that the police leader of the intervention force encourage the timely observation and location of the place where the accident occurred (Radmilović, Kolar-Gregorić, 2010), the direction of spread, the external characteristics of the flame, but also the exact identification of the persons and places where they were found, the direction from which they moved, etc. All this information are necessary for the accurate determination of the factual situation, which is imperative for criminal investigation.

The analysis of security events in Table 1 shows the fact of conducting a criminal investigation and inspection as part of it, about what competent State Attorney is informed in writing, which indicates complete mutual coordination.

2.1.5. The role of the police manager

The particularities of intervention management by the police manager can be emphasized through an overview of his activities, which we summarize and interpret through the essential characteristics of managerial or guidance functions as known by modern science. (Orlović, 2021).

Table 2. Police chief management functions

POLICE CHIEF MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS		
PLANNING	➤ Conceptual elaboration of activities at the scene	CONDUCT OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION
ORGANIZING	➤ Determination of task bearers	
LEADING	➤ Deciding on tactical measures	
	➤ Delegation of tasks to holders	
LEADING	➤ Motivation of the task bearer	
	➤ Conflict prevention skills	
	➤ Application of communication skills	
LEADING	➤ Application of professional competences in new circumstances	
	CONTROL	➤ Supervision over the implementation of tasks

Source: Authors

From the presented scheme of the analyzed activities of managers in the intervention through managerial functions, the presence of all management characteristics is visible, which assume a correlation with the particularities on this type of intervention. The leader of the intervention, depending on the type and severity of the event, can be determined at the levels from the police station, through the county police n to the police directorate (The Police Act). Leadership is imposed as a dominating function (Labaš, Kralj, Štrk, 2020), but the organization and planning of concrete tasks for the executors precedes and includes risks for the successful ending the intervention, but only through control, which should be continuous, possible failures become known and the method of correcting procedures is determined. As particularities of competences, it may be including the speed of making decision and finding solutions in new circumstances, concern for the personal safety of the forces, distribution of objectively feasible ideas, continuous visibility of the situation during the intervention, timely detection of dangers and critical areas. The personal competences of managers refer to acquired knowledge and previously acquired experiences in such events as a condition for controlling the situation and affirming the self-confidence of the executor with the aim of preventing uncoordinated and spontaneous actions.

The analyzed cases confirm the rule of engagement of managers in all stages of the intervention, from receiving the report to activities at the scene.

3. LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL (*lege artis*) SOURCES FOR POLICE INTERVENTION

The particularity of police action and the implementation of measures and actions during the intervention has basic characteristics that can be defined in terms of legal admissibility and logical justification of those measures in a specific security event. Legal permissibility marks activities that are in accordance with positive legal norms and logical justification is based on experiential or doctrinal knowledge that the police adopted through their past work.

Table 3 – Overview of legislation – purpose and impact on the particularity of tactics

Legislation	Scope	Impact on the particularity of tactics
The Organization and Scope of State Administration Bodies Act	Defining the protection of life and safety of people and property, criminal investigation of criminal offences, civil protection, etc., as scope of the MoI.	Obligation of the police force to act in circumstances of security risks for one's own life and health - general, abstract influence (what)
The Police Act	Organizational foundations of the police and relations of organizational levels as well as the specifics of the labour law position of police officers	Application of tactics through clearly defined organizational forms using hierarchical relationships, legal security of forces in case of adverse consequences - generic, departmental, influence (what)
Police Duties and Powers Act	It determines police tasks and powers, as well as the conditions of their application, criminal investigation, etc.	It provides legal certainty to the forces in the correct application of measures in the event of a sudden change in the situation - criterion (reasons and conditions of application), impact (what and when)
Regulation on the internal organization of the MoI, Regulation on areas, headquarters, types and categories of police counties and stations, Instructions for the Work of Operations and Communications Centres in the MoI, Instructions for Official Reporting and Information Sharing within the MoI, Protocol on the Collaboration between the Police and state Attorney's Office in Criminal Cases	As a group of direct departmental regulations, they regulate the detailed organization and organizational forms of the police, work processes and their holders, and especially work methodology, etc.	It strengthens the self-confidence of the manager and the forces through clearly prescribed activities in the methodical application of activities, affects the prevention of uncertainty in the management and implementation of police intervention, clearly determines the tasks and actual competence of organizational forms - targeted, in-depth, directionally (what, who and how)
Code of Practice for Police Officers	It elaborates the way of applying the authority in the performance of police work	In application, it provides the possibility of rational and meaningful use of forces during the intervention - targeted, very precise (how)
The Criminal Procedure Act	It determines the rules of conduct of the police and other bodies at criminal liability.	It provides a legal framework for the possibility of tactical application of the most expedient measures and actions - binding, strong influence (what, who and how) especially in criminal investigations
The Environmental Protection Act	Regulates the principles of environmental protection, responsibility for environmental damage, supervision, etc.	At the intervention, it provides information about legally binding entities and their obligations - wider organization and systemic impact
The Critical Infrastructures Act	Regulates critical infrastructures, sectors, management, risk analysis, owner obligations, supervision, etc.	During the intervention, it provides knowledge about the technical characteristics of the process and the obligations of the owner, with the aim of successful intervention - wider, but also more precise due to the heterogeneity of CI
Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan	Increasing preparedness and more effective response and planning measures to prevent and mitigate disasters, competences of institutions, etc.	It provides the manager of the intervention with knowledge about stakeholders (Emergency), their activities and influences coordinated action - wider, but also more precise due to the necessity of understanding strategies, activities, and measures

Source: Authors

All these regulations give the police the ability to act for the purpose of prevention, but also the necessary knowledge to work on rescue and elimination of the spread of a harmful event. They also represent a starting point for work on determining the cause and personal responsibility in terms of criminal investigation of a security event.

Management guidelines in written form include work instructions made by competent managers at the strategic level and aim at uniform, rational and tactically justified action of the forces during the intervention that is the subject of the guideline.

Logically justified behavior refers to and most often contains unwritten, experiential rules of the profession (legal framework) as an imperative of police work, respectively it relates to earlier experiences in similar events, and situational adaptation as a mental assessment of the adequacy of the necessary activities, which assume the probability that their application will give contribution to intervention mastery.

Therefore, through the normative *and lege artis* framework, the tactics of police action gain legitimacy, but also represent a binding roadmap for the application of a wide range of tactical measures and actions in relation to accidents and security events. In other words, this framework answers the question of *WHAT* is justified, necessary and possible to undertake, while the *lege artis* (rules of the profession) mostly deals with the question of how to perform and implement tactical measures and instruments, therefore answers the question of *HOW* to organize and implement these activities.

4. RESULTS

The description of the selected (5) subject cases, structured according to about 10 variables, related to, and was carried out on about fifty positions in the created analysis matrix. These positions represent indicators and measurable indicators of the applied tactical measures, respectively the development and course of the intervention, but also the outcomes and achieved tactical goals.

By looking at the normative framework as an element of legal admissibility and regularity, as well as the *lege artis* aspects and the logical justification of the tactical measures and actions it can be assessed that the police forces in the analysed cases acted in accordance with legal norms, bylaws, and professional principles, and successfully achieved the expected and assumed tactical goals.

Tactical measures in the function of creating assumptions for the successful operation of other emergency services (firefighters, emergency medical assistance, civil protection, etc.), especially tactical measures in traffic (control, blockade, and diversion), are usually considered routine, but often they represent an obstacle and complicating the action of all services at a security event.

Criminalistic differential diagnosis is inseparable and assumes simultaneous tactical measures and actions already with the first knowledge or tactical measure of action according to the information about the event. However, this diagnosis of the event usually requires numerous tactical actions related to the scene of the event, as well as actions in relation to the relevant

participants, such as perpetrators, victims, witnesses, etc. The particularities of tactical measures in the function of criminal investigation, as well as those in the function of creating assumptions for the effective operation of other emergency services, were checked, and determined in the managerial cycle segment as well. The police organization and management system are often put to the test in accidental security events, but research confirms relatively high compliance and functionality of all levels from programming and planning to monitoring the implementation of tactical measures and actions.

The results also reveal that one of the most significant particularities of police tactics is the level of situational efficiency and competence of police officers as immediate executors of the analysed tactical measures and actions. This segment of tactics is connected to other disciplines (especially kinesiology), so it is not inspected in depth in this paper, but it is important to point out that the success of achieving tactical goals depends significantly on the psychophysical conditions and overall abilities of police officers.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Particularities of the police tactics in the phase of creation of a situational picture and assessment, and the specialty of this procedure is *the rapidity of gaining knowledge* about the nature and extent of the security accident and the comparison between the report and the factual situation determined by the police forces. In the analysed and similar events, the *specificity of the tactics is determined by the most often limiting circumstances* such as the availability of forces, distance, type, and dynamics of accidents, etc.

All tactic measures are specific because of alignment with situation progress on intervention *and achieve the purpose* the tactical goals.

Synergy because of the successful action of all stakeholders is extremely important for the analysed and similar events, especially due to the established *legislative uncertainty*, so the importance of informal relations between the police and other intervention forces is emphasized, which affects the uniqueness of police tactics.

With the element of crime investigation, it is crucial to differentiate all accidental events into those that are assumed to contain elements of *criminal responsibility and those that do not*, so they are defined and processed as events. A confirmed circumstance that symbolizes a tactical specialty is the duration of the crime investigation, which almost never coincides with the duration of the intervention, but, depending on the event, extends to several days, weeks or longer.

The role of the police manager is a *conditio sine qua non* of successful tactics and in the analysed events, which included all phases of the managerial cycle, it was confirmed and evaluated as an element without special aggravating circumstances. In addition to the need for high general competencies of managers, the *promptness of making correct decisions* was emphasized, but especially the *management experience* gained in previous similar events.

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