



# Tips and Techniques

Portland Police Bureau

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## Recommendations for Response to Excited Delirium Calls

Recent research has revealed insight into the cause and effect of excited delirium syndrome. While there are a number of causes to explain this syndrome, police officers must recognize warning signs and develop strategies to effectively resolve the incident.

All Portland Police officers have been introduced to many of the signs of excited delirium syndrome: removing clothing, breaking glass and mirrors and an affinity to water. This is not a complete list, and not all signs are present at every occurrence.

Incidents involving individuals suffering from excited delirium are often very chaotic; officer and citizen safety is our primary responsibility. Although the subject may have engaged in criminal conduct, **it is important to remember that the subject's condition is truly a medical emergency and should be handled as such.**

Here are suggestions to help officers have the best chance of success:

1. While en-route, if there is any information that suggests an excited delirium situation, get EMS started immediately. Don't wait to get there and assess the situation. Time is critical and can mean the difference between life and death.
2. Wait for cover and put a plan together to control the individual as quickly as possible. Prolonged struggles should be avoided. Overwhelming numbers may mean a quicker stop to the fight. The use of Taser may be appropriate also.
3. Medical response should be part of the initial planning. Have medical personnel start treatment as soon as it is safe for them to approach the subject. EMS has a medical protocol for excited delirium situations.
4. Directive 630.45 states, "Members **will not** transport subjects who appear to be seriously injured, seriously ill, or unconscious **unless** an on-scene evaluation by EMS determines the subject is cleared for officer transport. This includes, but is not limited to any subject who:
  - a. Appears to be suffering from excited delirium..."

A coordinated effort between police and EMS personnel gives us the best possible chance of a positive outcome for these tumultuous situations.

ROSANNE M. SIZER  
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