

PUBLIC ORDER MANAGEMENT

Breaking Contact



Background

Although this module covers three distinct subjects, they are all related. If a unit is coming under pressure from a crowd, it may be necessary to withdraw and regroup rather than to continue to take the pressure and risk fatigue or even injury to officers in the unit. The Commander will have to make the appropriate decision in these circumstances; the unit may break contact & withdraw, request the assistance of a fresh unit to take over, or call for the assistance of a unit to support where their unit is being overrun.

Aim

To familiarize FPU members with the tactical response of breaking contact

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module the participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate professional tactics to break contact

Training sequence

The material in this module is designed to be delivered over one hour classroom based theory lessons, followed by 3 hours of practice, which should include, at least one hour for assessment. This is on the assumption that the students have received no previous training in this subject.

Duration

Minimum Session time	Lecture/Presentation	Question/Assessment	Session Activities
4 hours	50 mins	10 mins	3 hours
Additional Options	Mission Specific	Optional film	Optional activity

Methodology

This module contains a PowerPoint theory presentation to explain and show the various techniques. However, the majority of this module should be taught in a practical manner using the following format:

- Explanation by the instructor
- Demonstration by the instructor
- Imitation by the students (with instructor correcting where necessary)
- Practice by the students until the technique is perfected

At the end of the final stage, the instructor will be able to assess if the student is competent in the technique having carried out continuous assessment throughout the preceding lessons.

The instructor should inform participants of the content, format and timing. Knowing what to expect, participants can improve their ability to focus on the subject and benefit better from the session.

- Break contact (one hour) = lesson 1
- Practice (3 hours of practical exercises) = lesson 2

The practice should be carried out over a number of days and the instructors should be aware that the physically demanding nature of deploying the FPU in Public Order Management techniques must be carefully managed so that the students do not get fatigued as this is likely to lead to injury.

A number of the practical periods should be conducted in the form of exercises which should be carried out in as realistic situation as possible with the use of other officers acting at 'Mob crowd'

When training a full FPU it is recommended that this module is taught to individual Platoons and then additional practice time is given to bring the whole FPU together for co-ordinated training.

Instructors are encouraged to add practical examples and mission specific information related to the specific deployment of participants, if known.

Instructor Profile

This module is best presented by an instructor who has practical experience in Public Order Management in peacekeeping operations and who could share his/her experience with the group. They must be practiced and skilled to be able to demonstrate the technique correctly. If there is more than one instructor, at least one should have practical experience as Public Order Management trainer in either domestic policing or a peacekeeping mission.

Instructor Preparations

Required Readings

- FPU Training Handbook
- Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials
- Directives of Use of Force and SOPs

General Preparations

Equipment:

1. Computer and PowerPoint slides for lesson 1
2. Projector and Screen for lessons 1

3. Full public Order management equipment and vehicles for the practical section of the training.

Training Area:

The initial lesson should be carried out in the classroom; however subsequent lessons will need a large open area where students can work as an FPU section and platoon. Once the 'open ground' tactics have been grasped by the students, the FPU will need to practice their tactics in a more urban situation. For this purpose, a 'ghost town' or public order village is ideal.

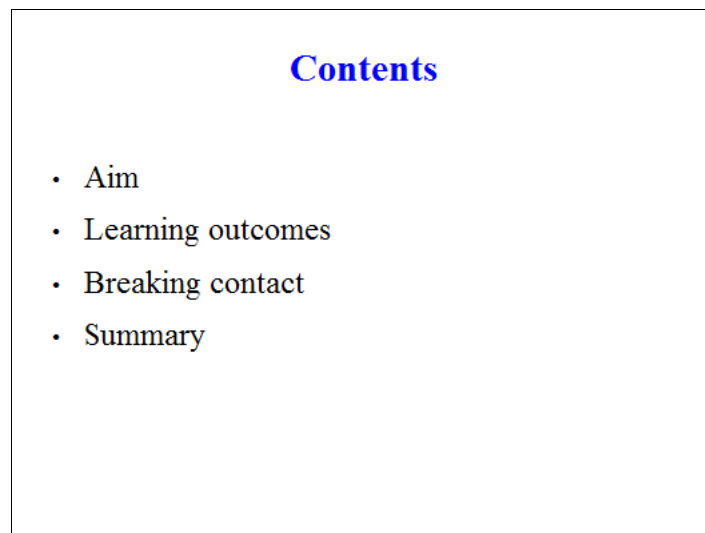
Session notes

Lesson 1 – Breaking Contact (theory)

Contents:



Slide 1



Slide 2

Aim

To introduce the FPU to the tactical response of breaking contact during public order operations

Slide 3

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module the participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate the correct tactics to break contact

Slide 4



Slide 5

Breaking contact is a defensive mission designed to hold demonstrators in an area by means of tactical withdrawal. Referred to as mobile defence it combines fire (use of CS canisters) and movement in depth to reorganise the unit and keep the opponent engaged. The key to making the tactic work is coordination.



Slide 6

Definition outlines the basic principles of the tactic, it allows the unit to withdraw and regroup so that they can re-engage the crowd, in the same principle as a defensive bound but on a larger scale.

Tactically speaking, breaking contact means that the FPU (or sub-element) has to leave the held ground, (for whatever reasons, mission reassignment...), "under the pressure of demonstrators". It is very different from leaving an area where a

demonstration has taken place, after the crowd has peacefully dispersed. The general idea is to distance from the crowd contact elements as the units has less and less staff actually holding the cordon. This is attained mainly through backing up while the different sub-units re-embark swiftly but in order into the vehicles, while the contact element conduct deterrent manoeuvres to prevent the demonstrators from coming close to the re-embarking unit.

This is a very complex technique which has to be practised many times since it involves for the commanding officer to coordinate all his elements when the environments is characterized by the an increasing imbalance in the ratio FPU officers holding the ground and demonstrators opposed to them. This situation is likely to prompt more violence among demonstrators who suddenly feel “stronger”, out numbering to police and seeing the unit withdrawing. The commanding officer needs to stay much focused. All elements on the ground should know the “chronology” of the technique.

Prepare for the manoeuvre

- Define the plan
- Select route
- Fire support
- Tactical order

Ensure you are not overwhelmed

Slide 7

In preparation for the manoeuvre, the unit commander will define the plan to enable him and his sub-unit commanders, to be clear on how the tactic will be executed and what the coordination timelines are. The commander must pre-define when the unit will reach the breaking point as it is critical that the manoeuvre is conducted by the unit in a coordinated manner. If the unit is past the breaking point, the manoeuvre will become disordered and fail, risking the unit being overwhelmed.

The Commander will select the best exit route and turn the vehicle convoy around so they are facing in the right direction for the withdrawal. At the same time they will define the point to reorganise.

The Commander will then devise the fire support plan and instructions for co-

ordination. It is critical, at this point, that the unit conserves ammunition so that there is sufficient quantity to deploy in support of the movement

Finally the Commander will give the precise order for leaving the area and issue the tactical order.

Execution of the manoeuvre

- Warn crowd
- Organize CS
- Coordinate fire & movement
- Convoy moves once all police officers embark
- Report

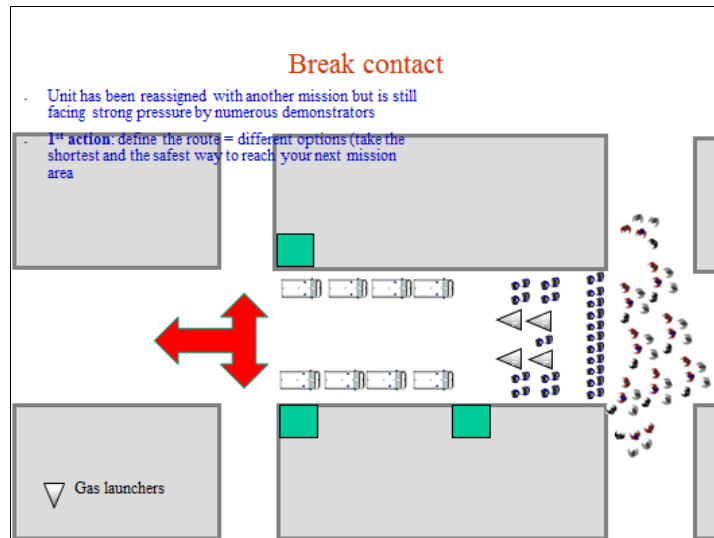
Slide 8

Prior to the execution of the manoeuvre the Commander will warn the crowd regarding use of force following which they will use tear gas canisters to disperse the crowd. The purpose isn't to actually disperse the crowd but rather distance and scatter demonstrators in order to have more manoeuvring space and fewer demonstrators on the contact line.

The Commander must coordinate manoeuvres and fire support. With the CS Gas deployment, will come a defensive bound of 5 to 10m forward and 20m back allowing the start of the tactical withdrawal.

The convoy will remain in position to allow complete embarking as the sub-units withdraw.

Finally the Commander will report that the manoeuvre is in progress and then when it is complete so that the Headquarters are aware of the relocation of the unit.



👉 **Instructors note:** Slides 9 - 18 are animated slides which illustrate various options when breaking contact. The PowerPoint version of the presentation on the resource disc must be used for this section of the lesson



Slide 19

The final stage is to reorganise the unit and prepare it for the next phase, this must be done in a secure area where the unit will not come under attack from a hostile crowd. The reorganisation must be rapid and allow the unit to respond if necessary. The commander must remain alert to the movement of the crowd and ready to redeploy in an emergency if necessary.

The unit should take the opportunity to re-supply with ammunition and if necessary to refresh

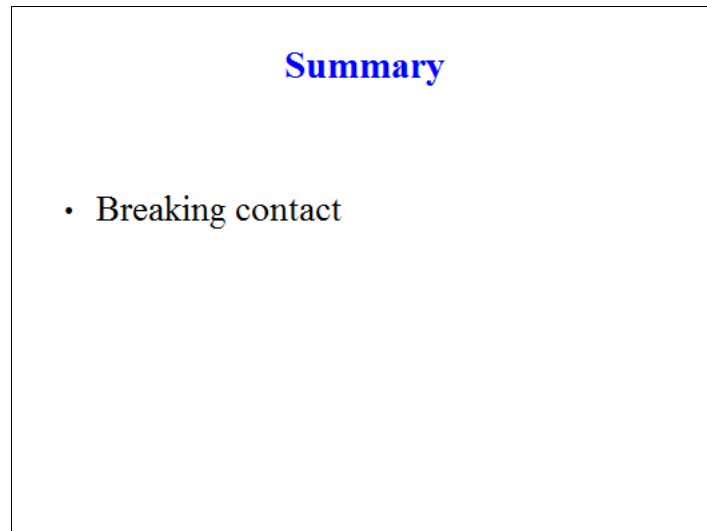
the officers with food and water. While this is going on, the Commander will decide on the strategy to take back the control of the ground if appropriate and report back in to Headquarters.

General considerations

- Observation and assessment
- Good communication
- Avoid isolating any element (buddy, team, section...)
- Combine action with protection
- HQ must be kept updated
- Consider timing in the execution to avoid endangering the unit

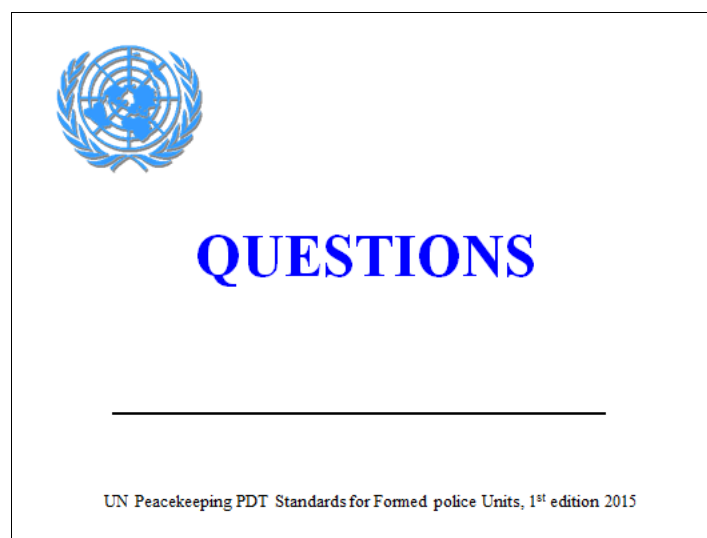
Slide 20

All phases have to be preceded by observation and assessment and good communication and co-ordination between the different elements of the unit is essential. The Commander should avoid isolating any element and all movement must combine action with adequate protection the use of APCs CG Gas and smoke for example. It is essential that the commanding officer rely on his subordinates to conduct the manoeuvre. He must think ahead of the next steps of the operation and anticipate potential contingencies. His main role will be to coordinate the operation having in mind the whole operation and not focusing on the details already dealt with by his platoon leaders.



Slide 21

The officers should be given a summary of the key points of the lesson before being asked if they have any questions.



Slide 22

Lesson 2 – Breaking Contact (practical element)

There is three hours of practice recommended for this subject which should be carried out at the discretion of the instructor. The practice should be in a realistic situation such as a public order village or 'ghost town' and a 'mob' crowd should be available to act in an appropriate manner where necessary armed with soft balls or similar projectiles.