

# Tactical Terminology: Planning

## (Constraints vs. Restraints)

Every tactical plan is developed within certain guidelines. These limitations may involve political, environmental, strategic or economic considerations. Since no plan is entirely free of influencing factors, it is necessary to have an understanding of them in order to devise a safe and effective formula for action. Factors which influence planning can be categorized into two broad groups: constraints and restraints. "Constraints" are those things which a commander must do, while "restraints" are those things he must *not* do.

Constraints may be requirements imposed by law or department policy. Examples include the necessity to obtain a search warrant or to wear a certain uniform. Other constraints may be imposed by higher authority. These are almost always event specific; that is, they are temporary requirements relating only to a single operation. A requirement to attempt to "call out" a suspect before forcing an entry or have a prosecuting attorney present during the operation are examples. Still other constraints may be imposed by the planner. These self-imposed constraints often relate to safety, such as requirements to have a fire truck and TEMS at the command post, or have entry personnel wear safety goggles during the operation.

The opposite of a constraint is a restraint. Restraints are controls which prohibit some action. These too may be imposed by law or department policy. For example, police are restrained from using excessive force, unnecessarily detaining bystanders or destroying private property. Likewise, they may be imposed by higher authority. Examples include prohibitions against the use of chemical agents in an apartment building or the use of diversionary devices in drug laboratories. Self-imposed

restraints may prohibit firing on targets outside a sector of fire, leaving a containment position until relieved, or prevention of traffic from entering an area.

A thorough understanding of constraints and restraints is essential in

devising a successful plan for anything which is not required or prohibited is permitted. An understanding of the parameters which regulate the tactics in a plan is an integral part of the planning process. ■

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