

Illinois State University Police Department  
Emergency Response Procedure

Hostage Situation

A Hostage Situation is one where a person (aka Hostage Taker) takes persons and holds them against their will with force or threat of force. Often times this also includes barricaded suspects and the hostages are used as leverage for protection or negotiation with authorities. All hostage situations are not the same, where some are very dynamic and change quickly, while others can be long and drawn out with little change over time. In all situations persons must use good judgment and common sense in avoiding or dealing with hostage takers.

If you hear or see a hostage situation but are not immediately involved:

- Remain calm
- Immediately remove yourself from any danger.
- Immediately notify University Police Department at 911 from a campus phone or 309/438-8631 from a cell phone or emergency blue phone located around campus.
- If possible, have the following information:
  - a. Location and room number of incident.
  - b. Number of possible hostage takers
  - c. Physical description and names of the hostage taker(s)
  - d. Number of hostages
  - e. Any weapons the hostage takers may have.
  - f. Your name
  - g. Your location and phone number

If you are taken hostage:

- Remain calm, be polite and cooperate with the hostage taker(s)
- DO NOT attempt escape unless there is an extremely good chance of survival. It is sometimes safer to be submissive and obey the hostage taker(s).
- Speak in a calm voice and do not complain, avoid being belligerent and comply with all orders and instructions of the hostage taker(s).
- DO NOT make sudden movements, statements, comments or hostile looks.
- Be aware of your non-verbal communications
- Be an empathetic listener if the hostage taker(s) talks to you.
- Observe the hostage taker(s) and try to memorize their physical traits, voice patterns, clothing or other details that can help provide a description later.
- Avoid getting into political or ideological discussions.
- If forced to present terrorist demands to authorities, either in writing or on tape, state clearly that the demands are from your captors. Avoid making a plea on your own behalf.
- Try to stay low to the ground or behind cover from windows or doors, if possible.

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During a rescue by the police:

- **DO NOT RUN.** Drop to the floor and remain still. If that is not possible, stand still and keep your hands in plain view at all times. Make no sudden moves a police officer may interpret as hostile or threatening.
- Wait for instructions and obey all instructions you are given by the police.
- Do not resist or argue if a police officer isn't sure whether you are a hostage taker or a hostage. Even if you are handcuffed and searched **DO NOT** resist the police officers. Wait for the confusion to calm down as you will be taken to a safe area, where proper identification and status will be determined. Police officers must make sure all persons are safe and sometimes they will be required to secure persons until they are able to determine if they are suspects or victims.