

## **5 Primary Building Search “Rules”**

1. Don't Leave Your Partner
2. Engage the Immediate Threat Before Potential Threat
3. Don't Pass an Unsecured Area
4. Contact/Cover
5. Use HARD Cover

**\*More details listed on the following pages!**

## **5 Primary Building Search “Rules”.**

Try not to violate these “rules” as you complete your building search. They are in order of priority. If you must violate a “rule,” violate the ones further down the list. Sometimes, you must violate a rule in order to make progress (like #5, you must leave your protection from bullets to go down the hall and make progress in the building). But as soon as you can, go back to following all the rules again.

- 1. Don't Leave Your Partner!!** Two officers are *extremely* limited in the amount of area they can control. Two officers can only dominate the area they are in if they are *together*. Once they become geographically separated, they become extremely vulnerable. *It is more important that the two officers stay together than it is to “control” the areas they've already checked.* Example: Small rooms (walk-in closet, etc. with limited threat areas) can be peeked/'sliced' from the outside. If only one officer can physically enter, the second (cover) officer **must** be in a position to immediately coordinate fire on threats inside that room with the contact officer (Immediate threat). If the cover officer instead focuses on 'holding long on the hallway' (potential threat), he/she will never be able to help the contact officer in time. Small room options: both officers enter, if no immediate threat appears, cover officer takes a position where they can still immediately support the contact officer, and also take threats coming from the entry point. At the very least, the cover officer must first *focus* on the small room that their partner is entering (What if the armed, aggressive suspect is in the room your partner is entering?). Remember: Keep thinking, 'If the gunfight happens now, am I in the best possible spot to win/protect my partner?'
- 2. Engage the Immediate Threat before the potential threat!** Remember that the suspect you see is the one that can kill you *immediately*. Your priority is to *immediately* engage that suspect, put them in the position of greatest disadvantage, and secure them. The cover officer will have to protect you from unsecured areas (potential threats). Because of those other threats, the contact officer must *immediately* get that suspect cuffed, and then *prepare to engage other threats!* If, while 'proning' the suspect out you can quickly put them in a cover location, great, but *this is secondary to the priority of getting them cuffed.* Backing a suspect to a 'secure' cuffing location only gives the suspect time to plan an assault.
- 3. Don't Pass An Unsecured Area!** Try to methodically clear a building. Keep threats to the front. Search the areas that you are most vulnerable to first! Remember that two officers can't 'take and hold ground'. After you leave a hallway to enter a room, remember that someone could have slipped past you. Maintain 360° coverage! If you have to pass an unsecured/unsearched area, alarm it (furniture against

the door, or use a wedge). Maintain lunge distance from unsecured areas (doors, windows) so that you will have time to react!

4. **Contact/Cover!** The officer that engages the immediate threat is the contact officer, the other becomes the cover officer. The contact officer directs, cuffs, engages the suspect. The cover officer protects the contact officer from everything else (including the immediate threat, if the contact officer needs help).
5. **Use HARD Cover!** Protect yourself from bullets. Always be alert for and use things that will stop bullets: concrete walls, concrete pillars, steel beams, ballistic shields, etc. Remember that even vehicle engine blocks are poor cover from the outside...too many surfaces for skip rounds. Always place the front panel of your body armor towards the immediate threat area!