

CIVCAS Consequence Management Steps

Apply consequence management procedures if a CIVCAS incident occurs:

- Understand the process on how to deal with collateral CIVCAS.
- Immediately report any CIVCAS incident (actual or possible) to your higher headquarters.
- Conduct ground-level BDA/sensitive site exploitation (i.e., take photographs, collect forensic evidence, etc.) to verify the occurrence of a CIVCAS event.
- Notify partnered forces of investigation and obtain local evidence.
- Seriously regard local national complaints or allegations.
- Conduct joint partnered forces assessment.
- Share findings of investigation. Leaders must meet with local leaders and encourage them to tell locals what happened.
- Provide an explanation in the local language to the media; preferably with partner force talking to the media.
- Make amends if necessary through apology, compensation, referral to other agencies, or assistance.
- CIVCAS mitigation should emphasize U.S. actions and what partnered forces can do to reduce CIVCAS.

Best practices in reducing CIVCAS:

- **Communication.** Use clear, precise, and unbiased language to describe what you are seeing. Keep it simple.
- **Beware of group think.** If you disagree with the description you are hearing, or feel that there is an alternative explanation for what you are seeing, then say so.
- **Tactical patience.** The longer you wait and observe the more you will know about what is going on and be better prepared to make a decision to employ lethal or non-lethal means.
- **PID.** Until proven otherwise, every person must be considered a civilian and every compound a friendly structure.
- **POL.** This is linked to PID. Understand what is considered “normal” activity of the inhabitants of your area of responsibility.
- **ROE.** It is imperative that all personnel have a thorough understanding of ROE and understand when the application of force is authorized.

Civilian Casualty Prevention

**GTA 90-01-039
MAY 2016**

Ask yourself three questions to reduce civilian casualty (CIVCAS) incidents:

Must I engage? Under self-defense, if friendly forces are taking fire and there is no other way to withdraw then yes, you should engage.

Can I engage? Does the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) permit engagement? Do I have appropriate rules of engagement (ROE)? Have I properly considered positive identification (PID), pattern of life (POL), ROE, and potential collateral damage?

Should I engage? What if I am wrong? Is the tactical gain I might achieve worth the strategic risk of being wrong?

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Principles for reducing CIVCAS and its impact:

- **Consider tactical alternatives.** Determine the best means of achieving the desired effects with minimum CIVCAS.
- **Partner to the fullest extent possible.** Leverage relationships with partnered forces before, during, and after operations to share responsibility.
- **Learn what is “normal.”** Know and understand what is normal local behavior and POL.
- **Improve shared situational awareness.** Clearly and objectively share details with other forces and higher headquarters.
- **Conduct battle damage assessment (BDA) whenever possible.**
- **Know where civilian groups are operating in your area.**
- **Ethical leadership matters.** Know who is in charge.
- **Be fast, but not wrong.** Communicate information as soon as possible. However, to avoid damaging our credibility, do not report details that are speculative.

Tactical Alternatives:

- **Shaping.** Understand your environment and set the conditions to minimize use of force in the presence of civilians.
- **Alternate tactics, techniques, and procedures.** Consider options to achieve desired effects in view of potential second-order effects.
- **Tactical patience.** When the situation allows, take additional time to verify intentions and PID before using lethal force.

Non-Lethal Weapons (NLWs):

- Provide troops with a means to warn, deter, discourage, and determine intent of suspect individuals prior to applying lethal force.
- Help de-escalate potentially volatile, lethal situations during military operations.
- Provide more reaction time for troops to assess the tactical situation to reduce CIVCAS.

Predeployment and Reinforcement Training:

- Train in accordance with current operational standard operating procedures.
- Improve coordination with air assets and indirect fire.
- Attain a better understanding of what PID means – confirm before making a decision to shoot or not.
- Force the practice of ground BDA and reporting.
- Partnering is the key; understand how to partner with coalition forces.
- POL must be understood; study the operational environment and your designated area of responsibility prior to deploying.
- Train with vignettes from the theater of operations.
- Resource and train with NLW equipment to increase reaction time, reduce unnecessary escalation of force (EOF) incidents, and reduce CIVCAS.
- Soldiers at every level must understand EOF procedures; continually train and rehearse EOF before, during, and after an EOF event.

Air-to-Ground Considerations:

- Both ground and air elements must understand how the current tactical directive impacts air-to-ground fires.
- Ground force commanders should expect increased dialogue with air crews; if an air crew sees something that does not make sense, they should raise that issue with the ground force.
- Ground force commanders and joint tactical air controllers/joint fires observers need to work together for PID, and to ensure that no civilians are in the target area.
- Avoid communication breakdowns caused by the use of leading language, such as “non-agricultural digging.” Do not omit important details from combat observations and reports.
- Understand weapon effects; apply precision munitions against lethal targets to limit CIVCAS and collateral damage.

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