

355 – Procedures for the Use of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team

Santa Ana Police Department

Department Order #355 - Procedures for the Use of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team

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Purpose

The purpose of this Order is to establish procedural guidelines for the use of the Special Weapons and Crisis Negotiation Teams.

Background

SWAT is a team of professional, highly trained, skilled and motivated law enforcement officers who have been especially selected, trained and equipped to respond to and resolve hostage incidents, barricaded gunman incidents, sniper situations, high risk warrant service, personal protection and other special assignments or other emergency situations, which are beyond the capability of other police personnel.

I. Organizational Structure

A. SWAT Commanding Officer

1. The Chief of Police will designate a Deputy Chief to be the SWAT Commanding Officer and primary senior staff position responsible for SWAT and Crisis Negotiations Team training, readiness, and deployment.
2. Operational Policies and Procedures will be developed and maintained at the Bureau Command level of the designated SWAT Commanding Officer.
3. All other members may be from assignments throughout the Department.

B. SWAT Commander

1. A Commander recommended by the SWAT Commanding Officer and approved by the Chief of Police.
2. Responsible for the SWAT Team selection process, training, and deployment.
3. Equipment, control, maintenance and use will be the SWAT Commander's responsibility. Various tasks within the unit can be assigned to SWAT personnel in order to complete this function.

C. Assistant SWAT Commander

1. A Commander recommended by the SWAT Commanding Officer and approved by the Chief of Police.
2. Assists in SWAT Team selection process, training, and deployment.
3. Assists in overseeing and assumes command of both the SWAT Team and Crisis Negotiation Team in the absence of the SWAT Commander.
4. Responsible for various administrative duties as assigned.

D. Team Leaders

1. Sergeants or Corporals designated by the SWAT Commander and approved by the SWAT Commanding Officer.

2. Responsible for assertive leadership, team integrity and unity as well as performing other duties as assigned.
3. SWAT Team Leaders will be selected utilizing a formal testing process to include an examination of their training, experiences, maturity, decision-making skills, supervisory and leadership abilities.
4. Assistant SWAT Team Leaders may also be designated, and shall be experienced SWAT members and/or Corporals given specific supervisory authority to oversee tasks and operations.

E. Team Members

Sworn police officer volunteers from the rank of corporal and below from throughout the Department. At a minimum, the selection process consists of a physical fitness test, firearms proficiency, oral board examination, personnel record review, and team assessment. Each candidate is then evaluated at the end of a one-year probationary period, and either advanced to permanent status or dismissed from the SWAT Team. Based on operational needs, and at the discretion of the SWAT Commander, members of the SWAT Team that have recently promoted to the rank of sergeant may be retained until a replacement is selected.

II. Call-Out/Deployment Procedure

- A. Special Weapons and Tactics Teams are trained to handle a multitude of incidents, such as barricaded incidents, hostage situations, high-risk warrant service, V.I.P. security and Special Enforcement Details. Their role is to assist in those situations that demand specific tactics, weapons and/or equipment that exceed routine deployment and resources available to patrol officers or detectives.
 1. Four elements should exist before emergency deployment of SWAT:
 - a. A criminal act exists, and there is a threat to the life of a hostage, victim, or officers; or where abandonment of the situation by the police would present an unacceptable danger to the community.
 - b. The suspect(s) are armed, or there is a reason to believe they are.
 - c. The suspect(s) are in a position of cover, concealment or tactical advantage. Due to the dynamic nature of critical incidents and the likelihood that a suspect will not communicate with officers once they have attained a position of cover, concealment or tactical advantage, a reasonable belief by the field supervisor that, based on articulable information, the suspect is still present shall be sufficient to meet this criteria (i.e. rapid establishment of a perimeter, witness statements, etc.)
 - d. The suspect(s) refuse to surrender.
 2. SWAT may also be deployed during times of civil unrest, riots, demonstrations, marches, or other significant events in which a dedicated unit with specialized training and resources may be required to keep the peace or to gain and/or maintain control of such event. When

deployed in accordance to this section, SWAT's objectives shall be to protect the public, protect public employees, and to protect public and private property.

3. The Watch Commander will initiate the call-up after a request from a field supervisor or other staff officer of the Department. The Watch Commander shall attempt to contact the SWAT Commander first, or in his/her absence the Assistant SWAT Commander. The SWAT Commander or the Assistant SWAT Commander shall attempt to contact, by phone, the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief. In the event neither of the commanders are available, the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief and the Chief of Police shall be contacted.
 - a. Chief shall be notified and will authorize the activation if warranted.
 - b. Utilize the Watch Commander's SWAT activation checklist.
4. Pre-arranged tactical deployment will be approved by the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief, or in his absence the On-Duty Deputy Chief.
5. The SWAT Team is the primary unit responsible for conducting V.I.P. Security Details.
 - a. All requests for V.I.P. Security Details shall be directed to the SWAT Commander and approved by the Field Operations Bureau Commander.
6. Use of the SWAT Team to conduct High-Risk Warrant Services is initiated by contacting the SWAT Commander. The SWAT Commander will review all pertinent facts and circumstance surrounding the warrant and contact the Chief of Police for approval. If the use is authorized, a SWAT Team Leader shall be assigned and will contact the detective to begin the planning process. The SWAT Team shall be solely responsible for the tactics to be utilized during the service of the warrant. Once the warrant has been served and the location secured, the SWAT Team will relinquish the scene to the detective. Detectives should give serious consideration to the use of the SWAT Team as a resource in serving warrants given the unique training, equipment, and capabilities of the Team. Appropriate use of the SWAT Team may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. The suspect is believed to have committed a crime of violence and/or has utilized weapons, or threatened to use weapons.
 - b. The suspect has an extensive criminal record that may have included acts of violence, and/or the use of weapons.
 - c. The suspect is a gang member, or suspected gang member who is believed to be currently in possession of, or has ready access to weapons.
 - d. The suspect, although no past or current information regarding his/her use of weapons exists, is known to associate with persons whom have past criminal histories for weapons and violent offenses, and it is likely that associates may be present at the location where the warrant is to be served.

- e. The location where the warrant is to be served is fortified, and entry can only be gained utilizing equipment designated for use by the SWAT Team.
 - f. Any other circumstances where the detective believes use of the SWAT Team would be appropriate.
- B. SWAT/CNT personnel are specially trained to communicate with criminals, terrorists, and mentally unstable person(s) in an effort to resolve a confrontation in a peaceful manner.
- 1. Requests for deployment of SWAT Crisis Negotiators are the same as for the entire SWAT team. The CNT Team may not be deployed independent from the SWAT Team without the express approval of the SWAT Commander or his designee.
- C. A report shall be completed after every deployment of the SWAT/CNT Team. The report shall be written to the Police Legal Advisor via the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief and the Chief of Police. The report shall state the circumstances surrounding the incident, SWAT actions taken, and the outcome of the deployment. No other copies of this report shall be made.

III. Training

Each member of the SWAT Team and Crisis Negotiation Team participate in regular training.

- A. Physical fitness standards are the responsibility of the individual SWAT/CNT member to maintain. SWAT/CNT Team members are authorized three hours per week on-duty fitness training upon written request and approval by the SWAT Commanding Officer. (Form is attached at the end of this order)
- B. Firearms, physical fitness and equipment standards and qualifications will be established by SWAT Commander.
- C. SWAT members assigned as Precision Marksmen will be required to attend firearms qualifications and advanced monthly training in addition to the standard SWAT training.

IV. Firearms

- A. All SWAT personnel will be authorized to carry their assigned weapons (rifle and/or sub-machinegun) while on-duty.
 - 1. SWAT members must obtain approval by the scene supervisor prior to deployment of SWAT weapons at a non-SWAT situation.

EXCEPTION: Extreme emergencies of a life threatening nature, in which no time for approval is available.
 - 2. SWAT weapons are only to be used in such situations where the conventional weapons carried by uniformed officers are insufficient, and the lives of officers and/or citizens are in danger.

3. SWAT members shall not independently deploy their weapons in other situations without the approval of the SWAT Commander. Example: SWAT members may not utilize their assigned weapons, and/or other SWAT Team equipment to assist a Directed Patrol Team serving a narcotics search warrant without prior approval.
4. Each SWAT Team member will be responsible for storing his/her weapons in a safe and secure manner
5. Whenever a SWAT Team member deploys their assigned weapon at a non-SWAT situation, a memorandum shall be directed to the SWAT Commander explaining the circumstances. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in dismissal from the SWAT Team and/or possible disciplinary action.

V. Incident Command

- A. The highest-ranking sworn officer at the scene shall assume command of the overall operation and be designated as the Incident Commander. He/she shall establish a perimeter of operations and designate those persons and vehicles authorized to enter the area. Any evacuation, crowd or traffic control will also be the responsibility of the Incident Commander.
- B. The SWAT Team, upon arrival, will be responsible for the tactical objective only. All other responsibilities shall remain under the control of the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander shall not dictate tactics or procedures to the SWAT Team.
- C. The execution of any order directing the actions of the SWAT Team (i.e. forced entry of a structure, intentional confrontation with a suspect, or use of deadly force, etc.) that is likely to result in an officer becoming seriously injured, killed, or involved in an officer involved shooting shall not be authorized without the express approval of the Chief of Police, or his designate. The SWAT Commander, the highest-ranking officer at the scene and/or the Incident Commander shall confer with the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief, who will then evaluate the situation with the Chief of Police. If the Field Operations Bureau Deputy Chief is not available, the SWAT Commander will confer solely with the Chief of Police prior to executing the command.
 1. SWAT situations are dynamic, and exigent circumstances may arise that preclude adherence to notification requirements. Nothing in this order shall preclude officers from defending themselves or others whenever necessary.

VI. Team Equipment and Tactical Devices

- A. The Tactical Command Vehicle, Mobile Command Vehicle (when assigned to the SWAT Team), Bear and Peacekeeper Rescue Vehicles, SWAT Suburban, and SWAT Van are restricted to use by SWAT/CNT personnel only.

- B. The use of specialized chemical agents is restricted to specially trained SWAT personnel. The improper use of chemical agents can lead to serious injury or death. Use of specialized chemical agents can only be approved by a commander or above.
- C. Flash/Sound Diversionary Devices are restricted to use by SWAT personnel and only the senior SWAT member present at the incident shall authorize their use.

Summary

The Special Weapons and Tactics Team and Crisis Negotiation Team are specialized support units within the police department and will respond only upon official requests pursuant to the guidelines established in this Order. Final decisions on field actions of the SWAT Team and/or Incident Commander are reserved for the Chief of Police.